



# FOREIGN AFFAIRS

## A New Cold War?

Russia and America,  
Then and Now

# FOREIGN AFFAIRS



**April 2018**

April 2018  
**Introduction**

## THE COLD WAR BEGINS

July 1947  
**The Sources of Soviet Conduct**  
*“X” (George F. Kennan)*

---

April 1950  
**Political Ideas in the Twentieth Century**  
*Isaiah Berlin*

---

July 1953  
**Atomic Weapons and American Policy**  
*J. Robert Oppenheimer*

---

April 1958  
**The Illusion of Disengagement**  
*Dean Acheson*

---

---

October 1959

**On Peaceful Coexistence**

*Nikita S. Khrushchev*

---

July 1959

**The Search for Stability**

*Henry A. Kissinger*

---

April 1961

**The Challenge of Change in the Soviet Bloc**

*Zbigniew Brzezinski*

---

January 1963

**The Practice of Partnership**

*Dean Acheson*

---

January 1968

**The Framework of East-West Reconciliation**

*Zbigniew Brzezinski*

---

July 1968

**The Limits of Détente**

*Robert Conquest*

---

October 1972

**After the Cold War**

*George F. Kennan*

---

October 1977

**On Power: The Nature of Soviet Power**

*Robert Legvold*

---

Winter 1983/84

**The Rise, Fall and Future of Détente**

*John Lewis Gaddis*

---

---

Winter 1985/86

**What Went Wrong With Arms Control?**

*Thomas C. Schelling*

---

Spring 1987

**Containment: 40 Years Later**

**Containment Then and Now**

*George F. Kennan*

---

Fall 1988

**Testing Gorbachev**

*Graham Allison*

---

**AFTER THE THAW**

America and the World 1989

**Beyond the Cold War**

*Jeane J. Kirkpatrick*

---

America and the World 1989

**From Cold War Toward Trusting Peace**

*McGeorge Bundy*

---

Spring 1991

**Toward the Post-Cold War World**

*John Lewis Gaddis*

---

Summer 1991

**America's Stake in the Soviet Future**

*Graham Allison and Robert D. Blackwill*

---

January/February 1994

**Beyond Boris Yeltsin**

*Philip Zelikow*

---

January/February 1997

## **Can Russia Change?**

*David Remnick*

## **PUTIN'S RISE**

---

November/December 2002

## **Russia Renewed?**

*Daniel Treisman*

---

July/August 2006

## **Russia Leaves the West**

*Dimitri Trenin*

---

November/December 2007

## **Losing Russia**

### **The Costs of Renewed Confrontation**

*Dimitri K. Simes*

---

January/February 2008

## **Mission to Moscow**

### **Why Authoritarian Stability Is a Myth**

*Michael McFaul and Kathryn Stoner-Weiss*

---

November/December 2008

## **What Has Moscow Done?**

### **Rebuilding U.S.-Russian Relations**

*Stephen Sestanovich*

---

November/December 2010

## **Moscow's Modernization Dilemma**

### **Is Russia Charting a New Foreign Policy?**

*Walter Laqueur*

---

November/December 2011

## **The Dying Bear**

### **Russia's Demographic Disaster**

*Nicholas Eberstadt*

---

July/August 2014

## **Managing the New Cold War**

What Moscow and Washington Can Learn From the Last One

*Robert Legvold*

---

May/June 2016

## **Russia's Perpetual Geopolitics**

Putin Returns to the Historical Pattern

*Stephen Kotkin*

---

May/June 2016

## **Putin's Foreign Policy**

The Quest to Restore Russia's Rightful Place

*Fyodor Lukyanov*

---

May/June 2016

## **The Revival of the Russian Military**

How Moscow Reloaded

*Dmitri Trenin*

---

May/June 2016

## **Why Putin Took Crimea**

The Gambler in the Kremlin

*Daniel Treisman*

---

March/April 2017

## **Trump and Russia**

The Right Way to Manage Relations

*By Eugene B. Rumer, Richard Sokolsky, and Andrew S. Weiss*

---

November 22, 2017

## **Why New Russia Sanctions Won't Change Moscow's Behavior**

Washington's Approach Lacks Clear Goals

*Emma Ashford*

---

December 5, 2017

**The Kremlin's Latest Crackdown on Independent Media**  
**Russia's New Foreign Agent Law in Context**

*Alina Polyakova*

---

January 18, 2018

**Containing Russia, Again**

**An Adversary Attacked the United States—It's Time to Respond**

*Robert D. Blackwill and Philip H. Gordon*

---

March 16, 2018

**Putin's Past Explains Russia's Future**

**What to Expect After the Election**

*Gregory Feifer*

---

March 27, 2018

**Has a New Cold War Really Begun?**

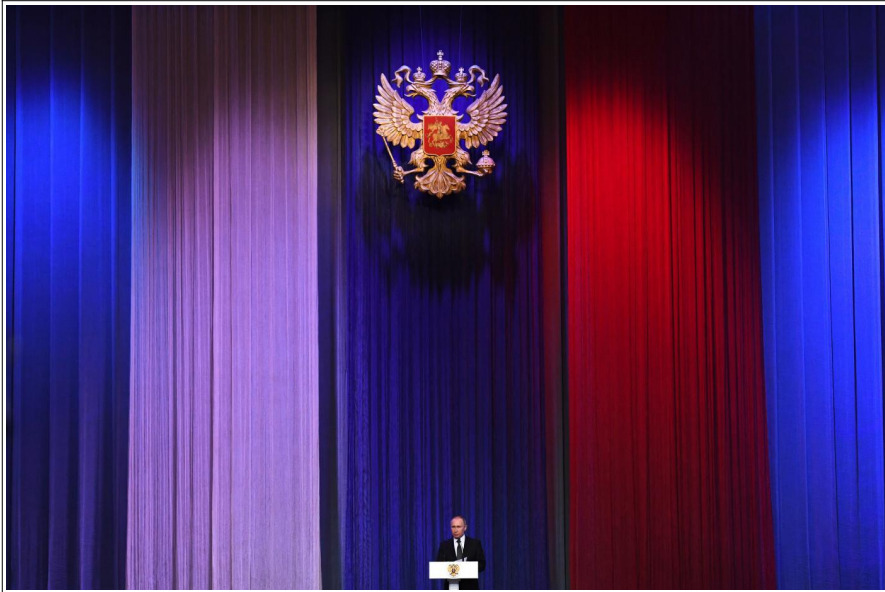
**Why the Term Shouldn't Apply to Today's Great-Power Tensions**

*Odd Arne Westad*

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# Introduction

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REUTERS

On March 18, 2018, Vladimir Putin was elected to his fourth term as Russia’s president, a position he can hold until at least 2024—and possibly beyond that, if he finds a way to circumvent the constitution. During the campaign, Putin stressed to Russians that he was just the kind of strong leader who could, as his supporters often put it, “raise Russia off its knees,” and he spent much of his time bashing his critics in the West, particularly in the United States. Putin’s hostility toward the West has been met in kind. In fact, so concerned have Westerners grown with his political meddling, regional aggression, and general efforts to play international spoiler that many of them contend we are entering a new Cold War.

Are we? To answer that question, we’ve put together this special collection of essays, featuring not only contemporary

takes on that issue but also some of the most important Foreign Affairs analyses from the past seven decades. Many of these pieces had a decisive influence on how the Cold War was waged; all of them provide valuable insight into how we've gotten to where we are now.

We begin with George F. Kennan's 1947 article, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," published under the pseudonym Mr. X—a seminal document of Cold War U.S. foreign policy. In 1953, Robert Oppenheimer, father of the atomic bomb, reflected on the arms race that was unfolding before him. By 1959, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev was advocating in the pages of Foreign Affairs for nations with different governing systems to find a way to coexist peacefully. That same year, Henry Kissinger, still in the early stages of his career, warned that in the search for a settlement with the Soviet Union, the United States must not lose sight of its strategic goals. His counterpart in the Democratic Party, Zbigniew Brzezinski, laid out a plan in 1961 for exacerbating splits within the Soviet camp.

In 1972, as superpower tensions eased with détente, Kennan returned to the pages of Foreign Affairs (this time under his own byline) to declare the problem of nuclear weapons "more serious and more urgently in need of solution than it was 25 years ago." But even as ill will rose again in the 1980s, Thomas C. Schelling, pondering the failure of arms control, noted that he had "no reason to believe . . . that the threat of nuclear war is more ominous today than it has been for many years."

Then came the collapse of the Soviet Union. In the late 1980s and 1990s, leading scholars, policymakers, and journalists—including Jeane Kirkpatrick, McGeorge Bundy, John Lewis Gaddis, Graham Allison, Robert Blackwill, Philip Zelikow, and David Remnick—looked back at the Cold War's course and considered what it meant for Russia's evolution.

They wrote about how the West should engage with the new Russia, the failures of Boris Yeltsin's presidency, and the ongoing dangers of nuclear proliferation.

More recently, top experts have come to Foreign Affairs to take stock of growing tension between the United States and Putin's Russia. Blackwill and Philip Gordon argued that with Russia's interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential election, it was time to once again "contain" the country. Emma Ashford, on the other hand, mulled whether such an adversarial stance would even work with Moscow, noting that "confrontation remains the path of least resistance." And Odd Arne Westad, in examining the Cold War analogy directly, concluded that such comparisons "make no sense." The new era "may turn out to be conflict-ridden and confrontational," he argued, but it is no Cold War.

With Putin entering yet another presidential term, the course of U.S.-Russian relations will have enormous consequences for Russia, for America, and for the world. Read this special Foreign Affairs anthology to understand the Cold War's past and what it means for the future.

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# The Sources of Soviet Conduct

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"X" (*George F. Kennan*)



*Soviet tanks face U.S. tanks at Checkpoint Charlie, October 27, 1961*

The political personality of Soviet power as we know it today is the product of ideology and circumstances: ideology inherited by the present Soviet leaders from the movement in which they had their political origin, and circumstances of the power which they now have exercised for nearly three decades in Russia. There can be few tasks of psychological analysis more difficult than to try to trace the interaction of these two forces and the relative role of each in the

determination of official Soviet conduct. Yet the attempt must be made if that conduct is to be understood and effectively countered.

It is difficult to summarize the set of ideological concepts with which the Soviet leaders came into power. Marxian ideology, in its Russian-Communist projection, has always been in process of subtle evolution. The materials on which it bases itself are extensive and complex. But the outstanding features of Communist thought as it existed in 1916 may perhaps be summarized as follows: (a) that the central factor in the life of man, the factor which determines the character of public life and the "physiognomy of society," is the system by which material goods are produced and exchanged; (b) that the capitalist system of production is a nefarious one which inevitably leads to the exploitation of the working class by the capital-owning class and is incapable of developing adequately the economic resources of society or of distributing fairly the material goods produced by human labor; (c) that capitalism contains the seeds of its own destruction and must, in view of the inability of the capital-owning class to adjust itself to economic change, result eventually and inescapably in a revolutionary transfer of power to the working class; and (d) that imperialism, the final phase of capitalism, leads directly to war and revolution.

The rest may be outlined in Lenin's own words: "Unevenness of economic and political development is the inflexible law of capitalism. It follows from this that the victory of Socialism may come originally in a few capitalist countries or even in a single capitalist country. The victorious proletariat of that country, having expropriated the capitalists and having organized Socialist production at home, would rise against the remaining capitalist world, drawing to itself in the process the oppressed classes of other countries." [see endnote 1] It must be noted that there was no assumption that capitalism would perish without proletarian revolution. A final push was

needed from a revolutionary proletariat movement in order to tip over the tottering structure. But it was regarded as inevitable that sooner or later that push be given.

For 50 years prior to the outbreak of the Revolution, this pattern of thought had exercised great fascination for the members of the Russian revolutionary movement. Frustrated, discontented, hopeless of finding self-expression -- or too impatient to seek it -- in the confining limits of the Tsarist political system, yet lacking wide popular support for their choice of bloody revolution as a means of social betterment, these revolutionists found in Marxist theory a highly convenient rationalization for their own instinctive desires. It afforded pseudo-scientific justification for their impatience, for their categorical denial of all value in the Tsarist system, for their yearning for power and revenge and for their inclination to cut corners in the pursuit of it. It is therefore no wonder that they had come to believe implicitly in the truth and soundness of the Marxian-Leninist teachings, so congenial to their own impulses and emotions. Their sincerity need not be impugned. This is a phenomenon as old as human nature itself. It has never been more aptly described than by Edward Gibbon, who wrote in *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*: "From enthusiasm to imposture the step is perilous and slippery; the demon of Socrates affords a memorable instance how a wise man may deceive himself, how a good man may deceive others, how the conscience may slumber in a mixed and middle state between self-illusion and voluntary fraud." And it was with this set of conceptions that the members of the Bolshevik Party entered into power.

Now it must be noted that through all the years of preparation for revolution, the attention of these men, as indeed of Marx himself, had been centered less on the future form which Socialism [see endnote 2] would take than on the necessary overthrow of rival power which, in their view, had to precede the introduction of Socialism. Their views,

therefore, on the positive program to be put into effect, once power was attained, were for the most part nebulous, visionary and impractical. Beyond the nationalization of industry and the expropriation of large private capital holdings there was no agreed program. The treatment of the peasantry, which according to the Marxist formulation was not of the proletariat, had always been a vague spot in the pattern of Communist thought; and it remained an object of controversy and vacillation for the first ten years of Communist power.

The circumstances of the immediate post-revolution period -- the existence in Russia of civil war and foreign intervention, together with the obvious fact that the Communists represented only a tiny minority of the Russian people -- made the establishment of dictatorial power a necessity. The experiment with "war Communism" and the abrupt attempt to eliminate private production and trade had unfortunate economic consequences and caused further bitterness against the new revolutionary regime. While the temporary relaxation of the effort to communize Russia, represented by the New Economic Policy, alleviated some of this economic distress and thereby served its purpose, it also made it evident that the "capitalistic sector of society" was still prepared to profit at once from any relaxation of governmental pressure, and would, if permitted to continue to exist, always constitute a powerful opposing element to the Soviet regime and a serious rival for influence in the country. Somewhat the same situation prevailed with respect to the individual peasant who, in his own small way, was also a private producer.

Lenin, had he lived, might have proved a great enough man to reconcile these conflicting forces to the ultimate benefit of Russian society, though this is questionable. But be that as it may, Stalin, and those whom he led in the struggle for succession to Lenin's position of leadership, were not the men to tolerate rival political forces in the sphere of power which

they coveted. Their sense of insecurity was too great. Their particular brand of fanaticism, unmodified by any of the Anglo-Saxon traditions of compromise, was too fierce and too jealous to envisage any permanent sharing of power. From the Russian-Asiatic world out of which they had emerged they carried with them a skepticism as to the possibilities of permanent and peaceful coexistence of rival forces. Easily persuaded of their own doctrinaire "rightness," they insisted on the submission or destruction of all competing power. Outside of the Communist Party, Russian society was to have no rigidity. There were to be no forms of collective human activity or association which would not be dominated by the Party. No other force in Russian society was to be permitted to achieve vitality or integrity. Only the Party was to have structure. All else was to be an amorphous mass.

And within the Party the same principle was to apply. The mass of Party members might go through the motions of election, deliberation, decision and action; but in these motions they were to be animated not by their own individual wills but by the awesome breath of the Party leadership and the over-brooding presence of "the word."

Let it be stressed again that subjectively these men probably did not seek absolutism for its own sake. They doubtless believed -- and found it easy to believe -- that they alone knew what was good for society and that they would accomplish that good once their power was secure and unchallengeable. But in seeking that security of their own rule they were prepared to recognize no restrictions, either of God or man, on the character of their methods. And until such time as that security might be achieved, they placed far down on their scale of operational priorities the comforts and happiness of the peoples entrusted to their care.

Now the outstanding circumstance concerning the Soviet regime is that down to the present day this process of

political consolidation has never been completed and the men in the Kremlin have continued to be predominantly absorbed with the struggle to secure and make absolute the power which they seized in November 1917. They have endeavored to secure it primarily against forces at home, within Soviet society itself. But they have also endeavored to secure it against the outside world. For ideology, as we have seen, taught them that the outside world was hostile and that it was their duty eventually to overthrow the political forces beyond their borders. The powerful hands of Russian history and tradition reached up to sustain them in this feeling. Finally, their own aggressive intransigence with respect to the outside world began to find its own reaction; and they were soon forced, to use another Gibbonesque phrase, "to chastise the contumacy" which they themselves had provoked. It is an undeniable privilege of every man to prove himself right in the thesis that the world is his enemy; for if he reiterates it frequently enough and makes it the background of his conduct he is bound eventually to be right.

Now it lies in the nature of the mental world of the Soviet leaders, as well as in the character of their ideology, that no opposition to them can be officially recognized as having any merit or justification whatsoever. Such opposition can flow, in theory, only from the hostile and incorrigible forces of dying capitalism. As long as remnants of capitalism were officially recognized as existing in Russia, it was possible to place on them, as an internal element, part of the blame for the maintenance of a dictatorial form of society. But as these remnants were liquidated, little by little, this justification fell away; and when it was indicated officially that they had been finally destroyed, it disappeared altogether. And this fact created one of the most basic of the compulsions which came to act upon the Soviet regime: since capitalism no longer existed in Russia and since it could not be admitted that there could be serious or widespread opposition to the Kremlin

springing spontaneously from the liberated masses under its authority, it became necessary to justify the retention of the dictatorship by stressing the menace of capitalism abroad.

This began at an early date. In 1924 Stalin specifically defended the retention of the "organs of suppression," meaning, among others, the army and the secret police, on the ground that "as long as there is a capitalist encirclement there will be danger of intervention with all the consequences that flow from that danger." In accordance with that theory, and from that time on, all internal opposition forces in Russia have consistently been portrayed as the agents of foreign forces of reaction antagonistic to Soviet power.

By the same token, tremendous emphasis has been placed on the original Communist thesis of a basic antagonism between the capitalist and Socialist worlds. It is clear, from many indications, that this emphasis is not founded in reality. The real facts concerning it have been confused by the existence abroad of genuine resentment provoked by Soviet philosophy and tactics and occasionally by the existence of great centers of military power, notably the Nazi regime in Germany and the Japanese Government of the late 1930s, which did indeed have aggressive designs against the Soviet Union. But there is ample evidence that the stress laid in Moscow on the menace confronting Soviet society from the world outside its borders is founded not in the realities of foreign antagonism but in the necessity of explaining away the maintenance of dictatorial authority at home.

Now the maintenance of this pattern of Soviet power, namely, the pursuit of unlimited authority domestically, accompanied by the cultivation of the semi-myth of implacable foreign hostility, has gone far to shape the actual machinery of Soviet power as we know it today. Internal organs of administration which did not serve this purpose withered on the vine. Organs which did serve this purpose became vastly swollen. The

security of Soviet power came to rest on the iron discipline of the Party, on the severity and ubiquity of the secret police, and on the uncompromising economic monopolism of the state. The "organs of suppression," in which the Soviet leaders had sought security from rival forces, became in large measure the masters of those whom they were designed to serve. Today the major part of the structure of Soviet power is committed to the perfection of the dictatorship and to the maintenance of the concept of Russia as in a state of siege, with the enemy lowering beyond the walls. And the millions of human beings who form that part of the structure of power must defend at all costs this concept of Russia's position, for without it they are themselves superfluous.

As things stand today, the rulers can no longer dream of parting with these organs of suppression. The quest for absolute power, pursued now for nearly three decades with a ruthlessness unparalleled (in scope at least) in modern times, has again produced internally, as it did externally, its own reaction. The excesses of the police apparatus have fanned the potential opposition to the regime into something far greater and more dangerous than it could have been before those excesses began.

But least of all can the rulers dispense with the fiction by which the maintenance of dictatorial power has been defended. For this fiction has been canonized in Soviet philosophy by the excesses already committed in its name; and it is now anchored in the Soviet structure of thought by bonds far greater than those of mere ideology.

## II

So much for the historical background. What does it spell in terms of the political personality of Soviet power as we know it today?

Of the original ideology, nothing has been officially junked. Belief is maintained in the basic badness of capitalism, in the inevitability of its destruction, in the obligation of the proletariat to assist in that destruction and to take power into its own hands. But stress has come to be laid primarily on those concepts which relate most specifically to the Soviet regime itself: to its position as the sole truly Socialist regime in a dark and misguided world, and to the relationships of power within it.

The first of these concepts is that of the innate antagonism between capitalism and Socialism. We have seen how deeply that concept has become imbedded in foundations of Soviet power. It has profound implications for Russia's conduct as a member of international society. It means that there can never be on Moscow's side any sincere assumption of a community of aims between the Soviet Union and powers which are regarded as capitalist. It must invariably be assumed in Moscow that the aims of the capitalist world are antagonistic to the Soviet regime, and therefore to the interests of the peoples it controls. If the Soviet government occasionally sets its signature to documents which would indicate the contrary, this is to be regarded as a tactical maneuver permissible in dealing with the enemy (who is without honor) and should be taken in the spirit of caveat emptor. Basically, the antagonism remains. It is postulated. And from it flow many of the phenomena which we find disturbing in the Kremlin's conduct of foreign policy: the secretiveness, the lack of frankness, the duplicity, the wary suspiciousness and the basic unfriendliness of purpose. These phenomena are there to stay, for the foreseeable future. There can be variations of degree and of emphasis. When there is something the Russians want from us, one or the other of these features of their policy may be thrust temporarily into the background; and when that happens there will always be Americans who will leap forward with

gleeful announcements that "the Russians have changed," and some who will even try to take credit for having brought about such "changes." But we should not be misled by tactical maneuvers. These characteristics of Soviet policy, like the postulate from which they flow, are basic to the internal nature of Soviet power, and will be with us, whether in the foreground or the background, until the internal nature of Soviet power is changed.

This means that we are going to continue for a long time to find the Russians difficult to deal with. It does not mean that they should be considered as embarked upon a do-or-die program to overthrow our society by a given date. The theory of the inevitability of the eventual fall of capitalism has the fortunate connotation that there is no hurry about it. The forces of progress can take their time in preparing the final coup de grâce. Meanwhile, what is vital is that the "Socialist fatherland" -- that oasis of power which has been already won for Socialism in the person of the Soviet Union -- should be cherished and defended by all good Communists at home and abroad, its fortunes promoted, its enemies badgered and confounded. The promotion of premature, "adventuristic" revolutionary projects abroad which might embarrass Soviet power in any way would be an inexcusable, even a counterrevolutionary act. The cause of Socialism is the support and promotion of Soviet power, as defined in Moscow.

This brings us to the second of the concepts important to contemporary Soviet outlook. That is the infallibility of the Kremlin. The Soviet concept of power, which permits no focal points of organization outside the Party itself, requires that the Party leadership remain in theory the sole repository of truth. For if truth were to be found elsewhere, there would be justification for its expression in organized activity. But it is precisely that which the Kremlin cannot and will not permit.

The leadership of the Communist Party is therefore always right, and has been always right ever since in 1929 Stalin formalized his personal power by announcing that decisions of the Politburo were being taken unanimously.

On the principle of infallibility there rests the iron discipline of the Communist Party. In fact, the two concepts are mutually self-supporting. Perfect discipline requires recognition of infallibility. Infallibility requires the observance of discipline. And the two together go far to determine the behaviorism of the entire Soviet apparatus of power. But their effect cannot be understood unless a third factor be taken into account: namely, the fact that the leadership is at liberty to put forward for tactical purposes any particular thesis which it finds useful to the cause at any particular moment and to require the faithful and unquestioning acceptance of the thesis by the members of the movement as a whole. This means that truth is not a constant but is actually created, for all intents and purposes, by the Soviet leaders themselves. It may vary from week to week, month to month. It is nothing absolute and immutable -- nothing which flows from objective reality. It is only the most recent manifestation of the wisdom of those in whom the ultimate wisdom is supposed to reside, because they represent the logic of history. The accumulative effect of these factors is to give to the whole subordinate apparatus of Soviet power an unshakable stubbornness and steadfastness in its orientation. This orientation can be changed at will by the Kremlin but by no other power. Once a given party line has been laid down on a given issue of current policy, the whole Soviet governmental machine, including the mechanism of diplomacy, moves inexorably along the prescribed path, like a persistent toy automobile wound up and headed in a given direction, stopping only when it meets with some unanswerable force. The individuals who are the components of this machine are unamenable to argument or reason which comes to them from outside

sources. Their whole training has taught them to mistrust and discount the glib persuasiveness of the outside world. Like the white dog before the phonograph, they hear only the "master's voice." And if they are to be called off from the purposes last dictated to them, it is the master who must call them off. Thus the foreign representative cannot hope that his words will make any impression on them. The most that he can hope is that they will be transmitted to those at the top, who are capable of changing the party line. But even those are not likely to be swayed by any normal logic in the words of the bourgeois representative. Since there can be no appeal to common purposes, there can be no appeal to common mental approaches. For this reason, facts speak louder than words to the ears of the Kremlin; and words carry the greatest weight when they have the ring of reflecting, or being backed up by, facts of unchallengeable validity.

But we have seen that the Kremlin is under no ideological compulsion to accomplish its purposes in a hurry. Like the Church, it is dealing in ideological concepts which are of long-term validity, and it can afford to be patient. It has no right to risk the existing achievements of the revolution for the sake of vain baubles of the future. The very teachings of Lenin himself require great caution and flexibility in the pursuit of Communist purposes. Again, these precepts are fortified by the lessons of Russian history: of centuries of obscure battles between nomadic forces over the stretches of a vast unfortified plain. Here caution, circumspection, flexibility and deception are the valuable qualities; and their value finds natural appreciation in the Russian or the oriental mind. Thus the Kremlin has no compunction about retreating in the face of superior force. And being under the compulsion of no timetable, it does not get panicky under the necessity for such retreat. Its political action is a fluid stream which moves constantly, wherever it is permitted to move, toward a given goal. Its main concern is to make sure that it has filled every

nook and cranny available to it in the basin of world power. But if it finds unassailable barriers in its path, it accepts these philosophically and accommodates itself to them. The main thing is that there should always be pressure, unceasing constant pressure, toward the desired goal. There is no trace of any feeling in Soviet psychology that that goal must be reached at any given time.

These considerations make Soviet diplomacy at once easier and more difficult to deal with than the diplomacy of individual aggressive leaders like Napoleon and Hitler. On the one hand it is more sensitive to contrary force, more ready to yield on individual sectors of the diplomatic front when that force is felt to be too strong, and thus more rational in the logic and rhetoric of power. On the other hand it cannot be easily defeated or discouraged by a single victory on the part of its opponents. And the patient persistence by which it is animated means that it can be effectively countered not by sporadic acts which represent the momentary whims of democratic opinion but only by intelligent long-range policies on the part of Russia's adversaries -- policies no less steady in their purpose, and no less variegated and resourceful in their application, than those of the Soviet Union itself.

In these circumstances it is clear that the main element of any United States policy toward the Soviet Union must be that of a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies. It is important to note, however, that such a policy has nothing to do with outward histrionics: with threats or blustering or superfluous gestures of outward "toughness." While the Kremlin is basically flexible in its reaction to political realities, it is by no means unamenable to considerations of prestige. Like almost any other government, it can be placed by tactless and threatening gestures in a position where it cannot afford to yield even though this might be dictated by its sense of realism. The Russian leaders are keen judges of human

psychology, and as such they are highly conscious that loss of temper and of self-control is never a source of strength in political affairs. They are quick to exploit such evidences of weakness. For these reasons, it is a sine qua non of successful dealing with Russia that the foreign government in question should remain at all times cool and collected and that its demands on Russian policy should be put forward in such a manner as to leave the way open for a compliance not too detrimental to Russian prestige.

### III

In the light of the above, it will be clearly seen that the Soviet pressure against the free institutions of the Western world is something that can be contained by the adroit and vigilant application of counterforce at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points, corresponding to the shifts and maneuvers of Soviet policy, but which cannot be charmed or talked out of existence. The Russians look forward to a duel of infinite duration, and they see that already they have scored great successes. It must be borne in mind that there was a time when the Communist Party represented far more of a minority in the sphere of Russian national life than Soviet power today represents in the world community.

But if ideology convinces the rulers of Russia that truth is on their side and that they can therefore afford to wait, those of us on whom that ideology has no claim are free to examine objectively the validity of that premise. The Soviet thesis not only implies complete lack of control by the west over its own economic destiny, it likewise assumes Russian unity, discipline and patience over an infinite period. Let us bring this apocalyptic vision down to earth, and suppose that the western world finds the strength and resourcefulness to contain Soviet power over a period of ten to fifteen years. What does that spell for Russia itself?

The Soviet leaders, taking advantage of the contributions of modern technique to the arts of despotism, have solved the question of obedience within the confines of their power. Few challenge their authority; and even those who do are unable to make that challenge valid as against the organs of suppression of the state.

The Kremlin has also proved able to accomplish its purpose of building up in Russia, regardless of the interests of the inhabitants, an industrial foundation of heavy metallurgy, which is, to be sure, not yet complete but which is nevertheless continuing to grow and is approaching those of the other major industrial countries. All of this, however, both the maintenance of internal political security and the building of heavy industry, has been carried out at a terrible cost in human life and in human hopes and energies. It has necessitated the use of forced labor on a scale unprecedented in modern times under conditions of peace. It has involved the neglect or abuse of other phases of Soviet economic life, particularly agriculture, consumers' goods production, housing and transportation.

To all that, the war has added its tremendous toll of destruction, death and human exhaustion. In consequence of this, we have in Russia today a population which is physically and spiritually tired. The mass of the people are disillusioned, skeptical and no longer as accessible as they once were to the magical attraction which Soviet power still radiates to its followers abroad. The avidity with which people seized upon the slight respite accorded to the Church for tactical reasons during the war was eloquent testimony to the fact that their capacity for faith and devotion found little expression in the purposes of the regime.

In these circumstances, there are limits to the physical and nervous strength of people themselves. These limits are absolute ones, and are binding even for the cruelest

dictatorship, because beyond them people cannot be driven. The forced labor camps and the other agencies of constraint provide temporary means of compelling people to work longer hours than their own volition or mere economic pressure would dictate; but if people survive them at all they become old before their time and must be considered as human casualties to the demands of dictatorship. In either case their best powers are no longer available to society and can no longer be enlisted in the service of the state.

Here only the younger generation can help. The younger generation, despite all vicissitudes and sufferings, is numerous and vigorous; and the Russians are a talented people. But it still remains to be seen what will be the effects on mature performance of the abnormal emotional strains of childhood which Soviet dictatorship created and which were enormously increased by the war. Such things as normal security and placidity of home environment have practically ceased to exist in the Soviet Union outside of the most remote farms and villages. And observers are not yet sure whether that is not going to leave its mark on the overall capacity of the generation now coming into maturity.

In addition to this, we have the fact that Soviet economic development, while it can list certain formidable achievements, has been precariously spotty and uneven. Russian Communists who speak of the "uneven development of capitalism" should blush at the contemplation of their own national economy. Here certain branches of economic life, such as the metallurgical and machine industries, have been pushed out of all proportion to other sectors of economy. Here is a nation striving to become in a short period one of the great industrial nations of the world while it still has no highway network worthy of the name and only a relatively primitive network of railways. Much has been done to increase efficiency of labor and to teach primitive peasants something about the operation of machines. But maintenance

is still a crying deficiency of all Soviet economy. Construction is hasty and poor in quality. Depreciation must be enormous. And in vast sectors of economic life it has not yet been possible to instill into labor anything like that general culture of production and technical self-respect which characterizes the skilled worker of the west.

It is difficult to see how these deficiencies can be corrected at an early date by a tired and dispirited population working largely under the shadow of fear and compulsion. And as long as they are not overcome, Russia will remain economically a vulnerable, and in a certain sense an impotent, nation, capable of exporting its enthusiasm and of radiating the strange charm of its primitive political vitality but unable to back up those articles of export by the real evidences of material power and prosperity.

Meanwhile, a great uncertainty hangs over the political life of the Soviet Union. That is the uncertainty involved in the transfer of power from one individual or group of individuals to others.

This is, of course, outstandingly the problem of the personal position of Stalin. We must remember that his succession to Lenin's pinnacle of preeminence in the Communist movement was the only such transfer of individual authority which the Soviet Union has experienced. That transfer took 12 years to consolidate. It cost the lives of millions of people and shook the state to its foundations. The attendant tremors were felt all through the international revolutionary movement, to the disadvantage of the Kremlin itself.

It is always possible that another transfer of preeminent power may take place quietly and inconspicuously, with no repercussions anywhere. But again, it is possible that the questions involved may unleash, to use some of Lenin's words, one of those "incredibly swift transitions" from "delicate

deceit" to "wild violence" which characterize Russian history, and may shake Soviet power to its foundations.

But this is not only a question of Stalin himself. There has been, since 1938, a dangerous congealment of political life in the higher circles of Soviet power. The All-Union Congress of Soviets, in theory the supreme body of the Party, is supposed to meet not less often than once in three years. It will soon be eight full years since its last meeting. During this period membership in the Party has numerically doubled. Party mortality during the war was enormous; and today well over half of the Party members are persons who have entered since the last Party congress was held. Meanwhile, the same small group of men has carried on at the top through an amazing series of national vicissitudes. Surely there is some reason why the experiences of the war brought basic political changes to every one of the great governments of the west. Surely the causes of that phenomenon are basic enough to be present somewhere in the obscurity of Soviet political life, as well. And yet no recognition has been given to these causes in Russia.

It must be surmised from this that even within so highly disciplined an organization as the Communist Party there must be a growing divergence in age, outlook and interest between the great mass of Party members, only so recently recruited into the movement, and the little self-perpetuating clique of men at the top, whom most of these Party members have never met, with whom they have never conversed, and with whom they can have no political intimacy.

Who can say whether, in these circumstances, the eventual rejuvenation of the higher spheres of authority (which can only be a matter of time) can take place smoothly and peacefully, or whether rivals in the quest for higher power will not eventually reach down into these politically immature and inexperienced masses in order to find support for their

respective claims? If this were ever to happen, strange consequences could flow for the Communist Party: for the membership at large has been exercised only in the practices of iron discipline and obedience and not in the arts of compromise and accommodation. And if disunity were ever to seize and paralyze the Party, the chaos and weakness of Russian society would be revealed in forms beyond description. For we have seen that Soviet power is only a crust concealing an amorphous mass of human beings among whom no independent organizational structure is tolerated. In Russia there is not even such a thing as local government. The present generation of Russians have never known spontaneity of collective action. If, consequently, anything were ever to occur to disrupt the unity and efficacy of the Party as a political instrument, Soviet Russia might be changed overnight from one of the strongest to one of the weakest and most pitiable of national societies.

Thus the future of Soviet power may not be by any means as secure as Russian capacity for self-delusion would make it appear to the men in the Kremlin. That they can keep power themselves, they have demonstrated. That they can quietly and easily turn it over to others remains to be proved. Meanwhile, the hardships of their rule and the vicissitudes of international life have taken a heavy toll of the strength and hopes of the great people on whom their power rests. It is curious to note that the ideological power of Soviet authority is strongest today in areas beyond the frontiers of Russia, beyond the reach of its police power. This phenomenon brings to mind a comparison used by Thomas Mann in his great novel *Buddenbrooks*. Observing that human institutions often show the greatest outward brilliance at a moment when inner decay is in reality farthest advanced, he compared the Buddenbrook family, in the days of its greatest glamour, to one of those stars whose light shines most brightly on this world when in reality it has long since ceased to exist. And

who can say with assurance that the strong light still cast by the Kremlin on the dissatisfied peoples of the western world is not the powerful afterglow of a constellation which is in actuality on the wane? This cannot be proved. And it cannot be disproved. But the possibility remains (and in the opinion of this writer it is a strong one) that Soviet power, like the capitalist world of its conception, bears within it the seeds of its own decay, and that the sprouting of these seeds is well advanced.

#### IV

It is clear that the United States cannot expect in the foreseeable future to enjoy political intimacy with the Soviet regime. It must continue to regard the Soviet Union as a rival, not a partner, in the political arena. It must continue to expect that Soviet policies will reflect no abstract love of peace and stability, no real faith in the possibility of a permanent happy coexistence of the Socialist and capitalist worlds, but rather a cautious, persistent pressure toward the disruption and weakening of all rival influence and rival power.

Balanced against this are the facts that Russia, as opposed to the western world in general, is still by far the weaker party, that Soviet policy is highly flexible, and that Soviet society may well contain deficiencies which will eventually weaken its own total potential. This would of itself warrant the United States entering with reasonable confidence upon a policy of firm containment, designed to confront the Russians with unalterable counterforce at every point where they show signs of encroaching upon the interest of a peaceful and stable world.

But in actuality the possibilities for American policy are by no means limited to holding the line and hoping for the best. It is entirely possible for the United States to influence by its

actions the internal developments, both within Russia and throughout the international Communist movement, by which Russian policy is largely determined. This is not only a question of the modest measure of informational activity which this government can conduct in the Soviet Union and elsewhere, although that, too, is important. It is rather a question of the degree to which the United States can create among the peoples of the world generally the impression of a country which knows what it wants, which is coping successfully with the problems of its internal life and with the responsibilities of a world power, and which has a spiritual vitality capable of holding its own among the major ideological currents of the time. To the extent that such an impression can be created and maintained, the aims of Russian Communism must appear sterile and quixotic, the hopes and enthusiasm of Moscow's supporters must wane, and added strain must be imposed on the Kremlin's foreign policies. For the palsied decrepitude of the capitalist world is the keystone of Communist philosophy. Even the failure of the United States to experience the early economic depression which the ravens of the Red Square have been predicting with such complacent confidence since hostilities ceased would have deep and important repercussions throughout the Communist world.

By the same token, exhibitions of indecision, disunity and internal disintegration within this country have an exhilarating effect on the whole Communist movement. At each evidence of these tendencies, a thrill of hope and excitement goes through the Communist world; a new jauntiness can be noted in the Moscow tread; new groups of foreign supporters climb on to what they can only view as the bandwagon of international politics; and Russian pressure increases all along the line in international affairs.

It would be an exaggeration to say that American behavior unassisted and alone could exercise a power of life and death

over the Communist movement and bring about the early fall of Soviet power in Russia. But the United States has it in its power to increase enormously the strains under which Soviet policy must operate, to force upon the Kremlin a far greater degree of moderation and circumspection than it has had to observe in recent years, and in this way to promote tendencies which must eventually find their outlet in either the breakup or the gradual mellowing of Soviet power. For no mystical, messianic movement -- and particularly not that of the Kremlin -- can face frustration indefinitely without eventually adjusting itself in one way or another to the logic of that state of affairs.

Thus the decision will really fall in large measure on this country itself. The issue of Soviet-American relations is in essence a test of the overall worth of the United States as a nation among nations. To avoid destruction the United States need only measure up to its own best traditions and prove itself worthy of preservation as a great nation.

Surely, there was never a fairer test of national quality than this. In the light of these circumstances, the thoughtful observer of Russian-American relations will find no cause for complaint in the Kremlin's challenge to American society. He will rather experience a certain gratitude to a Providence which, by providing the American people with this implacable challenge, has made their entire security as a nation dependent on their pulling themselves together and accepting the responsibilities of moral and political leadership that history plainly intended them to bear.

[1] "Concerning the Slogans of the United States of Europe," August 1915. Official Soviet edition of Lenin's works

[2] Here and elsewhere in this paper "Socialism refers to Marxist or Leninist Communism, not to liberal Socialism of the Second International variety.



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# Political Ideas in the Twentieth Century

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*Isaiah Berlin*



*Leon Trotsky, Vladimir Lenin, and Lev Kamenev, 1920.*

Anyone desiring a quiet life has done badly to be born in the twentieth century.--L. Trotsky.

HISTORIANS of ideas, however scrupulous and minute they may feel it necessary to be, cannot avoid perceiving their material in terms of some kind of pattern. To say this is not necessarily to subscribe to any form of Hegelian dogma about the dominant rôle of laws and metaphysical principles in history -- a view increasingly influential in our time -- according to which there is some single "explanation" of the

order and attributes of persons, things and events. Usually this consists in the advocacy of some fundamental "category" or "principle" which claims to act as an infallible guide both to the past and to the future, a magic lens revealing "inner," inexorable, all-pervasive historical laws, invisible to the naked eye of the mere recorder of events, but capable, when understood, of giving the historian a unique sense of certainty -- certainty not only of what in fact occurred, but of the reason why it could not have occurred otherwise, affording a secure knowledge which the mere empirical investigator, with his collections of data, his insecure structure of painstakingly accumulated evidence, his tentative approximations and perpetual liability to error and reassessment, can never hope to attain.

The notion of "laws" of this kind is rightly condemned as nothing but a metaphysical mystery; but the contrary notion of bare facts -- facts which are nothing but facts, hard, inescapable, untainted by interpretation or arrangement in man-made patterns -- is equally mythological. To comprehend and contrast and classify and arrange, to see in patterns of lesser or greater complexity, is not a peculiar kind of thinking, it is thinking itself. And we accuse historians of exaggeration, distortion, ignorance, bias or departure from the facts, not because they select, compare and set forth in a context and order which are in part, at least, of their own choosing, in part conditioned by the circumstances of their material and social environment or their character or purpose -- we accuse them only when the result deviates too far, contrasts too harshly with the accepted canons of verification and interpretation which belong to their own time and place and society. These canons and methods and categories are those of the normal "common sense" outlook of a given period and culture, at their best a sharpened, highly-trained form of this outlook, which takes cognizance of all the relevant scientific techniques available, but is itself not one of them.

All the criticisms directed against this or that writer for an excess of bias or fantasy, or too weak a sense of evidence, or too limited a perception of connections between events, are based not upon some absolute standard of truth, of strict "factuality," of a rigid adherence to a permanently fixed ideal method of "scientifically" discovering the past "wie es eigentlich gewesen ist," in contrast with mere theories about it, for there is in the last analysis no meaning in the notion of "objective" criticism in this timeless sense. They rest rather on the most refined concept of accuracy and objectivity and scrupulous "fidelity to the facts" which obtain in a given society at a given period, within the subject in question.

When the great Romantic revolution in the writing of history transferred emphasis from the achievements of individuals to the growth and influence of institutions conceived in much less personal terms, the degree of "fidelity to the facts" was not thereby automatically altered. The new kind of history, the account of the development, let us say, of public and private law, or government, or literature, or social habits during some given period of time, was not necessarily less or more accurate or "objective" than earlier accounts of the acts and fate of Alcibiades or Marcus Aurelius or Calvin or Louis XIV. Thucydides or Tacitus or Voltaire was not subjective or vague or fanciful in a sense in which Ranke or Savigny or Michelet was not. The new history was merely written from what is nowadays called a "different angle." The kinds of fact the new history was intended to record were different, the emphasis was different, a shift of interest had occurred in the questions asked and consequently in the methods used. The concepts and terminology reflect an altered view of what constitutes evidence and therefore, in the end, of what are the "facts." When the "romances" of chroniclers were criticized by "scientific" historians, at least part of the implied reproach lay in the alleged discrepancies in the work of the older writers from the findings of the most admired and trusted sciences of

a later period; and these were in their turn due to the change in the prevalent conceptions of the patterns of human development -- to the change in the models in terms of which the past was perceived, those artistic, theological, mechanical, biological or psychological models which were reflected in the fields of inquiry, in the new questions asked and the new types of technique used, giving answers felt to be more interesting or important than those which had become outmoded.

The history of these changes of "models" is to a large degree the history of human thought. The "organic" or the Marxist methods of investigating history certainly owed part of their vogue to the prestige of the particular natural sciences, or the particular artistic techniques, upon whose model they were supposedly or genuinely constructed; the increased interest, for example, both in biology and in music from which many basic metaphors and analogies derived, is relevant to the historical writing of the nineteenth century, as the new interest in physics and mathematics is to the philosophy and history of the eighteenth; and the deflationary methods and ironical temper of the historians who wrote after the war of 1914-18 were conspicuously influenced by -- and accepted in terms of -- the new psychological and sociological techniques which had gained public confidence during this period. The relative proportions of, say, social, economic and political concepts in a once admired historical work throw more light upon the general characteristics of its time and for this reason are a more reliable index to the standards adopted, the questions asked, the respective rôles of "facts" to "interpretation," and, in effect, to the entire social and political outlook of an age, than the distance of the work in question from some imaginary, fixed, unaltering ideal of absolute truth, "factual" or "abstract." It is in terms of whether such shifts in the methods of treating the past or the present or the future, and of the idioms and the catchwords,

the doubts and hopes, fears and exhortations which they expressed, that the development of political ideas -- the conceptual apparatus of a society and of its most gifted and articulate representatives -- can best be judged. No doubt the concepts in terms of which people speak and think are symptoms and effects of other processes, the discovery of which is the task of this or that empirical science. But this does not detract from their importance and paramount interest for those who wish to know what constitutes the conscious experience of the most characteristic men of an age or a society, whatever its causes and whatever its fate. And we are, of course, for obvious reasons of perspective, in a better situation to determine this in the case of past societies than for our own. But the very sense of contrast and dissimilarity with which the past affects us provides the only relevant background against which the features peculiar to our own experience stand out in sufficient relief to be adequately discerned and described.

The student of the political ideas of, for example, the mid-nineteenth century must indeed be blind if he does not, sooner or later, become aware of the profound differences in ideas and terminology, in the general view of things -- the ways in which the elements of experience are conceived to be related to one another -- which divide that not very distant age from our own. He understands neither that time nor his own if he does not perceive the contrast between what was common to Comte and Mill, Mazzini and Michelet, Herzen and Marx, on the one hand, and to Max Weber and William James, Tawney and Beard, Lytton Strachey and Wells, on the other; the continuity of the European intellectual tradition without which no historical understanding at all would be possible is, at shorter range, a succession of specific discontinuities and dissimilarities. Consequently, the remarks which follow deliberately ignore the similarities in favor of the specific differences in political outlook which characterize our

own time, and as far as possible, solely our own.

## II

The two great liberating political movements of the nineteenth century were, as every history book informs us, humanitarian individualism and romantic nationalism. Whatever their differences -- and they were notoriously profound enough to lead to a sharp divergence and ultimate collision of these two ideals -- they had this in common: they believed that the problems both of individuals and of societies could be solved if only the forces of intelligence and of virtue could be made to prevail over ignorance and wickedness. They believed, as against the pessimists and fatalists, both religious and secular, whose voices, audible indeed a good deal earlier, began to sound loudly only toward the end of the century, that all clearly understood questions could be solved by human beings with the moral and intellectual resources at their disposal. No doubt different schools of thought returned different answers to these varying problems; utilitarians said one thing, and neo-feudal romantics -- Tory democrats, Bonapartists, Pan-Germans, Slavophiles -- another. Liberals believed in the unlimited power of education and the power of rational morality to overcome economic misery and inequality. Socialists, on the contrary, believed that without radical alterations in the distribution and control of economic resources no amount of change of heart or mind on the part of individuals could be adequate; or, for that matter, occur at all. Conservatives and Socialists believed in the power and influence of institutions and regarded them as a necessary safeguard against the chaos, injustice and cruelty caused by uncontrolled individualism; anarchists, radicals and liberals looked upon institutions as such with suspicion as being obstructive to the realization of that free (and, in the view of most such thinkers, rational) society which the will of man could both conceive and build, if it were not for the unliquidated residue of ancient abuses (or unreason) upon

which the existing rulers of society -- whether individuals or administrative machines -- leaned so heavily, and of which so many of them indeed were typical expressions.

Arguments about the relative degree of the obligation of the individual to society and vice versa filled the air. It is scarcely necessary to rehearse these familiar questions, which to this day form the staple of discussion in the more conservative institutions of Western learning, to realize that however wide the disagreements about the proper answers to them, the questions themselves were common to liberals and conservatives alike. There were of course even at that time isolated irrationalists -- Stirner, Kierkegaard, in certain moods Carlyle; but in the main all the parties to the great controversies, even Calvinists and ultramontane Catholics, accepted the notion of man as resembling in varying degrees one or the other of two idealized types. Either he is a creature free and naturally good, but hemmed in and frustrated by obsolete or corrupt or sinister institutions masquerading as saviors and protectors and repositories of sacred traditions; or he is a being largely, but not wholly, free, and to a high degree, but not entirely, good, and consequently unable to save himself by his own wholly unaided efforts; and therefore rightly seeking salvation within the great frameworks -- states, churches, unions. For only these great edifices promote solidarity, security and sufficient strength to resist the shallow joys and dangerous, ultimately self-destructive liberties peddled by those conscienceless or self-deceived individualists who in the name of some bloodless intellectual dogma, or noble enthusiasm for an ideal unrelated to human lives, ignore or destroy the rich texture of social life, heavy with treasures from the past -- blind, leaders of the blind, robbing men of their most precious resources, exposing them again to the perils of a life solitary, brutish, nasty and short. Yet there was at least one premise common to the controversy, namely the belief that the problems were real,

that it took men of exceptional training and intelligence to formulate them properly, and men with exceptional grasp of the facts, will power and capacity for coherent thought to find and apply the correct solutions.

These two great currents finally ended in exaggerated and indeed distorted forms as Communism and Fascism -- the first as the treacherous heir of the liberal internationalism of the previous century, the second as the culmination and bankruptcy of the mystical patriotism which animated the national movements of the time. All movements have origins, forerunners, imperceptible beginnings: nor does the twentieth century stand divided from the nineteenth by so universal an explosion as the French Revolution, even in our day the greatest of all historical landmarks. Yet it is a profound fallacy to regard Fascism and Communism as in the main more uncompromising and violent manifestations of an earlier crisis, the culmination of a struggle fully discernible long before. The differences between the political movements of the twentieth century and the nineteenth are very sharp, but they spring from factors whose full force was not properly realized until our century was well under way. For there is a barrier which divides what is unmistakably past and done with from that which most characteristically belongs to our day. The familiarity of this barrier must not blind us to its relative novelty. One of the elements of the new outlook is the notion of unconscious and irrational influences which outweigh the forces of reason; another the notion that answers to problems exist not in rational solutions, but in the removal of the problems themselves by means other than thought and argument. The interplay between the old tradition, which saw history as the battleground between the easily identifiable forces of light and darkness, reason and obscurantism, progress and reaction; or alternatively between spiritualism and empiricism, intuition and scientific method, institutionalism and individualism -- the conflict between this

order and, on the other hand, the new factors violently opposed to the humane psychology of "bourgeois" civilization -- is to a large extent the history of political ideas of our time.

### III

And yet to a casual observer of the politics and the thought of the twentieth century it might at first seem that every idea and movement typical of our time is best understood as a natural development of tendencies already prominent in the nineteenth century. In the case of the growth of international institutions, for instance, this seems a truism. What are the Hague Court, the old League of Nations and its modern successor, the numerous prewar and postwar international agencies and conventions for political, economic, social and humanitarian purposes -- what are they, if not the direct descendants of that liberal internationalism -- Tennyson's "Parliament of Man" -- which was the staple of all progressive thought and action in the nineteenth century, and indeed of much in the century before it? The language of the great founders of European liberalism -- Condorcet, for example, or Helvétius -- does not differ greatly in substance, nor indeed in form, from the most characteristic moments in the speeches of Woodrow Wilson or Thomas Masaryk. European liberalism wears the appearance of a single coherent movement, little altered during almost three centuries, founded upon relatively simple intellectual foundations, laid by Locke or Grotius or even Spinoza; stretching back to Erasmus and Montaigne, the Italian Renaissance, Seneca and the Greeks. In this movement there is a rational answer to every question. Man is, in principle at least, everywhere and in every condition, able, if he wills it, to discover and apply rational solutions to his problems. And these solutions, because they are rational, cannot clash with one another, and will ultimately form a harmonious system in which the truth will prevail, and freedom, happiness and unlimited opportunity for untrammelled self-development will be open to all.

True, the consciousness of history which grew in the nineteenth century modified the severe and simple design of the classical theory as it was conceived in the eighteenth century. Human progress was presently seen to be conditioned by factors of greater complexity than had been conceived of in the springtime of rationalist individualism: education, rationalist propaganda, were perhaps not always, nor everywhere, quite enough. Such factors as the particular and special influences by which various societies were historically shaped -- some due to physical conditions, others to more elusive emotional and what were vaguely classified as "cultural" factors -- were presently allowed to have greater importance than they were accorded in the oversimple scheme of Diderot or Bentham. Education, and all forms of social action, must, it was now thought, be fitted to take account of historical needs which made men and their institutions somewhat less easy to mould into the required pattern than had been too optimistically assumed in earlier and more naïve times.

Nevertheless, the original program continued in its various forms to exercise an almost universal spell. This applied to the Right no less than to the Left. The thinkers of the Right, unless they were concerned solely with obstructing the liberals and their allies, believed and acted upon the belief that, provided no excessive violence was done to slow but certain processes of "natural" development, all might yet be well; the faster must be restricted from pushing aside the slower, and in this way all would arrive in the end. This was the doctrine preached by Bonald early in the century, and it expressed the optimism of even the stoutest believers in original sin. Provided that traditional differences of outlook and social structure were protected from what conservatives were fond of describing as the "unimaginative," "artificial," "mechanical" levelling processes favored by the liberals; provided that the infinity of "intangible" or "historic" or

"natural" or "providential" distinctions (which to them seemed to constitute the essence of fruitful forms of life) were preserved from being transformed into a uniform collection of homogeneous units moving at a pace dictated by some "irrelevant" or "extraneous" authority, contemptuous of prescriptive or traditional rights and habits; provided that adequate safeguards were instituted against too reckless a trampling upon the sacred past -- with these guarantees, rational reforms and changes were allowed to be feasible and even desirable. Given these guarantees, conservatives no less than liberals were prepared to look upon the conscious direction of human affairs by qualified experts with a considerable degree of approval; and not merely by experts, but by a growing number of individuals and groups, drawn from, and representing, wider and wider sections of a society which was progressively becoming more and more enlightened.

This is a mood and attitude common to a wider section of opinion in the later nineteenth century in Europe, and not merely in the West but in the East too, than historians, affected by the political struggles of a later or earlier period, allow us to see. One of the results of it -- in so far as it was a causal factor and not merely a symptom of the process -- was the wide development of political representation in the West whereby in the end, in the succeeding century, all classes of the population began to attain to power, sooner or later, in one country or another. The nineteenth century was full of unrepresented groups engaged in the struggle for self-expression, and later for control. Its representatives counted among them heroes and martyrs, men of the moral and artistic genius whom a genuine struggle of this kind brings forth. The twentieth century, by satisfying much of the social and political hunger of the Victorian period, did indeed witness a striking improvement in the material condition of the majority of the peoples of Western Europe, due in large

measure to the energetic social legislation which transformed the social order.

But one of the least predicted results of this trend (although isolated thinkers like Tocqueville, Burckhardt, Herzen, and, of course, Nietzsche, had more than an inkling of it) was a steep decline in the quality of moral idealism, and of romantic, artistic rebelliousness, which marked the early struggles of the dissatisfied social groups during their heroic period when, deeply divergent though they were, they fought together against tyrants, priests and militant philistines. Whatever the injustices and miseries of our time -- and they are plainly no fewer than those of the immediate past -- they are less likely to find expression in monuments of noble eloquence, because that kind of inspiration seems to spring only from the oppression or suppression of entire classes of society. There arrives a brief moment when the leaders of the most articulate, and socially and economically most developed, of these suppressed groups are lifted by the common mood and for a moment speak not for their own class or milieu alone, but in the name of all the oppressed; for a brief instant their utterance has a universal quality.

But a situation where all or nearly all the great sections of society have been, or are on the point of being, in at any rate the formal possession of power is unfavorable to that truly disinterested eloquence -- disinterested partly at least because fulfillment is remote, because principles shine forth most clearly in the darkness and void, because the inner vision is still free from the confusions and obscurities, the compromises and blurred outlines of the external world inevitably forced upon it by the beginnings of practical action. No body of men which has tasted power, or is within a short distance of doing so, can avoid a certain degree of that cynicism which, like a chemical reaction, is generated by the sharp contact between the pure ideal nurtured in the wilderness and its realization in some unpredicted form which

seldom conforms to the hopes or fears of earlier times. It therefore takes an exceptional effort of the imagination to discard the context of later years, to cast ourselves back into the period when the views and movements which have since triumphed and lost their glamor long ago were still capable of stirring so much vehement idealistic feeling: when, for example, nationalism was not in principle felt to be incompatible with a growing degree of internationalism, or civil liberties with a rational organization of society; when this was believed by conservatives almost as much as by their rivals, and the gap between the moderates of both sides was only that between the plea that reason must not be permitted to increase the pace of progress beyond the limits imposed by "history" and the counterplea that "la raison a tou-jours raison," that memories and shadows were less important than the direct perception of the real world in the clear light of day. This was a time when liberals in their turn themselves began to feel the impact of historicism, and to admit the need for a certain degree of adjustment and even control of social life, perhaps by the hated state itself, if only to mitigate the inhumanity of unbridled private enterprise, to protect the liberties of the weak, to safeguard those basic human rights without which there could be neither happiness nor justice nor freedom to pursue the ends of life.

The philosophical foundations of these liberal beliefs in the mid-nineteenth century were somewhat obscure. Rights described as "natural," "inherent," absolute standards of truth and justice, were not compatible with tentative empiricism and utilitarianism; yet liberals believed in both. Nor was faith in democracy strictly consistent with belief in the inviolable rights of minorities or dissident individuals. But so long as the right-wing opposition set itself against all those principles, the contradictions could, on the whole, be allowed to lie dormant, or to form the subject of peaceful academic disputes, not exacerbated by urgent need for immediate

factual application. Thus the contradictions further enhanced the rôle of rational criticism by which, in the end, all questions could and would one day be settled. The Socialists on their part resembled the conservatives in believing in the existence of inexorable laws of history, and, like them, accused the liberals of legislating "unhistorically" for timeless abstractions -- an activity for which history would not neglect to take due revenge. But they also resembled the liberals in believing in the supreme value of rational analysis, in policies founded on theoretical considerations deduced from "scientific" premises, and with them accused the conservatives of misinterpreting "the facts" to justify the miserable status quo, of condoning misery and injustice; not indeed like the liberals by ignoring history, but by misreading it in a manner consciously or unconsciously calculated to preserve their own power upon a specious moral basis. But genuinely revolutionary as some among them were, and a thoroughly new phenomenon in the Western world, the majority of them shared with the parties which they attacked the common assumption that men must be spoken and appealed to in terms of the needs and interests and ideals of which they were, or could be made to be, conscious.

Conservatives, liberals, radicals, Socialists differed indeed in their interpretation of historical change. They disagreed about what were in fact the deepest needs and interests and ideals of human beings, and who held them, and how deeply or widely or for what length of time, or about their validity in this or that situation. They differed about the facts, they differed about ends and means, they seemed to themselves to agree on almost nothing. But what they had in common -- too obviously to be clearly realized -- was the belief that their age was ridden with social and political problems which could be solved only by the conscious application of truths upon which all men endowed with adequate mental powers could agree. The Marxists did indeed question this in theory, but not in

practice: even they did not seriously attack the thesis that when ends were not yet attained, and the choice of means was limited, the proper way of setting about adapting the means to the ends was by the use of all the skill and energy and intellectual and moral insight available. And while some regarded these problems as akin to those of the natural sciences, some to those of ethics or religion, while others supposed that they were altogether sui generis and needed altogether unique methods, they were agreed -- it seemed too obvious to need stating -- that the problems themselves were genuine and urgent and intelligible in more or less similar terms to all clearheaded men, that all solutions were entitled to a hearing, and that nothing was gained by ignorance or the supposition that the problem did not exist.

This set of common assumptions -- they are part of what the word "enlightenment" means -- were, of course, deeply rationalistic. They were denied implicitly by the whole Romantic movement, and explicitly by isolated thinkers -- Carlyle, Dostoevsky, Baudelaire, Tolstoy, Nietzsche. And there were obscurer prophets -- Büchner, Kierkegaard, Bakunin, Leontiev -- who protested against the prevailing orthodoxy with a depth and originality which became clear only in our own time. Not that these thinkers represent any one single movement, or even an easily identifiable "trend;" but in one relevant particular they display an affinity. They denied the importance of political action based on rational considerations, and to this extent they were rightly abhorred by the supporters of respectable conservatism. They said or implied that rationalism in any form was a fallacy derived from a false analysis of the character of human beings, because the springs of human action lay in regions unthought of by the sober thinkers whose views enjoyed prestige among the serious public. But their voices were few and discordant, and their eccentric views were ascribed to psychological aberrations. Liberals, however much they admired their

artistic genius, were revolted by what they conceived as a perverted view of mankind, and either ignored it or rejected it violently. Conservatives looked upon them as allies against the exaggerated rationalism and infuriating optimism of both liberals and Socialists, but treated them nervously as queer visionaries, a little unhinged, not to be imitated or approached too closely. The Socialists looked on them as so many deranged reactionaries, scarcely worth their powder and shot. The main currents both on the Right and on the Left flowed round and over these immovable, isolated rocks with their absurd appearance of seeking to arrest or deflect the central current. What were they, after all, but survivals of a darker age, or interesting misfits, sad and at times fascinating casualties of the advance of history, worthy of sympathetic insight -- men of talent or even genius born out of their time, gifted poets, remarkable artists, but surely not worthy of detailed attention on the part of serious students of social and political life?

There was (it is worth saying again) a somewhat sinister element dimly recognized from its very beginning in Marxism -- in the main a highly rationalistic system -- which seemed hostile to this entire outlook, denying the importance of reason in their choice of ends and in effective government alike on the part of individuals or groups. But the worship of the natural sciences which Marxism shared with its liberal antagonists was unpropitious to a clearer perception of its own true nature; and so this aspect of it lay largely unrecognized until Sorel brought it to life and combined it with the Bergsonian anti-rationalism by which his thought is very strongly colored; and until Lenin, stemming from a very different tradition, translated it into an all too effective practice. But Lenin did not, and his followers to this day do not, seem aware of the degree to which it influenced their actions. Or, if aware, they did not and do not admit it. This was so when the twentieth century opened.

#### IV

Chronological frontiers are seldom landmarks in the history of ideas, and the current of the old century, to all appearances irresistible, seemed to flow peacefully into the new. Presently the picture began to alter. Humanitarian liberalism encountered more and more obstacles to its reforming zeal from the conscious or unconscious opposition both of governments and other centers of social power, as well as the passive resistance of established institutions and habits. It gradually found itself compelled to organize those classes of the population on whose behalf it fought into something sufficiently powerful to work effectively against the old establishment.

The history of the transformation of gradualist and Fabian tactics into the militant formations of Communism and Syndicalism, as well as the milder formations of Social Democracy and trade unionism, is a history not so much of principles as of their interplay with new material facts. In a sense Communism is doctrinaire humanitarianism driven to an extreme in the pursuit of effective offensive and defensive methods. No movement at first sight seems to differ more sharply from liberal reformism than does Marxism, yet the central doctrines -- human perfectibility, the possibility of creating a perfect society by a natural means, the belief in the compatibility (indeed the inseparability) of liberty and equality -- are common to both. The historical transformation may occur continuously, or in sudden revolutionary leaps, but it must proceed in accordance with an intelligible, logically connected pattern, abandonment of which is always foolish, always utopian. No one doubted that liberalism and Socialism were bitterly opposed both in ends and in methods: yet at their edges they shaded off into one another. Marxism is a doctrine which, however strongly it may stress the class-conditioned nature of action and thought, nevertheless in theory sets out to appeal to reason, at least among the class

destined by history to triumph -- the proletariat. In the Communist view the proletariat alone can face the future without flinching, because it need not be deterred into falsification of the facts by fear of what the future may bring. And, as a corollary, this applies also to those intellectuals who have liberated themselves from the prejudices and superstitions of their economic class, and have aligned themselves with the winning side in the social struggle. To them, since they are fully rational, the privileges of democracy and of free use of all their intellectual faculties may be accorded. They are to Marxists what the enlightened philosophes were to the Encyclopedists: their task is to transform all those who are historically capable of it into their own liberated and rational likeness.

But in 1903 there occurred an event which marked the culmination of a process which has altered the history of our world. At the conference of the Russian Social Democratic Party held in that year, which began in Brussels and ended in London, during the discussion of what seemed at first a purely technical question -- how far centralization and hierarchical discipline should govern the behavior of the Party -- a delegate named Posadovsky inquired whether the emphasis laid by the "hard" Socialists -- Lenin and his friends -- upon the need for the exercise of absolute authority by the revolutionary nucleus of the Party might not prove incompatible with those fundamental liberties to whose realization Socialism, no less than liberalism, was officially dedicated. He asked whether the basic, minimum civil liberties -- "the sacrosanctity of the person" -- could be infringed and even violated if the party leaders so decided. He was answered by Plekhanov, one of the founders of Russian Marxism, and its most venerated figure, a cultivated, fastidious and morally sensitive scholar of wide outlook, who had for 20 years lived in Western Europe and was much respected by the leaders of western Socialism, the very

symbol of civilized "scientific" thinking among Russian revolutionaries. Plekhanov, speaking solemnly, and with a splendid disregard for grammar, pronounced the words, *Salus revolutiae suprema lex*. Certainly, if the revolution demanded it, everything -- democracy, liberty, the rights of the individual -- must be sacrificed to it. If the democratic assembly elected by the Russian people after the revolution proved amenable to Marxist tactics, it would be kept in being as a Long Parliament; if not, it would be disbanded as quickly as possible. A Marxist Revolution could not be carried through by men obsessed by scrupulous regard for the principles of bourgeois liberals. Doubtless whatever was valuable in these principles, like everything else good and desirable, would ultimately be realized by the victorious working class; but during the revolutionary period preoccupation with such ideals was evidence of a lack of seriousness.

Plekhanov, who was brought up in a humane and liberal tradition, did, of course, later retreat from this position himself. The mixture of utopian faith and brutal disregard for civilized morality proved too repulsive to a man who had spent the greater part of his civilized and productive life among Western workers and their leaders. Like the vast majority of Social Democrats, like Marx and Engels themselves, he was too European to try to realize a policy which, in the words of Shigalev in Dostoevsky's "The Possessed," "starting from unlimited liberty ends in unlimited despotism." But Lenin accepted the premises, and being logically driven to conclusions repulsive to most of his colleagues, accepted them easily and without apparent qualms. His assumptions were, perhaps, in some sense, still those of the optimistic rationalists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: the coercion, violence, executions, the total suppression of individual differences, the rule of a small, virtually self-appointed minority, were necessary only in the interim period, only so long as there was a powerful enemy to

be destroyed. It was necessary only in order that the majority of mankind, once it was liberated from the exploitation of fools by knaves and of weak knaves by more powerful ones, could develop -- trammelled no longer by ignorance or idleness or vice, free at last to realize to their fullest extent the infinitely rich potentialities of human nature. This dream may indeed have affinities with the dreams of Diderot or St. Simon or Kropotkin, but what marked it as something relatively novel was the assumption about the means required to translate it into reality. And the assumption, although apparently concerned solely with methods, and derived from Babeuf or Blanqui or Marx or the French Communards, was very different from the practical program set forth by the most "activist" and least "evolutionary" Western Socialists towards the end of the nineteenth century. The difference was crucial and marked the birth of the new age.

What Lenin demanded was unlimited power for a small body of professional revolutionaries, trained exclusively for one purpose, and ceaselessly engaged in its pursuit by every means in their power. This was necessary because democratic methods, and the attempts to persuade and preach used by earlier reformers and rebels, were ineffective: and this in its turn was due to the fact that they rested on a false psychology, sociology and theory of history -- namely the assumption that men acted as they did because of conscious beliefs which could be changed by argument. For if Marx had done anything, he had surely shown that such beliefs and ideals were mere "reflections" of the condition of the socially and economically determined classes of men, to some one of which every individual must belong. A man's beliefs, if Marx and Engels were right, flowed from the situation of his class, and could not alter -- so far, at least, as the mass of men was concerned -- without a change in that situation. The proper task of a revolutionary therefore was to change the "objective" situation, i.e. to prepare the class for its historical

task in the overthrow of the hitherto dominant classes.

Lenin went further than this. He acted as if he believed not merely that it was useless to talk and reason with persons precluded by class interest from understanding and acting upon the truths of Marxism, but that the mass of the proletarians them-selves were too benighted to grasp the rôle which history had called on them to play. He saw the choice as between, on the one hand, the gradual stimulation among the army of the dispossessed of a "critical spirit" (which would awaken them intellectually, but lead to a vast deal of discussion and controversy similar to that which divided and enfeebled the intellectuals), and on the other, the turning of them into a blindly obedient force held together by a military discipline and a set of perpetually ingeminated formulae (at least as powerful as the patriotic patter used by the Tsarist régime) to shut out independent thought. If the choice had to be made, then it was mere irresponsibility to stress the former in the name of some abstract principle such as democracy or enlightenment. The important thing was the creation of a state of affairs in which human resources were developed in accordance with a rational pattern. Men were moved more often by irrational than reasonable solutions. The masses were too stupid and too blind to be allowed to proceed in the direction of their own choosing. Tolstoy and the populists were profoundly mistaken; the simple agricultural laborer had no deep truths, no valuable way of life, to impart; he and the city worker and the simple soldier were fellow serfs in a condition of abject poverty and squalor, caught in a system which bred fratricidal strife among themselves; they could be saved only by being ruthlessly ordered by leaders who had acquired a capacity for knowing how to organize the liberated slaves into a rational planned system.

Lenin himself was in certain respects oddly utopian. He started with the belief that with sufficient education, and a rational economic organization, almost anyone could be

brought in the end to perform almost any task efficiently. But his conclusion was in practice strangely like that of those reactionaries and Fascists who believed that man was everywhere wild, bad, stupid and unruly, and must be held in check and provided with objects of unreasoning worship. This must be done by a clear-sighted band of organizers, acting in accordance with the truths perceived by such men as Nietzsche, Pareto, or the French absolutist thinkers from De Maistre to Maurras, and indeed by Marx himself -- men who by some process superior to scientific reasoning had grasped the true nature of social development, and in the light of their discovery saw the liberal theory of human progress as something unreal, thin, pathetic and absurd. Whatever his crudities and errors, on the central issue, Hobbes, not Locke, turned out to be right: men sought neither happiness nor liberty nor justice, but, above all and before all, security. Aristotle, too, was right: a great number of men were slaves by nature, and when liberated from their chains did not possess the moral and intellectual resources with which to face the prospect of responsibility, of too wide a choice between alternatives; and therefore, having lost one set of chains, inevitably searched for another or forged new chains themselves. It follows that the wise revolutionary legislator, so far from seeking to emancipate human beings from the framework without which they feel lost and desperate, will seek rather to erect a framework of his own, corresponding to the new needs of the new age brought about by natural or technological change. The value of the framework will depend upon the unquestioning faith with which its main features are accepted; otherwise it no longer possesses sufficient strength to support and contain the wayward, potentially anarchical and self-destructive creatures who seek salvation in it. The framework is that system of political, social, economic and religious institutions, those "myths," dogmas, ideals, conventional categories of thought and language, modes of feeling, scales of values, "socially approved" attitudes and

habits (called by Marx "superstructure") representing "rationalizations," "sublimations" and symbolic representations which cause men to function in an organized way, prevent chaos, fulfill the function of the Hobbesian state. This is not so very remote from De Maistre's central and deliberately unprobed mystery -- the supernatural authority whereby and in whose name rulers can rule and inhibit their subjects' unruly tendencies, above all the tendency to ask too many questions, to question too many established rules. Nothing can be permitted which might even a little weaken that sense of reliability and security which it is the business of the framework to provide. Only thus (in this view) can the founder of the new free society control whatever threatens to dissipate human energy or to slow down the relentless treadmill which alone prevents men from stopping to commit acts of suicidal folly, which alone protects them from too much freedom, from too little restraint, from the vacuum which mankind, no less than nature, abhors.

M. Bergson had, of course, been speaking of something not too unlike this when he had contrasted the flow of life with the forces of critical reason which cannot create or unite, but only divide, arrest, make dead, disintegrate. Freud, too, contributed to this; not in his work of genius as the greatest healer of our time, but as the originator, however innocent, of the misapplication of psychological and sociological methods by muddleheaded fools of good will and quacks and false prophets of every brand and hue. By giving currency to exaggerated versions of the view that the true reasons for a man's beliefs were most often very different from what they themselves thought them to be, being frequently caused by events and processes of which they were neither aware nor in the least anxious to be aware, these eminent thinkers helped, however unwittingly, to discredit the rationalist foundations upon which their own doctrines purported to rest. For it was but a short step from this to the view that what made men

most permanently happy was not -- as they themselves supposed -- the discovery of solutions to the questions which perplexed them, but rather some process natural or artificial whereby the problems were made to vanish altogether. They vanished because their psychological "sources" had been diverted or dried up, leaving behind only those less exacting questions whose solutions did not demand resources beyond the patient's strength.

That this short way with the troubled and the perplexed, which underlay much right-wing thought, should be advocated from the left, was new indeed. It is this change of attitude to the function and value of the intellect that is perhaps the best indication of the great gap which divides the twentieth century from the nineteenth.

## V

The central point which I wish to make is this: during all the centuries of recorded history the course of intellectual endeavor, the purpose of education, the substance of controversies about the truth or value of ideas, presupposed the existence of certain crucial questions, the answers to which were of paramount importance. How valid, it was asked, were the various claims to the best methods of discovering absolute knowledge and truth made by such great and famous disciplines as metaphysics, ethics, theology, and the sciences of nature and of man? What was the right life for men to lead, and how was it discovered? Did God exist, and could His purposes be known or even guessed at? Did the universe, and in particular human life, have a purpose? If so, whose purpose did it fulfil? How did one set about answering such questions? Were they or were they not analogous to the kind of questions to which the sciences or common sense provided satisfactory, generally accepted, replies? If not, did it make sense to ask them?

And as in metaphysics and ethics, so in politics too. The political problem was concerned with asking why any individual or individuals should obey other individuals or associations of individuals. All the classical doctrines which deal with the familiar topics of liberty and authority, sovereignty and natural rights, the ends of the state and the ends of the individual, the General Will and the rights of minorities, secularism and theocracy, functionalism and centralization -- all these are but various ways of attempting to formulate methods in terms of which this fundamental question can be answered in a manner compatible with the other beliefs and the general outlook of the inquirer and his generation. Great and sometimes mortal conflicts have arisen over the proper techniques for the answering of such questions. Some sought answers in sacred books, others in direct personal revelation, some in metaphysical insight, others in the pronouncements of infallible sages or in speculative systems or in laborious empirical investigations. The questions were of vital importance for the conduct of life. There were, of course, skeptics in every generation who suggested that there were, perhaps, no final answers, that solutions hitherto provided depended on highly variable factors such as the climate in which the theorist's life was lived, or his social or economic or political condition, or those of his fellows, or his or their emotional disposition, or the kinds of intellectual interests which absorbed him or them. But such skeptics were usually treated as either frivolous and so not important, or else unduly disturbing and even dangerous; so that in times of instability they were liable to persecution. But even they -- even Sextus Empiricus or Montaigne or Hume -- did not actually doubt the importance of the questions themselves. What they doubted was the possibility of obtaining final and absolute solutions.

It was left to the twentieth century to do something more drastic than this. For the first time it was now asserted that

the way to answer questions, particularly those recurrent issues which had perplexed and often tormented original and honest minds in every generation, was not by employing the tools of reason, still less those of the more mysterious capacities called "insight" and "intuition," but by obliterating the questions themselves. And this method consists not in removing them by rational means -- by proving, for example, that they are founded on intellectual confusion or verbal muddles or ignorance of the facts -- for to prove this would in its turn presuppose the need for rational methods of logical or psychological argument. Rather it consists in so treating the questioner that problems which appeared at once overwhelmingly important and utterly insoluble vanish from the questioner's consciousness like evil dreams and trouble him no more. It consists, not in developing the logical implications and elucidating the meaning, the context, or the relevance and origin of a specific problem -- in seeing what it "amounts to" -- but in altering the outlook which gave rise to it in the first place. Questions for whose solution no ready-made technique could easily be produced are all too easily classified as obsessions from which the patient must be cured. Thus if a man is haunted by the suspicion that, for example, full individual liberty is not compatible with coercion by the majority in a democratic state, and yet continues to hanker after both democracy and individual liberty, it may be possible by appropriate treatment to rid him of his *idée fixe*, so that it will disappear to return no more. The worried questioner of political institutions is thereby relieved of his burden and freed to pursue socially useful tasks, unhampered by disturbing and distracting reflections which have been eliminated by the eradication of their cause.

The method has the bold simplicity of genius: it secures agreement on matters of political principle by removing the psychological possibility of alternatives, which itself depends, or is held to depend, on the older form of social organization,

rendered obsolete by the revolution and the new social order. And this is how Communist and Fascist states -- and all other quasi- and semitotalitarian societies and secular and religious creeds -- have in fact proceeded in the task of imposing political and ideological conformity.

For this the works of Karl Marx are not more directly to blame than the other tendencies of our time. Marx was a typical nineteenth century social theorist, in the same sense as Mill or Comte or Buckle. A policy of deliberate psychological conditioning was as alien to him as to them. He believed that many of the questions of his predecessors were quite genuine, and thought that he had solved them. He supported his solutions with arguments which he honestly supposed to conform to the best scientific and philosophical canons of his time. Whether his outlook was in fact as scientific as he claimed, or his solutions as plausible, is another question. What matters is that he recognized the genuineness of the questions he was attempting to answer and offered a theory with a claim to being scientific in the accepted sense of the term; and thereby poured much light (and darkness) on many vexed problems, and led to much fruitful (and sterile) revaluation and reinterpretation.

But the practice of Communist states and, more logically of Fascist states (since they openly deny and denounce the value of the rational question-and-answer method), is not at all the training of the critical, or solution-finding, powers of their citizens, nor yet the development in them of any capacity for special insights or intuitions regarded as likely to reveal the truth. It consists in something which any nineteenth century thinker with respect for the sciences would have regarded with genuine horror -- the training of individuals incapable of being troubled by questions which, when raised and discussed, endanger the stability of the system; the building and elaboration of a strong framework of institutions, "myths," habits of life and thought intended to preserve it

from sudden shocks or slow decay. This is the intellectual outlook which attends the rise of totalitarian ideologies -- the substance of the hair-raising satires of George Orwell and Aldous Huxley -- the state of mind in which troublesome questions appear as a form of mental perturbation, noxious to the mental health of individuals and, when too widely discussed, to the health of societies. This is an attitude which looks on all inner conflict as an evil, or at best as a form of futile self-frustration; which considers the kind of friction, the moral or emotional or intellectual collisions, the particular kind of acute spiritual discomfort which rises to a condition of agony from which great works of the human intellect and imagination, inventions, philosophies, works of art, have sprung, as being no better than purely destructive diseases -- neuroses, psychoses, mental derangements, genuinely requiring psychiatric aid; above all as being dangerous deviations from that line to which individuals and societies must adhere if they are to continue in a state of well-ordered, painless, contented, self-perpetuating equilibrium.

This is a truly far-reaching conception, and something far more powerful than the pessimism or cynicism of thinkers like Plato or Machiavelli, Swift or Carlyle, who looked on the majority of mankind as unalterably stupid or incurably vicious, and therefore concerned themselves with how the world might be made safe for the exceptional, enlightened or otherwise superior minority or individual. For their view did at least concede the reality of the painful problems, and merely denied the capacity of the majority to solve them; whereas the more radical attitude looks upon intellectual perplexity as being caused either by a technical problem to be settled in terms of practical policy, or else as a neurosis to be cured, that is made to disappear, if possible without a trace. This leads to a novel conception of the truth and of disinterested ideals in general, which would hardly have been intelligible to previous centuries. To adopt it is to hold that

outside the purely technical sphere (where one asks only what are the most efficient means towards this or that practical end) words like "true," or "right," or "free," and the concepts which they denote, are to be defined in terms of the only activity recognized as valuable, namely, the organization of society as a smoothly-working machine providing for the needs of such of its members as are permitted to survive. The words and ideas in such a society will reflect the outlook of the citizens, being adjusted so as to involve as little friction as possible between, and within, individuals, leaving them free to make the "optimum" use of the resources available to them.

This is indeed Dostoevsky's utilitarian nightmare. In the course of their pursuit of social welfare, humanitarian liberals, deeply outraged by cruelty, injustice and inefficiency, discover that the only sound method of preventing these evils is not by providing the widest opportunities for free intellectual or emotional development -- for who can tell where this might not lead? -- but by eliminating the motives for the pursuit of these perilous ends, by suppressing any tendencies likely to lead to criticism, dissatisfaction, disorderly forms of life. I shall not attempt here to trace historically how this came to pass. No doubt the story must at some stage include the fact that mere disparity in tempo and extent between technical development and social change, together with the fact that the two could not be guaranteed to harmonize -- despite the optimistic promises of Adam Smith -- and indeed clashed more and more often, led to increasingly destructive and apparently unavertable economic crises. These were accompanied by social, political and moral disasters which the general framework -- the patterns of behavior, habits, outlook, language, that is the "ideological superstructure" of the victims -- could not sustain. The result was a loss of faith in existing political activities and ideals, and a desperate desire to live in a universe which, however dull and flat, was at any rate secure against the repetition of

such catastrophes. An element in this was a growing sense of the greater or lesser meaninglessness of such ancient battle-cries as liberty or equality or civilization or truth, since their application to the surrounding scene was no longer as intelligible as it had been in the nineteenth century.

Together with this development, in the majority of cases, there went a reluctance to face it. But the once hallowed phrases were not abandoned. They were used -- robbed of their original value -- to cover the different and sometimes diametrically opposed notions of the new morality, which in terms of the old system of values, seemed both unscrupulous and brutal. The Fascists alone did not take the trouble to pretend to retain the old symbols, and while political diehards and the representatives of the more unbridled forms of modern big business clung half cynically, half hopefully, to such terms as freedom or democracy, the Fascists rejected them outright with theatrical gestures of disdain and loathing, and poured scorn upon them as the outworn husks of ideals which had long ago rotted away. But despite the differences of policy concerning the use of specific symbols there is a substantial similarity between all the variants of the new political attitude.

Observers in the twenty-first century will doubtless see these similarities of pattern more easily than we who are involved can possibly do today. They will distinguish them as naturally and clearly from their immediate past -- that hortus inclusus of the nineteenth century in which so many writers both of history and of journalism and of political addresses today still seem to be living -- as we distinguish the growth of romantic nationalism or of naïve positivism from that of enlightened despotism or of patrician republics. Still, even we who live in them can discern something novel in our own times. Even we perceive the growth of new characteristics common to widely different spheres. On the one hand, we can see the progressive and conscious subordination of political to social

and economic interests. The most vivid symptoms of this subordination are the open self-identification and conscious solidarity of men as capitalists or workers; these cut across, though without destroying, national and religious loyalties. On the other, we meet with the conviction that political liberty is useless without the economic strength to use it, and consequently implied or open denial of the rival proposition that economic opportunity is of use only to politically free men. This in its turn carries with it a tacit acceptance of the proposition that the responsibilities of the state to its citizens must and will grow and not diminish, a theorem which is today taken for granted by masters and men alike, in Europe perhaps more unquestioningly than in the United States, but accepted even there to a degree which seemed utopian only 30, let alone 50, years ago. This great transformation, with its genuine material gains, and no less genuine growth in social equality in the least liberal societies, is accompanied by something which forms the obverse side of the medal -- the elimination, or, at the very best, strong disapproval of those propensities for free inquiry and creation which cannot, without losing their nature, remain as conformist and law-abiding as the twentieth century demands. A century ago Auguste Comte asked why, if there was rightly no demand for freedom to disagree in mathematics, it should be allowed and even encouraged in ethics or the social sciences. And indeed, if the creation of certain "optimum" patterns of behavior and thought and feeling in individuals or entire societies is the main goal of social and individual action, Comte's case is unanswerable. Yet it is the degree of this very right to disregard the forces of order and convention, even the publicly accepted "optimum" goals of action, that forms the glory of that bourgeois culture which reached its zenith in the nineteenth century and of which we have only now begun to witness the beginning of the end.

The new attitude, resting as it does upon the policy of diminishing strife and misery by the atrophy of the faculties capable of causing them, is naturally hostile to, or at least suspicious of, disinterested curiosity (which might end anywhere), and looks upon the practice of all arts not obviously useful to society as being at best forms of social frivolity. Such occupations, when they are not a positive menace, are, in this view, an irritating and wasteful irrelevance, a trivial fiddling, a dissipation or diversion of energy which is difficult enough to accumulate at all and should therefore be directed wholeheartedly and unceasingly to the task of building and maintaining the well-adjusted -- sometimes called the "well-integrated" -- social whole. In this state of mind it is only natural that such terms as truth or honor or obligation or beauty become transformed into purely offensive or defensive weapons, used by a state or a party in the struggle to create a community impervious to influences beyond its own direct control. The result can be achieved either by rigid censorship and insulation from the rest of the world -- a world which remains free at least in the sense that its inhabitants continue to say what they wish, in which words are relatively unorganized, with all the "dangerous" consequences thereby brought about; or else it can be achieved by extending the area of strict control until it stretches over all possible sources of anarchy, i.e. the whole of mankind. Only by one of these two expedients can a state of affairs be achieved in which human behavior can be manipulated with relative ease of technically qualified specialists -- adjusters of conflicts and promoters of peace both of body and of mind, engineers and other scientific experts, psychologists, sociologists, economic and social planners and so on. Clearly this is not an intellectual climate which favors originality of judgment, moral independence or uncommon powers of insight. The entire trend of such an order is to reduce all issues to technical problems of lesser or greater complexity, in particular the problem of how to

survive, get rid of maladjustments, achieve a condition in which the individual's psychological or economic capacities are harnessed to producing the maximum of unclouded social contentment; and this in its turn depends upon the suppression of whatever in him might raise doubt or assert itself against the single all-embracing, all-clarifying, all-satisfying plan.

The tendency has taken acute forms in, for example, the Soviet Union. There subordination to the central plan, and the elimination of disturbing factors, whether by education or repression, has been enacted with that capacity for believing in the literal inspiration of ideologies -- in the ability and duty of human beings to translate ideas into practice fully, rigorously and immediately -- to which Russian thinkers of all schools seem singularly addicted. The Soviet pattern is clear, simple and correctly deduced from "scientifically demonstrated" premises. The task of realizing it must be entrusted to technically trained believers who look on the human beings at their disposal as material which is infinitely malleable within the confines revealed by the sciences. Stalin's remark that creative artists are "engineers of human souls" is a very precise expression of this spirit. The presence of it in the various Fascist societies destroyed by the recent war, with intuition or instinct substituted for science, and cynicism for hypocrisy, are equally clear for all to see. In Western Europe this tendency has taken the milder form of a shift of emphasis away from disagreement about political principles (and from party struggles which sprang from genuine differences of moral and spiritual outlook) towards disagreements, ultimately technical, about methods -- about the best ways of achieving that degree of minimum economic or social stability without which arguments concerned with fundamental principles and the ends of life are felt to be "abstract," "academic" and unrelated to the urgent needs of the hour. Hence that noticeably growing lack of interest in

long-term political issues -- as opposed to current day-to-day economic or social problems -- on the part of the populations of the Western European continent which is occasionally deplored by shocked American and British observers who falsely ascribe it to the growth of cynicism and disenchantment with ideals.

No doubt all abandonment of old values for new must appear to the surviving adherents of the former as conscienceless disregard for morality as such. But this is a great delusion. There is all too little disbelief, whether conscienceless or apathetic, of the new values. On the contrary, they are clung to with unreasoning faith and that blind intolerance towards skepticism which springs, as often as not, from a profound inner bankruptcy, the hope against hope that here is a safe haven at least, narrow, dark, cut off, but secure. Growing numbers of human beings are prepared to purchase this sense of security even at the cost of allowing vast tracts of life to be controlled by persons who, whether consciously or not, act systematically to narrow the horizon of human activity to manageable proportions, to train human beings into more easily combinable parts -- interchangeable, almost prefabricated -- of a total pattern. In the face of such a strong desire to stabilize, if need be, at the lowest level -- upon the floor from which you cannot fall, which cannot betray you, "let you down" -- all the ancient political principles begin to vanish, feeble symbols of creeds no longer relevant to the new realities.

This process does not move at a uniform pace everywhere. In the United States perhaps, for obvious economic reasons, the nineteenth century survives far more powerfully than anywhere else. The political issues and conflicts, the topics of discussion, and the idealized personalities of democratic leaders are far more reminiscent of Victorian Europe than anything to be found on that continent now.

Woodrow Wilson was a nineteenth century liberal in a very full and unqualified sense. The New Deal and the personality of President Roosevelt excited political passions far more like those of the battles which raged round Gladstone or Lloyd George, or the anti-clerical governments at the turn of the century in France, than anything actually contemporary with it in Europe; and this great liberal enterprise, certainly the most constructive compromise between individual liberty and economic security which our own time has witnessed, corresponds more closely to the political and economic ideals of John Stuart Mill in his last, humanitarian-Socialist phase than to left-wing thought in Europe in the thirties. The controversy about international organization, about the United Nations and its subsidiaries, as well as the other postwar international institutions, like the controversies which in the years after 1918 surrounded the League of Nations, are fully intelligible in terms of nineteenth century political ideals, and therefore occupied far more attention and meant much more in America than in Europe. The United States may have disavowed President Wilson, but it continued to live in a moral atmosphere not very different from that of Wilson's time -- the easily recognizable black-and-white moral world of the Victorian values. The events of 1918 preyed on the American conscience for 25 years, whereas in Europe the exalté atmosphere of 1918-1919 disappeared without a trace - - a brief moment of illumination which in retrospect seems more American than European, the last manifestation in Europe of a great but dying tradition in a world already living, and fully conscious of living, in a new medium, too well aware of its differences from, and resentful of, its past. The break was not sudden and total, a dramatic coup de théâtre. Many of the seeds planted in the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries have flowered only in the twentieth: the political and ethical climate in which trade unions were founded in Germany, or England, or France did of course contain as elements the old, familiar doctrines of human rights and duties which were the

common property, avowed or not, of almost all parties and views in the liberal, humanitarian, expansionist hundred years of peaceful progress.

The main current of the nineteenth century does, of course, survive into the present, and especially in America and the British Dominions; but it is not what is most characteristic of our time. For in the past there were conflicts of ideas, whereas what characterizes our time is not the struggle of one set of ideas against another but the mounting wave of hostility to all ideas as such. Since ideas are considered the source of too much disquiet, there is a tendency to suppress the conflict between liberal claims to individual political rights and the economic injustice which results from their satisfaction (which forms the substance of Socialist criticism) by the submersion of both in an authoritarian régime which removes the free area within which such conflicts can occur. What is genuinely typical of our time is a new concept of the society, the values of which derive not from the desires or the moral sense of this or that individual's view of his ultimate ends but from some factual hypothesis or metaphysical dogma about history, or race, or national character in terms of which the answers to the question what is good, right, required, desirable, fitting, can be "scientifically" deduced, or intuited, or expressed in this or that kind of behavior. There is one and only one direction in which a given aggregate of individuals is conceived to be travelling, driven thither by quasi-occult impersonal forces, such as their class structure, or their unconscious selves, or their racial origin, or the "real" social or physical roots of this or that "popular" or "group" "mythology." The direction is alterable only by tampering with the hidden cause of behavior -- those who wish to tamper being, according to this view, free to determine their own direction and that of others by having an understanding of the machinery of social behavior and skill in manipulating it.

In this sinister fashion have the words of St. Simon's prophecy

finally come true -- words which once seemed so brave and optimistic: "The government of man will be replaced by the administration of things." The cosmic forces are conceived as omnipotent and indestructible. Hopes, fears, prayers cannot wish them out of existence; but the élite of experts can canalize them and control them to some extent. The task of these experts is to adjust human beings to these forces and to develop in them an unshakable faith in the new order, and unquestioning loyalty to it, which will anchor it securely and forever. Consequently the technical disciplines which direct natural forces and adjust men to the new order must take primacy over humane pursuits -- philosophical, historical, artistic. Such pursuits, at most, will serve only to prop up and embellish the new establishment. Turgenev's naïve materialist, the hero of his novel "Fathers and Sons," the nihilist Bazarov, has finally come into his own, as St. Simon and his more pedestrian follower Comte always felt sure that he would, but for reasons very different from those which seemed plausible a century ago. Bazarov's faith rested on the claim that the dissection of frogs was more important than poetry because it led to the truth, whereas the poetry of Pushkin did not.

The reason given today is more devastating: anatomy is superior to art because it generates no independent ends of life, provides no experiences which act as independent criteria of good or evil, truth or falsehood, and which are therefore liable to clash with the orthodoxy which we have created as the only bulwark strong enough to preserve us from doubts and despairs and all the horrors of maladjustment. To be torn this way and that emotionally or intellectually is a form of malaise. Against it nothing will work but the elimination of alternatives so nearly in equal balance that choice between them is -- or even appears -- possible.

This is, of course, what the Grand Inquisitor in Dostoevsky's "Brothers Karamazov" maintained with deadly eloquence: that

what men dreaded most was freedom of choice, to be left alone to grope their way in the dark; and the Church by lifting the responsibility from their shoulders made them willing, grateful and happy slaves. The Grand Inquisitor stood for the dogmatic organization of the life of the spirit: Bazarov for its theoretical opposite -- free scientific inquiry, the facing of the "hard" facts, the acceptance of the truth however brutal. But by an irony of history (not unforeseen by Dostoevsky) they have formed a pact, they are allies, and today are almost indistinguishable. Buridan's ass, we are told, unable to choose between two equidistant bundles of hay, starved to death. Against this fate the only remedy is blind obedience and faith. Whether the refuge is a dogmatic religion or a dogmatic natural science matters relatively little: for without such obedience and faith there is no confidence and no hope, no optimistic, "constructive," "positive" form of life.

## VI

At this point it might be said that the situation I have described is not altogether new. Has not every authoritarian institution, every irrationalist movement, been engaged upon something of this kind -- the artificial stilling of doubts, the attempt either to discredit uncomfortable questions or to educate men not to ask them? Was this not the practice of the great organized churches, indeed of every institution from the national state to small sectarian establishments? Was this not the attitude of the enemies of reason from the earliest mystery cults to the romanticism, anarchistic nihilism or *surréalisme* of the last century and a half? Why should our age be specially accused of addiction to the particular tendency which formed the central theme of the social doctrines of Plato, or of the sect of the mediæval Assassins, or of much Eastern thought and mysticism?

But there are two great differences which separate the political characteristics of our age from their origins in the

past. In the first place, the reactionaries or romantics of previous periods, however much they might have advocated the superior wisdom of institutional authority or the revealed word over that of individual reason, did not in their moments of wildest unreason minimize the importance of the questions to be answered. On the contrary they maintained that so crucial was it to obtain the correct answer that only hallowed institutions, or inspired leaders, or mystical revelation, or divine grace could vouchsafe a solution of sufficient depth and universality. No doubt a hierarchy of the relative importance of questions underlies any established social system -- a hierarchy the authority of which is itself not intended to be open to question. Moreover, the obscurity of some among the answers offered has in every age concealed their lack of truth or their irrelevance to the questions which they purported to solve. And perhaps much hypocrisy has traditionally been necessary to secure their success. But hypocrisy is very different from cynicism or blindness. Even the censors of opinion and the enemies of the truth felt compelled to pay formal homage to the vital importance of obtaining true answers to the great problems by the best available means. If their practice belied this, at least there was something to be belied: traitors and heretics often keep alive the memory -- and the authority -- of the beliefs which they are intent on betraying.

The second difference consists in the fact that in the past such attempts to becloud the nature of the issues were associated specifically with the avowed enemies of reason and individual freedom. The alignment of forces has been clear at any rate since the Renaissance; progress and reaction, however much these words have been abused, are not empty concepts. On one side stood the supporters of authority, unreasoning faith, suspicious of, or openly opposed to, the uncontrolled pursuit of truth or the free realization of individual ideals. On the other, whatever their differences,

were those supporters of free inquiry and self-expression who looked upon Voltaire and Lessing, Mill and Darwin and Ibsen as their prophets. Their common quality -- perhaps their only common quality -- was some degree of devotion to the ideals of the Renaissance and a hatred of all that was associated, whether justly or not, with the Middle Ages -- darkness, suppression, the stifling of all heterodoxy, the hatred of the flesh and of gaiety and of the love of natural beauty. There were of course many who cannot be classified so simply or so crudely; but until our own day the lines were drawn sharply enough to determine clearly the position of the men who most deeply influenced their age. A combination of devotion to scientific principles with "obscurantist" social theory seemed altogether unthinkable. Today the tendency to circumscribe and confine and limit, to determine the range of what may be asked and what may not, to what may be believed and what may not, is no longer a distinguishing mark of the "reactionaries." On the contrary, it comes as powerfully from the heirs of the radicals, the rationalists, the "progressives," of the nineteenth century as from the descendants of their enemies. There is a persecution not only of science, but by science and in its name; and this is a nightmare scarcely foreseen by the most Cassandra-like prophets of either camp.

We are often told that the present is an age of cynicism and despair, of crumbling values and the dissolution of the fixed standards and landmarks of our civilization. But this is neither true nor even plausible. So far from showing the loose texture of a collapsing order, the world is today stiff with rigid rules and codes and ardent, irrational religions. So far from evincing the toleration which springs from cynical disregard of the ancient sanctions, it treats heterodoxy as the supreme danger.

Whether in the East or West, the danger has not been greater since the ages of faith. Conformities are called for much more eagerly today than yesterday; loyalties are tested far more

severely; skeptics and liberals and individuals with a taste for private life and their own inner standards of behavior, if they do not take care to identify themselves with an organized faith, are objects of fear or derision and targets of persecution for either side, execrated or despised by all the embattled parties in the great ideological wars of our time. And although this is less acute in societies traditionally averse to extremes - - Great Britain, say, or Switzerland -- this makes little difference to the general pattern. In the world today individual stupidity and wickedness are forgiven more easily than failure to be identified with a recognized party or attitude, to achieve an approved political or economic or intellectual status. In earlier periods, when more than one authority ruled human life, a man might escape the pressure of the state by taking refuge in the fortress of the opposition -- of an organized church or a dissident feudal establishment. The mere fact of conflict between authorities allowed room for a narrow and shifting, but still never entirely non-existent, no-man's-land, where private lives might still precariously be lived, because neither side dared to go too far for fear of too greatly strengthening the other. Today the very virtues of the paternalistic state, its genuine anxiety to reduce destitution and disease and inequality, to penetrate all the neglected nooks and crannies of life which may stand in need of its justice and its bounty -- its very success in those beneficent activities -- has narrowed the area within which the individual may commit blunders, has curtailed his liberties in the interest (the very real interest) of his welfare or of his sanity, his health, his security, his freedom from want and fear. His area of choice has grown smaller not in the name of some opposing principle -- as in the Dark Ages or during the rise of the nationalities -- but in order to create a situation in which the very possibility of opposed principles, with all their unlimited capacity to cause mental stress and danger and destructive collisions, is eliminated in favor of a simpler and better regulated life, a robust faith in an efficiently working

order, untroubled by agonizing moral conflict.

Yet this is not a gratuitous development: the social and economic situation in which we are placed, the failure to harmonize the effects of technical progress with the forces of political and economic organization inherited from an earlier phase, do call for a greater measure of social control to prevent chaos and destitution, no less fatal to the development of human faculties than blind conformity. And certainly it is morally unthinkable that we give up our social gains and meditate for an instant the possibility of a return to ancient injustice and inequality and hopeless misery. The progress of technological skill makes it rational and indeed imperative to plan, and anxiety for the success of a particular planned society naturally inclines the planners to seek insulation from dangerous, because incalculable, forces which may jeopardize the plan. And this is a powerful incentive to "autarky" and "Socialism in one country" whether imposed by conservatives, or New Dealers, or isolationists, or Social Democrats, or indeed imperialists. And this in its turn generates artificial barriers and increasingly restricts the planners' own resources. In extreme cases it leads to repression of the discontented and a perpetual tightening of discipline, until it absorbs more and more of the time and ingenuity of those who originally conceived it only as a means to a minimum of efficiency. Presently it grows to be a hideous end in itself, since its realization spells ruin to the system now caught in a vicious circle of repression in order to survive and of survival mainly to repress. So the remedy grows to be worse than the disease, and takes the form of those orthodoxies which rest on the simple puritanical faith of individuals who never knew or have forgotten what *douceur de vivre*, free self-expression, the infinite variety of persons and of the relationships between them, and the right of free choice, difficult to endure but more intolerable to surrender, can ever have been like.

The dilemma is logically insoluble: we cannot sacrifice either freedom or a minimum standard of welfare. The way out must therefore lie in some logically untidy, flexible, and even ambiguous compromise: every situation calls for its own specific policy, since out of the crooked timber of humanity, as Kant once remarked, no straight thing was ever made. What the age calls for is not (as we are so often told) more faith or stronger leadership or more rational organization. Rather is it the opposite -- less Messianic ardor, more enlightened skepticism, more toleration of idiosyncrasies, more frequent ad hoc and ephemeral arrangements, more room for the attainment of their personal ends by individuals and by minorities whose tastes and beliefs find (whether rightly or wrongly must not matter) little response among the majority. What is required is a less mechanical, less fervent application of general principles, however rational or righteous, a more cautious and less self-confident application of accepted, scientifically tested, general solutions in unexamined individual cases. We must not submit to authority because it is infallible but only for strictly and openly utilitarian reasons, as a necessary evil. Since no solution can be guaranteed against error, no disposition is final. And therefore a loose texture and a measure of inefficiency and even muddle, even a degree of indulgence in idle talk, idle curiosity, aimless pursuit of this or that without authorization -- "conspicuous waste" itself -- may allow more spontaneous, individual variation (for which the individual must in the end assume full responsibility), and will always be worth far more than the neatest and most delicately fashioned imposed pattern. Above all, it must be realized that the kinds of problems which this or that method of education or system of scientific or religious or social organization of life is guaranteed to solve are eo facto not the central questions of human life. They are not, and never have been, the fundamental issues which embody the changing outlook and the most intense preoccupation of their time and generation.

It is from absorbed preoccupation with these fundamental issues and these alone, unplanned and at times without technical equipment, more often than not without conscious hope of success, still less of the approbation of the official auditor, that the best moments come in the lives of individuals and peoples.

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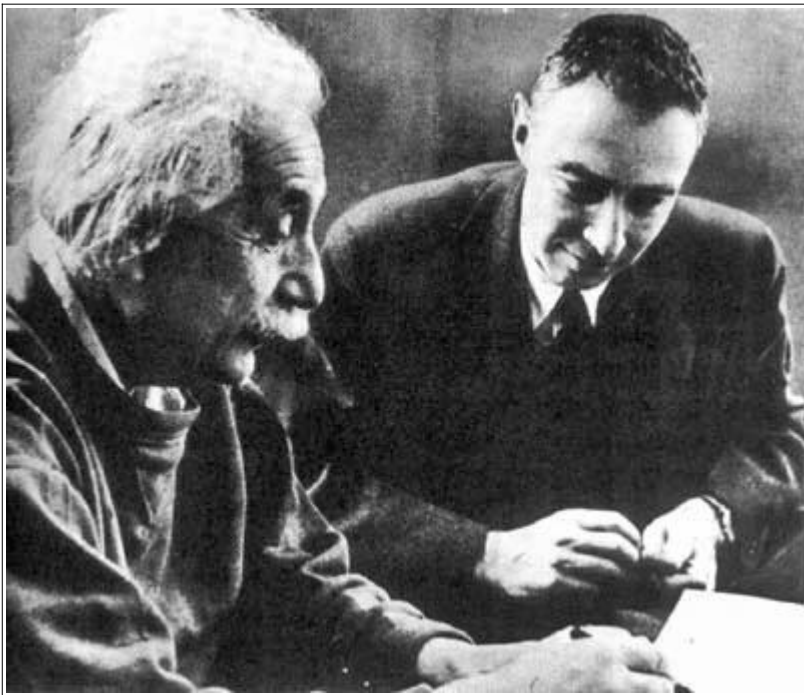
ISAIAH BERLIN, Fellow of New College and University Lecturer in Philosophy at Oxford; attached to the British Embassy in Washington, 1942-45, and in Moscow, 1945-46, with rank of First Secretary; visiting professor at Harvard, 1949; author of "Karl Marx" and other works

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# Atomic Weapons and American Policy

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*J. Robert Oppenheimer*



INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY

*Albert Einstein and Robert Oppenheimer, circa 1950.*

IT IS possible that in the large light of history, if indeed there is to be history, the atomic bomb will appear not very different than in the bright light of the first atomic explosion. Partly because of the mood of the time, partly because of a very clear prevision of what the technical developments would be, we had the impression that this might mark, not merely the end of a great and terrible war, but the end of such wars for mankind.

Two years later Colonel Stimson was to write in Foreign Affairs, "The riven atom, uncontrolled, can be only a growing menace to us all. . . ." In the same paragraph he wrote, "Lasting peace and freedom cannot be achieved until the world finds a way toward the necessary government of the whole." [i] Earlier, shortly after the war's end, the Government of the United States had put forward some modest suggestions, responsive to these views, for dealing with the atom in a friendly, open, coöperative way. We need not argue as to whether these proposals were stillborn. They have been very dead a long, long time, to the surprise of only a few. Openness, friendliness and coöperation did not seem to be what the Soviet Government most prized on this earth.

It should not be beyond human ingenuity for us to devise less friendly proposals. We need not here detail the many reasons why they have not been put forward, why it has appeared irrelevant and grotesque to do so. These reasons range from the special difficulties of all negotiation with the Soviet Union, through the peculiar obstacles presented by the programmatic hostility and the institutionalized secretiveness of Communist countries, to what may be regarded as the more normal and familiar difficulties of devising instruments for the regulation of armaments in a world without prospect of political settlement.

Instead we came to grips, or began to come to grips, with the massive evidences of Soviet hostility and the growing evidences of Soviet power, and with the many almost inevitable, yet often tragic, elements of weakness, disharmony and disunity in what we have learned to call the Free World. In these preoccupations --one wholly negative, and one largely positive though very difficult--the atom, too, was given a simple rôle, and the policy followed was a fairly simple one. The rôle was to be one ingredient of a shield: a shield composed also in part of the great industrial power of America, and in part of the military and, even more, the

political weaknesses of the Soviet Union. The rule for the atom was: "Let us keep ahead. Let us be sure that we are ahead of the enemy."

Today it would seem that, however necessary these considerations and these policies may be, they are no longer nearly sufficient. The reason for that one can see when one looks at the character of the arms race. The reason for that one can see when one compares the time-scale of atomic developments here and abroad with the probable time-scale of deep political changes in the world.

It is easy to say "let us look at the arms race." I must tell about it without communicating anything. I must reveal its nature without revealing anything; and this I propose to do.

There are three countries embarked on this race: The United Kingdom--and of that we need to note only that it is unfortunate that so talented and hard-pressed a country, so close to us in history and tradition, should be doing all this separately from us--ourselves, and the U.S.S.R.

As for the U.S.S.R., it has recently been said officially, and thus may be repeated with official sanction, that it has produced three atomic explosions, and is producing fissionable material in substantial quantities. I should like to present the evidence for this; I cannot. We do need one word of warning: this is evidence which could well be evidence of what the Government of the U.S.S.R. wants us to think rather than evidence of what is true. I may, however, record my own casual, perhaps too rough guess as to how the U.S.S.R. stands in relation to us in the field of atomic munitions. This does not refer at all to other elements of armament. I think that the U.S.S.R. is about four years behind us. And I think that the scale of its operations is not as big as ours was four years ago. It may be something like half as big as ours then was. This is consistent with the facts known to us. It has not been

proven by them, by any means.

This sounds comfortably reassuring. It sounds as though the job of keeping ahead were being satisfactorily accomplished. But in order to assay what it means, we have to know something of what it is that they are four years behind, how fast the situation is likely to change, and what it means to be half as big as we are.

When Hiroshima was bombed there was a single plane. There was no air opposition. We flew straight in at medium height, at rather low speed, over the city of Hiroshima; we dropped one bomb with an energy release the equivalent of about fifteen thousand tons of TNT. It killed more than seventy thousand people and produced a comparable number of casualties; it largely destroyed a medium-sized city. That we had in mind. But we also had in mind, and we said, that it was not a question of one bomb. It would become a question of ten, and then one hundred, and then a thousand, and then ten thousand, and then maybe one hundred thousand. We knew--or, rather, we did not know, but we had very good reason to think--that it was not a question of ten thousand tons but of one hundred thousand and then a million tons, and then ten million tons and then maybe one hundred million tons.

We knew that these munitions could be adapted, not merely to a slow medium bomber operating where we had almost complete air supremacy, but to methods of delivery more modern, more flexible, harder to intercept, and more suitable for combat as it might be encountered today.

Today all of this is in train. It is my opinion that we should all know--not precisely, but quantitatively and, above all, authoritatively--where we stand in these matters; that we should all have a good idea of how rapidly the situation has changed, and of where we may stand, let us say, three, four, or five years ahead, which is about as far as one can see. I

shall revert to the reasons why I think it important that we all know of these matters. I cannot write of them.

What I can say is this: I have never discussed these prospects candidly with any responsible group, whether scientists or statesmen, whether citizens or officers of the Government, with any group that could steadily look at the facts, that did not come away with a great sense of anxiety and somberness at what they saw. The very least we can say is that, looking ten years ahead, it is likely to be small comfort that the Soviet Union is four years behind us, and small comfort that they are only about half as big as we are. The very least we can conclude is that our twenty-thousandth bomb, useful as it may be in filling the vast munitions pipelines of a great war, will not in any deep strategic sense offset their two-thousandth. The very least we can say is that, as Mr. Gordon Dean has emphasized, there will come a time when, even from the narrowest technical point of view, the art of delivery and the art of defense will have a much higher military relevance than supremacy in the atomic munitions field itself.

There are other aspects of the arms race; though they may be well-known, they are worth mentioning. We developed the atomic bomb under the stimulus of the fear that the Germans might be at it. We deliberated at length on the use of the bomb against Japan; indeed it was Colonel Stimson who initiated and presided over these thorough deliberations. We decided that it should be used. We have greatly developed and greatly increased our atomic activities. This growth, though natural technically, is not inevitable. If the Congress had appropriated no money, it would not have occurred. We have made our decision to push our stockpiles and the power of our weapons. We have from the first maintained that we should be free to use these weapons; and it is generally known we plan to use them. It is also generally known that one ingredient of this plan is a rather rigid commitment to their use in a very massive, initial, unremitting strategic

assault on the enemy.

This arms race has other characteristics. There has been relatively little done to secure our defense against the atom; and in the far more tragic and difficult problem of defending our Allies in Europe still less has been done. This does not promise to be an easy problem.

Atomic weapons are not just one element of an arsenal that we hope may deter the Soviet Government, or just one of the means we think of for putting an end to a war, once started. It is, perhaps, almost the only military measure that anyone has in mind to prevent, let us say, a great battle in Europe from being a continuing, agonizing, large-scale Korea. It is the only military instrument which brings the Soviet Union and the United States into contact--a most uncomfortable and dangerous contact-- with one another.

Atomic weapons, as everyone knows, have been incorporated in the plans for the defense of Europe. They have been developed for many tactical military uses, as in the anti-submarine campaign, the air campaign, and the ground campaign in the European theater; and these potential applications continue to ramify and multiply. Yet the Europeans are rather in ignorance what these weapons are, how many there may be, how they will be used and what they will do. It thus needs to be remarked, as we shall need to remark again, that for Europe the atomic weapon is both a much needed hope of effective defense and a terrible immediate peril, greater even than for this country.

These are some of the peculiarities of this arms race, marked for us by a very great rigidity of policy, and a terrifyingly rapid accumulation, probably on both sides, of a deadly munition. When we think of the terms in which we in this country tend to talk of the future, the somberness with which thoughtful men leave a discussion of the subject is not wholly

ununderstandable. There are two things that everyone would like to see happen; but few people, if any, confidently believe that they will happen soon. One is a prompt, a happily prompt reform or collapse of the enemy. One is a regulation of armaments as part of a general political settlement--an acceptable, hopeful, honorable and humane settlement to which we could be a party.

There is nothing repugnant in these prospects; but they may not appear to be very likely in the near future. Most of us, and almost all Europeans, appear to regard the outbreak of war in this near future as a disaster. Thus the prevailing view is that we are probably faced with a long period of cold war in which conflict, tension and armaments are to be with us. The trouble then is just this: during this period the atomic clock ticks faster and faster. We may anticipate a state of affairs in which two Great Powers will each be in a position to put an end to the civilization and life of the other, though not without risking its own. We may be likened to two scorpions in a bottle, each capable of killing the other, but only at the risk of his own life.

This prospect does not tend to make for serenity; and the basic fact that needs to be communicated is that the time in which this will happen is short, compared to the time in which reasonable men may have some confidence in a reasonable amelioration or even alteration of the great political troubles of our time.

In this prospect, surely, we shall need all the help and wisdom and resourcefulness we can muster. This, in all probability, is a very tough fix. There are three things we need to remember, three things that are very sharp. It is perilous to forget any one of them. One is the hostility and the power of the Soviet. Another is the touch of weakness--the need for unity, the need for some stability, the need for armed strength on the part of our friends in the Free World. And the

third is the increasing peril of the atom. The problem is straightforward, if not easy, if we forget the last. It is easy if we forget the first. It is hard if we remember all three. But they are all there.

We need the greatest attainable freedom of action. We need strength to be able to ask whether our plans for the use of the atom are, all things considered, right or wrong. We need the freedom of action necessary--and we do not have it today--to be able to negotiate, should an opportunity for that at some future time appear.

Much will be needed to bring us this freedom of action. Some of it we cannot write about, because it has not occurred to us. Some we cannot write about because it would not be proper for anything but official discussion. An example may be the question of whether, under what circumstances, in what manner, and with what purpose to communicate with the Soviet Government on this and related problems.

But there are three reforms which seem so obvious, so important, so sure to be salutary that I should like to discuss them briefly. One has to do with making available to ourselves, in this tough time, the inherent resources of a country like ours and a government like ours. These resources are not available today. The second has to do with making available the resources of a coalition of governments, bound together in an alliance, yet at the moment foreclosed from discussing one of the principal factors that affects the destiny of the alliance and of all its members. The third has to do with taking measures to put off, to moderate, to reduce the dangers of which we have spoken. I shall deal with each of these.

The first is candor--candor on the part of the officials of the United States Government to the officials, the representatives, the people of their country. We do not

operate well when the important facts, the essential conditions, which limit and determine our choices are unknown. We do not operate well when they are known, in secrecy and in fear, only to a few men.

The general account of the atomic arms race that has been outlined here can, of course, be found in the public press, together with a great deal of detailed information, some true, and much largely false. This mass of published rumor, fact, press release and speculation could yield, upon analysis, a fairly solid core of truth; but as it stands, it is not the truth. The consequences of such ignorance may seem obvious; but we may recall two examples that illustrate well what they are.

It must be disturbing that an ex-President of the United States, who has been briefed on what we know about the Soviet atomic capability, can publicly call in doubt all the conclusions from the evidence. Perhaps this was primarily because it was all so secret that it could not be talked about, or thought about, or understood. It must be shocking when this doubt, so recently expressed, is compounded by two men, one of them a most distinguished scientist, who headed one of the great projects of the Manhattan District during the war, and one of them a brilliant officer, who was in over-all charge of the Manhattan District. These two men are not now employed by any agency of the Government concerned with these questions; therefore they did not have access to the evidence. Thus their advice is unavailing, their public counsel wrong.

A second example may illustrate further. A high officer of the Air Defense Command said--and this only a few months ago, in a most serious discussion of measures for the continental defense of the United States--that it was our policy to attempt to protect our striking force, but that it was not really our policy to attempt to protect this country, for that is so big a job that it would interfere with our retaliatory capabilities.

Such follies can occur only when even the men who know the facts can find no one to talk to about them, when the facts are too secret for discussion, and thus for thought.

The political vitality of our country largely derives from two sources. One is the interplay, the conflict of opinion and debate, in many diverse and complex agencies, legislative and executive, which contribute to the making of policy. The other is a public opinion which is based on confidence that it knows the truth.

Today public opinion cannot exist in this field. No responsible person will hazard an opinion in a field where he believes that there is somebody else who knows the truth, and where he believes that he does not know it. It is true that there are and always will be, as long as we live in danger of war, secrets that it is important to keep secret, at least for an appropriate period, if not for all time; some of these, and important ones, are in the field of atomic energy. But knowledge of the characteristics and probable effects of our atomic weapons, of--in rough terms--the numbers available, and of the changes that are likely to occur within the next years, this is not among the things to be kept secret. Nor is our general estimate of where the enemy stands.

Many arguments have been advanced against making public this basic information. Some of these arguments had merit in times past. One is that we might be giving vital information to the enemy. My own view is that the enemy has this information. It is available to anyone who will trouble to make an intelligence analysis of what has been published. Private citizens do not do this; but we must expect that the enemy does. It is largely available by other means as well. It is also my view that it is good for the peace of the world if the enemy knows these basic facts--very good indeed, and very dangerous if he does not.

There is another source of worry--that public knowledge of the situation might induce in this country a mood of despair, or a too ready acceptance of what is lightheartedly called preventive war. I believe that until we have looked this tiger in the eye, we shall be in the worst of all possible dangers, which is that we may back into him. More generally, I do not think a country like ours can in any real sense survive if we are afraid of our people.

As a first step, but a great one, we need the courage and the wisdom to make public at least what, in all reason, the enemy must now know: to describe in rough but authoritative and quantitative terms what the atomic armaments race is. It is not enough to say, as our government so often has, that we have made "substantial progress." When the American people are responsibly informed, we may not have solved, but we shall have a new freedom to face, some of the tough problems that are before us.

There is also need for candor in our dealings with at least our major allies. The Japanese are exposed to atomic bombardment; and it may be very hard to develop adequate counter-measures. Space, that happy asset of the United States, is not an asset for Japan. It is not an asset for France. It is not an asset for England. There are in existence methods of delivery of atomic weapons which present an intractable problem of interception, and which are relevant for the small distances that characterize Europe. It will be some time at least before they are relevant for intercontinental delivery. These countries will one day feel a terrible pinch, when the U.S.S.R. chooses to remind them of what it can do, and do very easily--not without suffering, but in a way that the Europeans themselves can little deter or deflect.

There have been arguments for technical collaboration with the United Kingdom and Canada; these have often appeared persuasive. There have been arguments for military

collaboration with the NATO governments, and with the responsible commanders involved. General Bradley and General Collins both have spoken of this need, partly in order to explain to our allies that an atomic bomb will not do all things--that it has certain capabilities but it is not the whole answer. This is surely a precondition for effective planning, and for the successful defense of Europe.

Yet there are much more general reasons. We and our allies are in this long struggle together. What we do will affect the destiny of Europe; what is done there will affect ours; and we cannot operate wisely if a large half of the problem we have in common is not discussed in common. This does not mean that we should tie our hands. It means that we should inform and consult. This could make a healthy and perhaps very great change in our relations with Europe.

It is not clear that the situation even in the Far East would be wholly unaffected. It is troublesome to read that a principal reason that we should not use atomic weapons in Korea is that our allies would not like it. We need not argue here either that it is right or that it is wrong to use them there. In either case, our decisions should rest on far firmer ground than that other governments, who know less than we about the matter, should hold a different view than ours. It would be proper that the Japanese and the British and the many other governments immediately involved have a notion of what the issues really are.

Once, clearly, the problem of proper candor at home is faced--the problem of a more reasonable behavior toward our own people and our representatives and officials with regard to the atom--then the problem of dealing with our allies will be less troublesome. For it is pretty much the same information, the same rough set of facts, that both our people and our allies need to have and to understand.

The third point may seem even more obvious. I do not believe --though of course we cannot today be certain--that we can take measures for the defense of our people, our lives, our institutions, our cities, which will in any real sense be a permanent solution to the problem of the atom. But that is no reason for not doing a little better than we are now doing.

The current view, as is well known, is not very optimistic. Not long ago General Vandenberg estimated that we might, with luck, intercept 20 or 30 percent of an enemy attack. That is not very reassuring, when one looks at numbers and casualties and at what it takes to destroy the heart and life of our country. For some months now, a highly-qualified panel, under the chairmanship of Dr. Mervin Kelly, appointed by Secretary Lovett and reporting now to Secretary Wilson, has studied the complex technical problems of continental defense. There are many technical developments that have not yet been applied in this field, and that could well be helpful. They are natural but substantial developments in munitions, in aircraft and in missiles, and in procedures for obtaining and analyzing information. Above all, there is the challenging problem of the effective use of space; there is space between the Soviet Union and the United States. This panel, it would appear, has been oppressed and troubled by the same over-all oppression which any group always finds when it touches seriously any part of the problem of the atom. Yet there is no doubt that it will recommend sensible ways in which we can proceed to try to defend our lives and our country.

Such measures will inevitably have many diverse meanings. They will mean, first of all, some delay in the imminence of the threat. They will mean a disincentive--a defensive deterrent--to the Soviet Union. They will mean that the time when the Soviet Union can be confident of destroying the productive power of America will be somewhat further off--very much further off than if we did nothing. They will mean,

even to our allies, who are much more exposed and probably cannot be well defended, that the continued existence of a real and strong America will be a solid certainty which should discourage the outbreak of war.

A more effective defense could even be of great relevance should the time come for serious discussion of the regulation of armaments. There will have been by then a vast accumulation of materials for atomic weapons, and a troublesome margin of uncertainty with regard to its accounting--very troublesome indeed if we still live with vestiges of the suspicion, hostility and secretiveness of the world of today. This will call for a very broad and robust regulation of armaments, in which existing forces and weapons are of a wholly different order than those required for the destruction of one great nation by another, in which steps of evasion will be either far too vast to conceal or far too small to have, in view of then existing measures of defense, a decisive strategic effect. Defense and regulation may thus be necessary complements. And here, too, all that we do effectively to contribute to our own immunity will be helpful in giving us some measure of an increased freedom of action.

These are three paths that we may take. None of them is a wholly new suggestion. They have, over the long years, been discussed; but they have not been acted on. In my opinion they have not, in any deep sense, been generally understood. We need to be clear that there will not be many great atomic wars for us, nor for our institutions. It is important that there not be one. We need to liberate our own great resources, to shape our destiny.

[i] "The Challenge to Americans," by Henry L. Stimson.  
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Commission; Director, during the war, of the Atomic Bomb Project Laboratory at Los Alamos; Director of the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton

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# The Illusion of Disengagement

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*Dean Acheson*



*Dean Acheson sworn into office as Secretary of State by Chief Justice Fred M. Vinson, January 21, 1949.*

THE other day I was re-reading Clarence Day's wise and delightful book, "This Simian World," and came across the paragraph remarking on what unpromising entrants in the struggle for supremacy on this planet the lemurs might have seemed many millions of years ago. "Those frowzy, unlovely hordes of apes and monkeys," he wrote, "were so completely lacking in signs of kingship; they were so flighty, too, in their

ways, and had so little purpose, and so much love for absurd and idle chatter, that they would have struck us . . . as unlikely material. Such traits, we should have reminded ourselves, persist. They are not easily left behind, even after long stages; and they form a terrible obstacle to all high advancement."

It does seem to be true that, in our day, only in a sort of cyclical way do free societies retain an understanding of their own experience, and hold to the purposes which it has inspired. Is this because some echo of those early traits still persists, or because the inevitable hardening of the arteries of each generation brings on some failure of memory, or for still other reasons?

Certainly moods change as memories, once fearful, become dimmed, as new anxieties arise, and as present exertions become increasingly distasteful. The bitter teachings of 1914-1918, and the determination they fired, had quite disappeared by 1938, to be replaced by ideas of neutralism, withdrawal from conflict, "America First." After these, in turn, were swept away by the devastation of another world war and by a display of world leadership entailing vast national effort, another 20 years has ended by bringing back the old yearnings and errors under a new name. "Disengagement," it is called now; but it is the same futile--and lethal--attempt to crawl back into the cocoon of history. For us there is only one disengagement possible--the final one, the disengagement from life, which is death.

Soon after we had awakened from the daze of the Second World War, it became clear to us that our protected adolescence as a great Power was over. The empires which had spawned us, whose capital had developed us, whose balance of power had given us security, either disappeared in the two world wars or passed to more minor rôles. We were face to face with the responsibility of adult national life in the

most critical situation imaginable. A world which for a century had had an integral life of sorts was split into three segments. One--the Soviet-Communist segment, militarily unequalled, except in nuclear power in which it was weak, was held together by an ideological and economic system supported by force. Another--containing the vast populations of Asia, the Middle East, and North and West Africa--was left in confusion and turmoil at the end of the war; and, in addition, either had newly gained national independence or was demanding it from rulers gravely weakened. To these people had come also expectations of an improving life to a degree never before imagined and, perhaps, unfulfillable.

The third segment was what was left of the old world order--roughly Europe and the Western Hemisphere. The second and third segments had certain important common characteristics. They were not in the Soviet power system. But various and large parts of them could, under some conditions, be added to it.

In this situation, as it appeared not long after the end of the Second World War, the task of what has since come to be called the Atlantic Community, that is, the states of Western Europe and the Western Hemisphere, was to bring about and maintain with increasing strength and vitality a non-Communist world system. Within this system, not only the states mentioned, but those in the second segment as well, should, if the system was workable and working, be able to pursue their national ends in their own way.

This effort required, at the beginning, a great deal of reconstruction, particularly in Europe. The only state strong enough to furnish the leadership in this effort was the United States. Both its government and its people responded vigorously to the press of necessity. The steps which were taken are well known and need not be recalled here. The important thing is that they were successful in bringing about

a common sense of purpose, certainly in Western Europe and the Western Hemisphere, and to a large extent were effective in giving opportunity to those nations in Asia and Africa which were just coming to the point where they were free to pursue their national destinies undirected from the outside.

Since the war, therefore, the foreign policy of the United States has become, by necessity, a positive and activist one. It has been one of attempting to draw together, through various groupings, that Western area which must be the center of a free and open world system, and of taking the leading part in providing it with military security, and with a developing economy in which trade could grow and industrial productivity could be developed, both in areas which were already industrially advanced and those which were at the threshold. At the same time it was an essential part of this policy to produce the maximum degree of cohesion throughout the whole non-Communist area, through political policies which would make for integration and strength rather than for exploitation.

Various aspects of this effort--the military, the economic, the political--I have attempted to describe in some detail elsewhere. I have there pointed out the interdependence of the Western Hemisphere and Western Europe; how the power factors involved make it essential that this part of the world shall stand firmly united; how, without the American connection, it is impossible to maintain independent national life in Western Europe; and how, without Western Europe, the power factors would turn disastrously against the United States.

Broadly speaking, these conceptions have for the past decade or more had wide acceptance both in this country and throughout the Western world. They have been successful beyond the dream of those who first advocated them. They are beginning to bear the most valuable fruit.

Recently, efforts have been relaxed. Our military security and much of our prestige resting upon it have been impaired, though not so far that vigorous action cannot make the necessary repair. But, throughout the world, as I indicated at the beginning of this article, voices are being raised to ask whether it is necessary to continue facing the hazards of the military situation, to continue bearing the expense of making vital and progressive the economic life of the whole free world; whether coexistence with the Communist system cannot be bought at a cheaper price and with less effort. And so, when people are told, as they have been by Mr. George Kennan, a man of the highest character and reputation and justly entitled to a respectful hearing, that this is possible, his words have a powerful impact.

Mr. Kennan's views are not new to him. They do not spring from a fresh analysis of the current situation. He has held and expressed these views for at least a decade. The effect which they have had currently makes us realize anew that the reception given to the expression of ideas depends upon the mood of the hearers. This reception may have little to do with the truth of the ideas expressed; it has a great deal to do with their power. Mr. Kennan has told people what they want to hear, though not because they want to hear it. What is it that he has said?

The ideas are almost as vague as the style is seductive. The thoughts are expressed as musings, wonderings, questionings, suggestions. But what comes out of it is about this: First, there is the idea of disengagement in Europe. By this is meant mutual withdrawal of American, British and Canadian, as well as Russian, forces from somewhere. This somewhere first appears to be East and West Germany; then the "heart of Europe;" again, the Continent; and sometimes, from the general ethos of the discussion, it appears to be all overseas areas.

The second idea is the neutralization of Germany. The third is that there should be no nuclear weapons in Europe. And the fourth is that throughout Asia and Africa, in what are called the "uncommitted areas," there is little "to be done . . . except to relax;" that "It is perfectly natural that Russia . . . should have her place and her voice there too;" that "our generation in the West" has no "obligation vis-à-vis the underdeveloped parts of the world," and, anyway, there is no "absolute value attached to rapid economic development. Why all the urgency?" If any sound schemes for development are presented, we should support them, "when they arise;" but, only on the condition that they tell us first "how you propose to assure that if we give you this aid it will not be interpreted among your people as a sign of weakness and fear on our part, or of a desire to dominate you." If Asian and African states should find in this grudging, meager and humiliating policy no opportunity to push their economic development within the non-Communist system, and should turn to Communist methods and Communist help, we should accept their action without concern and with good nature.

One sees at once that these conceptions are the very opposite of those which the West has been following for the past ten years or more. It is an assertion that the struggle naught availeth; that it is dangerous, unwise and unproductive. It is a withdrawal from positive and active leadership in the creation of a workable system of states. It is a conception, blended of monasticism and the diplomacy of earlier centuries, by which the United States would artfully manœuvre its way between and around forces without attempting to direct or control them.

If we attempt to analyze these suggestions, the problems which they create promptly emerge. First, let us consider the idea that something called disengagement can be brought about by removing American, British, Canadian and Russian troops from some area in Europe. What disengagement does

this bring about? Very little, as one sees if one pauses to consider the realities. Compare the confrontation which takes place between the United States and the Soviet Union in Germany with that which occurs along the DEW line--that system of early warning stations which stretches from Alaska, across the Arctic regions and far out into the Atlantic. Here there are daily contacts on a thousand radarscopes, and doubtless the same is true on the other side of the screen. Some of these blips on the radar are actual aircraft; sometimes atmospheric conditions produce them. But they represent a contact which no action in Germany can disengage. There is confrontation in every part of the world where the area of the open and free world system may be reduced by Soviet military, economic or political penetration. No action in Germany will produce disengagement here. The word is a mere conception, which confuses and does not represent any reality.

So, let us turn from it to consider something more capable of delineation. For instance, exactly what is the extent of the mutual withdrawal about which we are asked to negotiate? The answer to this question does not depend upon penetrating the vagueness of Mr. Kennan's language. For there can be little doubt, I believe, that, once a withdrawal begins, it will be complete, so far as United States, British and Canadian troops are concerned. All the forces, foreign and domestic, will combine to bring this about. As the withdrawal makes the military position weaker, our forces will be less desired wherever they may remain. If withdrawal is represented as advantageous for Germans, it would seem equally advantageous to Frenchmen. Icelanders, Moroccans, Saudi Arabians and the rest would quickly follow. And, once the idea caught hold, Americans would, of course, join in the general demand. The New Statesman shows us how the matter is now being presented to a small section of British opinion and how it could bemuse a still larger one in that

country:

Yet the missile agreement is one of the most extraordinary and complete surrenders of sovereignty ever to be made by one country for the exclusive benefit of another. For the missiles are not intended to defend Britain; on the contrary, they decisively increase its vulnerability. Their prime purpose is to reduce the likelihood of a Soviet ICBM onslaught on America during the crucial three-year period which must elapse before America possesses ICBMs herself. The sole beneficiary will be America.[i]

We should not deceive ourselves. After disengagement, we would soon find ourselves discussing complete withdrawal from all European areas and, very possibly, from bases in the Far East and Near East as well. Indeed, Mr. Khrushchev has twice served warning, once in Berlin in 1957 and again in January of 1958, that the sort of withdrawal which he is talking about is withdrawal from all overseas bases. This would cut the striking power of the free world by at least a half, and, perhaps, until our missile program accelerates, by much more.

We must think of what we purchase for this vast price. What would Russian withdrawal from Germany or the heart of Europe amount to? Is it possible to believe that the Soviet Government, whatever it may say or whatever agreement it may sign, would, or could, contemplate withdrawing its forces behind, say, the River Bug, and keeping them there? And, by forces, I mean effective Russian physical power, by whatever name called. It is hard to see, after the events in Poland and Hungary, whatever the Russian Government might wish, how it could possibly undertake so hazardous a course. For, if its physical force were permanently removed from Eastern Europe, who can believe that even one of the Communist régimes would survive? Therefore, wherever Soviet forces might be garrisoned, the expectation and threat of their

return must continue to be ever present (at most it would require from 12 to 18 hours) if Russia is to maintain the power which it has insisted upon as recently as the Hungarian uprising.

At this point in our discussion we must examine the conception of the neutralization of Germany; and then bring together the consequences of withdrawal and neutralization. It is necessary, we are told, that Germany should not be allowed to be free to choose its own course after unification. It must accept limitations upon its military forces and its military alignment. In other words, its national life will be conducted under far greater limitations than those in which other sovereign people live. The possibility that any such situation could endure seems to me quite fantastic.

Whatever Germans might initially think they would be willing to do, there is no precedent in history for, nor does there seem to me to be any possibility of, the successful insulation of a large and vital country situated, as Germany is, between two power systems and with ambitions and purposes of its own. Constant strain would undermine the sanctions of neutralization. The final result would be determined by the relative strength of the pressures from the two sides. As I have already suggested, the pressure would all be from the Russian side. For, there would be no Power in Europe capable of opposing Russian will after the departure of the United States from the Continent and the acceptance of a broad missile-free area. Then, it would not be long, I fear, before there would be an accommodation of some sort or another between an abandoned Germany and the great Power to the East. Under this accommodation, a sort of new Ribbentrop-Molotov agreement, the rest of the free world would be faced with what has twice been so intolerable as to provoke world war--the unification of the European land mass (this time the Eurasian land mass) under a Power hostile to national independence and individual freedom.

But, without this withdrawal of forces and the neutralization of Germany, Mr. Kennan sees "little hope for any removal of the division of Germany at all--nor, by the same token, of the removal of the division of Europe." Naturally enough, these words have found a strong echo in Germany. But it is a fading one, as Germans ponder the conditions which would flow from unification by withdrawal and neutralization, and see the end of the best hopes of the German people. Two weak states--East and West Germany--jockeying for position in a sort of no-man's land, could raise the East-West "tensions" to a point compared to which anything we have yet experienced would seem mild indeed. In all this West Berlin would, of course, be the first victim. It would be a wholly inadequate judgment upon those whose naïveté and weakness produced this result that they should share the guilt of those Western politicians whose preaching of "liberation" encouraged the uprisings in East Berlin and Hungary, and, like them, should sit in supine impotence while more gallant men suffered. The best hope for German unification I shall mention shortly.

Turning to Eastern Europe, Mr. Kennan sees those countries, without the withdrawal of Russian troops, caught between the dilemma of constant revolutions, bloodily suppressed, and the acknowledgment of Soviet domination. This view seems to me founded on nothing but its assertion. I cannot for the life of me see how the movement toward a greater degree of national identity in Eastern Europe is furthered by removing from the Continent the only Power capable of opposing the Soviet Union.

Nor do I see that the facts bear out Mr. Kennan's gloomy predictions. For instance, if the experience of 1956 had produced only the development in Poland or if the Hungarians had acted with as much restraint, it would have been plain to all that the attraction of the power of the West, of the possibilities which its system opens to all, was proving very strong indeed--stronger even than the secret police and

Soviet occupation troops. The fact that in Hungary the reaction was pushed to the point where the Russians felt it necessary to suppress it with force proves only that it was handled unwisely.

So, as we think about the matter, we must wonder whether there is anything we can purchase "one-half so precious as the goods" we sell. We are told not to worry about this; that, even though it seems quite unlikely that the Russians would carry out any withdrawal, nevertheless, it is good propaganda to make the offer and cause them to refuse it. This seems to me profoundly false. In the first place, it treats international negotiations as though all the figures on the chessboard were made of wood or ivory; whereas, in fact, we are dealing with living people, subject to all the emotions of mankind. If I were a European and had to live through two or three years of American negotiations about withdrawing from the Continent, I think that very early in the game I would discount America's remaining and would prepare to face a new situation.

Furthermore, to believe that the Russians can be put in the position of refusing to evacuate Europe underrates their skill in negotiation. They would simply, as they have already done, continue to raise the price. And it would be we and not they who would do the refusing.

The evils of a timid and defeatist policy of retreat are far deeper than its ineptness as a move in the propaganda battle. It would abandon the efforts of a decade, which are bringing closer to realization the hopes of Western Europe, of Germany, and of Eastern Europe as well. From the low point of 1946-1947 the economic, social and political health and strength of Western Europe--of which West Germany has become an integral and vital part--have grown greatly. Their pull on Eastern Europe continues to mount. To continue this the American connection is essential. The success of the movement toward unity in the west of Europe is no longer in doubt. Only the rate of progress is undecided. The Coal and

Steel Community, Euratom, the Common Market have been accepted. A common currency and political community are on the way.

All of this is threatened by the call to retreat. It will not do to say that a united Germany, made militarily impotent and neutralized, can play an effective part in bringing to fruition a united and vigorous European community. The slightest puff of reality blows this wishful fancy away. The jockeyings and tensions of the two parts of Germany, the unopposable threat of Russian power, the bribes which can be dangled before Germany by the Soviet Union in the form of boundary rectifications and economic opportunities--these alone are enough to put an end to hope of a united and strong Europe, invigorated by Germany.

For those who believe that Eastern Europe would welcome American and Russian troop withdrawals as the beginning of liberation, I suggest a quiet sampling of candid Polish opinion. I venture to predict that what they would find is a horror at being abandoned by the West and left between the Soviet Union and a Germany similarly abandoned, to which the offer of another partition of Poland might be irresistible.

But, if one looks at the other side of the medal, what a different face it bears! A strong, united Europe could have the men and the resources--along with British and United States contingents--to deal by conventional forces with invasion by conventional forces, particularly as the Eastern European satellites are becoming a danger, and not an asset, to Soviet military power. This, if pressed, gives real mutuality of benefit to a negotiated reduction in forces. It makes possible, too, a time when nuclear forces would no longer have to be relied on as a substitute for conventional forces, and with it a real opportunity to negotiate this threat further and further into the background.

Finally, a thriving Western Europe would continue its irresistible pull upon East Germany and Eastern Europe. This would, in turn, have its effect upon the demands of the Russian people on their government. With a rise in the standards of living in the Soviet Union, and as some broader participation in the direction of affairs was made essential by their very magnitude and complexity, the Russian need for the forced communization and iron control of Eastern Europe would diminish. Then negotiations looking toward a united Germany, under honorable and healing conditions, and toward the return of real national identity to the countries of Eastern Europe, while preserving also the interests of the Russian people in their own security and welfare, could for the first time be meaningful and show the buds of hope. This has been the goal of Western policy for the past decade.

It would be self-delusion to close our eyes to the difficulties which lie before us along this road. Some we have created ourselves. Our military strategy, with its sole reliance on massive retaliation, and a budgetary policy which has neglected even that, have caused us a loss of relative military power and of prestige. Some of our political policies have weakened our alliances. Our allies, too, are having their troubles. In what are perhaps the two closest of them, we could wish (as they undoubtedly do, too) that both the present and the immediate future held greater promise for the development of strength and popular attitudes more attuned to reality. We all share together the common problem of devising a military policy for NATO which will avoid making the proposed defense seem as fearsome as the potential enemy's threat, and which will be a real deterrent because it is a credible one.

I have suggested elsewhere that this is possible. Briefly, the way is to create a situation in fact which equals the political purpose of the North Atlantic Treaty--that is, a situation where in order for the Soviet Union to attack, or coerce,

Europe it would have to attack, or coerce, the United States as well. This, if we all use a fair degree of intelligence about our defenses, the Soviet Union could be deterred from doing. What is required is a short-range effort which does not preclude a sustained effort toward a wiser long-range goal. The short-range effort would be to provide NATO with such effective nuclear power that the Soviet Union could not have its way without destroying that power; and an attempt to destroy it would be impractical apart from a simultaneous attempt to disable the United States, which could be made too dangerous. The longer-range purpose would be to develop adequate conventional forces in Europe, with British and American participation, to make mutually desirable a real reduction and equalization of both Soviet and NATO forces and a controlled elimination of nuclear material for military use.

I quite understand that all of this is difficult. But I believe also that "the mode by which the inevitable comes to pass is effort."

Finally, Mr. Kennan's discussion of the uncommitted countries of Asia and Africa seems to me to disclose a complete lack of understanding of the forces which are at work there. In the first place, he would like to tell them, as Thoreau would have done, that the whole march of industrial civilization since the beginning of the nineteenth century has been a mistake; that they must be patient about increasing their standard of living; that they must curb the mad rate at which they reproduce; that we have no sense of guilt or obligation to them because we are in a position to help their economic development as our own was helped. But when they have any sound plans, we will consider them on terms which they cannot accept. This means that we find nothing to our interest in their industrialization; and that they are in reality ward heelers who threaten one political side with desertion to the other unless they receive a handout or a sinecure.

Nothing could be further from the truth. These governments are faced with a demand, just as are the Government of the United States and the Government of the Soviet Union, that conditions shall exist under which a rising standard of living is possible. The conditions in these countries vary from those which are still deep in an agricultural stage to those which have begun industrialization and are ready, once capital is available, to push it speedily forward. Governments cannot stay in power unless they respond to the demands of those who will keep them there. Even the oligarchs in the Kremlin are under pressure, which they cannot altogether refuse, to expand the standard of living in Russia.

There are two ways in which the governments of the undeveloped countries can bring about conditions which their peoples demand. Both of these involve acquiring capital, but under very different conditions. One involves the adoption of totalitarian authority, a temporary depression of the standard of living, forced savings, and industrial equipment from Russia, paid for by the export of raw materials. The other involves the maintenance, and perhaps a steady expansion, of the standard of living, the maintenance of systems of government in which there is a considerable area of freedom, the import of capital from Western Europe and North America, and the repayment of these loans over a considerable period of time by participation in the expanding trade of an open economic system. To say that economic development has nothing whatever to do with political alignment is a fallacy of the gravest sort. It is, of course, true that economic aid cannot force, cannot ensure, a political alignment from any country. But it is certain that, without it, a different alignment will take place.

May I conclude by repeating that the new isolationism which we have been discussing, and the reception it has received, is gravely disturbing, not only because it is utterly fallacious, but because the harder course which it calls on us to forego

has been so successful. If one compares the non-Communist segments of the world today with what they were 12 years ago, one sees enormous progress. If one compares, as we have tried to do here, the pull of a vigorous free system, held together by the joint efforts of at least some of its members to provide military security, economic power and political leadership, one sees how strong it is and what effect it has had. If one considers the changes which have already occurred within the Soviet Union, one can see the time approaching when adjustments in Eastern Europe are possible, when military forces can be reduced, and when the menace of nuclear destruction will be greatly diminished, if not removed. Surely, there are dangers, and great dangers, but with good sense we can live through these. We will not make them less by weakening ourselves, destroying the confidence of our allies, and refusing to help those people who are willing to work to some extent, at least within the system which we and our allies, together, have created and can make ever more vigorous and appealing.

[i] "Britain's Suicide Pact," *New Statesman: The Week-end Review*, January 4, 1958, p. 1.

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DEAN ACHESON, Secretary of State of the United States, 1949-53; author of "A Democrat Looks at His Party," "A Citizen Looks at Congress" and "Power and Diplomacy"

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# On Peaceful Coexistence

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*Nikita S. Khrushchev*



*Nikita Khrushchev.*

I have been told that the question of peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems is uppermost today in the minds of many Americans--and not only Americans. The question of coexistence, particularly in our day, interests literally every man and woman on the globe.

We all of us well know that tremendous changes have taken place in the world. Gone, indeed, are the days when it took weeks to cross the ocean from one continent to the other or when a trip from Europe to America, or from Asia to Africa, seemed a very complicated undertaking. The progress of modern technology has reduced our planet to a rather small place; it has even become, in this sense, quite congested. And if in our daily life it is a matter of considerable importance to

establish normal relations with our neighbors in a densely inhabited settlement, this is so much the more necessary in the relations between states, in particular states belonging to different social systems.

You may like your neighbor or dislike him. You are not obliged to be friends with him or visit him. But you live side by side, and what can you do if neither you nor he has any desire to quit the old home and move to another town? All the more so in relations between states. It would be unreasonable to assume that you can make it so hot for your undesirable neighbor that he will decide to move to Mars or Venus. And vice versa, of course.

What, then, remains to be done? There may be two ways out: either war--and war in the rocket and H-bomb age is fraught with the most dire consequences for all nations--or peaceful coexistence. Whether you like your neighbor or not, nothing can be done about it, you have to find some way of getting on with him, for you both live on one and the same planet.

But the very concept of peaceful coexistence, it is said, by its alleged complexity frightens certain people who have become unaccustomed to trusting their neighbors and who see a double bottom in each suitcase. People of this kind, on hearing the word "coexistence," begin to play around with it in one way and another, sizing it up and applying various yardsticks to it. Isn't it a fraud? Isn't it a trap? Does not coexistence signify the division of the world into areas separated by high fences, which do not communicate with each other? And what is going to happen behind those fences?

The more such questions are piled up artificially by the cold-war mongers, the more difficult it is for the ordinary man to make head or tail of them. It would therefore be timely to rid the essence of this question of all superfluous elements and to

attempt to look soberly at the most pressing problem of our day--the problem of peaceful competition.

## II

One does not need to delve deeply into history to appreciate how important it is for mankind to ensure peaceful coexistence. And here it may be said parenthetically that the Europeans might have benefited a great deal in their day if, instead of organizing senseless crusades which invariably ended in failure, they had established peaceful relations with the differently-minded peoples of the Moslem East.

But let us turn to facts concerning the relatively recent past when the watershed between states no longer consisted of different religious creeds and customs, but of much deeper differences of principle relating to the choice of social systems. This new situation arose on the threshold of the 1920s when, to the booming of the guns of the Russian cruiser Aurora which had joined the rebellious workers and peasants, a new and unprecedented social system, a state of workers and peasants, came into the world.

Its appearance was met with the disgruntled outcries of those who naively believed the capitalist system to be eternal and immutable. Some people even made an attempt to strangle the unwanted infant in the cradle. Everybody knows how this ended: our people voted with their arms for Soviet power, and it came to stay. And even then, in 1920, V. I. Lenin, replying to the question of an American correspondent as to what basis there could be for peace between Soviet Russia and America, said: "Let the American imperialists not touch us. We won't touch them."

From its very inception the Soviet state proclaimed peaceful coexistence as the basic principle of its foreign policy. It was no accident that the very first state act of the Soviet power

was the decree on peace, the decree on the cessation of the bloody war.

What, then, is the policy of peaceful coexistence?

In its simplest expression it signifies the repudiation of war as a means of solving controversial issues. However, this does not cover the entire concept of peaceful coexistence. Apart from the commitment to non-aggression, it also presupposes an obligation on the part of all states to desist from violating each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty in any form and under any pretext whatsoever. The principle of peaceful coexistence signifies a renunciation of interference in the internal affairs of other countries with the object of altering their system of government or mode of life or for any other motives. The doctrine of peaceful coexistence also presupposes that political and economic relations between countries are to be based upon complete equality of the parties concerned, and on mutual benefit.

It is often said in the West that peaceful coexistence is nothing else than a tactical method of the socialist states. There is not a grain of truth in such allegations. Our desire for peace and peaceful coexistence is not conditioned by any time-serving or tactical considerations. It springs from the very nature of socialist society in which there are no classes or social groups interested in profiting by war or seizing and enslaving other people's territories. The Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, thanks to their socialist system, have an unlimited home market and for this reason they have no need to pursue an expansionist policy of conquest and an effort to subordinate other countries to their influence.

It is the people who determine the destinies of the socialist states. The socialist states are ruled by the working people themselves, the workers and peasants, the people who themselves create all the material and spiritual values of

society. And people of labor cannot want war. For to them war spells grief and tears, death, devastation and misery. Ordinary people have no need for war.

Contrary to what certain propagandists hostile to us say, the coexistence of states with different social systems does not mean that they will only fence themselves off from one another by a high wall and undertake the mutual obligation not to throw stones over the wall or pour dirt upon each other. No! Peaceful coexistence does not mean merely living side by side in the absence of war but with the constantly remaining threat of its breaking out in the future. Peaceful coexistence can and should develop into peaceful competition for the purpose of satisfying man's needs in the best possible way.

We say to the leaders of the capitalist states: Let us try out in practice whose system is better, let us compete without war. This is much better than competing in who will produce more arms and who will smash whom. We stand and always will stand for such competition as will help to raise the well-being of the people to a higher level.

The principle of peaceful competition does not at all demand that one or another state abandon the system and ideology adopted by it. It goes without saying that the acceptance of this principle cannot lead to the immediate end of disputes and contradictions which are inevitable between countries adhering to different social systems. But the main thing is ensured: the states which decided to adopt the path of peaceful coexistence repudiate the use of force in any form and agree on a peaceful settlement of possible disputes and conflicts, bearing in mind the mutual interests of the parties concerned. In our age of the H-bomb and atomic techniques this is the main thing of interest to every man.

Displaying skepticism about the idea of peaceful competition,

Vice President Nixon, in his speech over the Soviet radio and television in August 1959, attempted to find a contradiction between the Soviet people's professions of their readiness to coexist peacefully with the capitalist states and the slogans posted in the shops of our factories calling for higher labor productivity in order to ensure the speediest victory of Communism.

This was not the first time we heard representatives of the bourgeois countries reason in this manner. They say: The Soviet leaders argue that they are for peaceful coexistence. At the same time they declare that they are fighting for Communism and they even say that Communism will be victorious in all countries. How can there be peaceful coexistence with the Soviet Union if it fights for Communism?

People who treat the question in this way confuse matters, wilfully or not, by confusing the problems of ideological struggle with the question of relations between states. Those indulging in this sort of confusion are most probably guided by a desire to cast aspersions upon the Communists of the Soviet Union and to represent them as the advocates of aggressive actions. This, however, is very unwise.

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union at its Twentieth Congress made it perfectly clear and obvious that the allegations that the Soviet Union intends to overthrow capitalism in other countries by means of "exporting" revolution are absolutely unfounded. I cannot refrain from reminding you of my words at the Twentieth Congress: "It goes without saying that among us Communists there are no adherents of capitalism. But this does not mean that we have interfered or plan to interfere in the internal affairs of countries where capitalism still exists. Romain Rolland was right when he said that 'freedom is not brought in from abroad in baggage trains like Bourbons.' It is ridiculous to think that revolutions are made to order."

We Communists believe that the idea of Communism will ultimately be victorious throughout the world, just as it has been victorious in our country, in China and in many other states. Many readers of FOREIGN AFFAIRS will probably disagree with us. Perhaps they think that the idea of capitalism will ultimately triumph. It is their right to think so. We may argue, we may disagree with one another. The main thing is to keep to the positions of ideological struggle, without resorting to arms in order to prove that one is right. The point is that with military techniques what they are today, there are no inaccessible places in the world. Should a world war break out, no country will be able to shut itself off from a crushing blow.

We believe that ultimately that system will be victorious on the globe which will offer the nations greater opportunities for improving their material and spiritual life. It is precisely socialism that creates unprecedentedly great prospects for the inexhaustible creative enthusiasm of the masses, for a genuine flourishing of science and culture, for the realization of man's dream of a happy life, a life without destitute and unemployed people, of a happy childhood and tranquil old age, of the realization of the most audacious and ambitious human projects, of man's right to create in a truly free manner in the interests of the people.

But when we say that in the competition between the two systems, the capitalist and the socialist, our system will win, this does not mean, of course, that we shall achieve victory by interfering in the internal affairs of the capitalist countries. Our confidence in the victory of Communism is of a different kind. It is based on a knowledge of the laws governing the development of society. Just as in its time capitalism, as the more progressive system, took the place of feudalism, so will capitalism be inevitably superseded by Communism--the more progressive and more equitable social system. We are confident of the victory of the socialist system because it is a

more progressive system than the capitalist system. Soviet power has been in existence for only a little more than 40 years, and during these years we have gone through two of the worst wars, repulsing the attacks of enemies who attempted to strangle us. Capitalism in the United States has been in existence for more than a century and a half, and the history of the United States has developed in such a way that never once have enemies landed on American territory.

Yet the dynamics of the development of the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. are such that the 42-year-old land of the Soviets is already able to challenge the 150-year-old capitalist state to economic competition; and the most farsighted American leaders are admitting that the Soviet Union is fast catching up with the United States and will ultimately outstrip it. Watching the progress of this competition, anyone can judge which is the better system, and we believe that in the long run all the peoples will embark on the path of struggle for the building of socialist societies.

You disagree with us? Prove by facts that your system is superior and more efficacious, that it is capable of ensuring a higher degree of prosperity for the people than the socialist system, that under capitalism man can be happier than under socialism. It is impossible to prove this. I have no other explanation for the fact that talk of violently "rolling back" Communism never ceases in the West. Not long ago the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives deemed it proper to pass a resolution calling for the "liberation" of the socialist countries allegedly enslaved by Communism and, moreover, of a number of union republics constituting part of the Soviet Union. The authors of the resolution call for the "liberation" of the Ukraine, Byelorussia, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and even a certain "Ural Area."

I would not be telling the full truth if I did not say that the

adoption of this ill-starred resolution was regarded by the Soviet people as an act of provocation. Personally I agree with this appraisal.

It would be interesting to see, incidentally, how the authors of this resolution would have reacted if the parliament of Mexico, for instance, had passed a resolution demanding that Texas, Arizona and California be "liberated from American slavery." Apparently they have never pondered such a question, which is very regrettable. Sometimes comparisons help to understand the essence of a matter.

Travelling through the Soviet Union, leading American statesmen and public figures have had full opportunity to convince themselves that there is no hope of sowing strife between the Soviet people and the Communist Party and the Soviet Government, and of influencing them to rebel against Communism. How, then, are we to explain the unceasing attempts to revive the policy of "rolling back" Communism? What do they have in mind? Armed intervention in the internal affairs of the socialist countries? But in the West as well as in the East people are fully aware that under the conditions of modern military technique such actions are fraught with immediate and relentless retaliation.

So we come back to what we started with. In our day there are only two ways: peaceful coexistence or the most destructive war in history. There is no third choice.

### III

The problem of peaceful coexistence between states with different social systems has become particularly pressing in view of the fact that since the Second World War the development of relations between states has entered a new stage, that now we have approached a period in the life of mankind when there is a real chance of excluding war once

and for all from the life of society. The new alignment of international forces which has developed since the Second World War offers ground for the assertion that a new world war is no longer a fatal inevitability, that it can be averted.

First, today not only all the socialist states, but many countries in Asia and Africa which have embarked upon the road of independent national statehood, and many other states outside the aggressive military groupings, are actively fighting for peace.

Secondly, the peace policy enjoys the powerful support of the broad masses of the people all over the world.

Thirdly, the peaceful socialist states are in possession of very potent material means, which cannot but have a deterring effect upon the aggressors.

Prior to the Second World War the U.S.S.R. was the only socialist country, with not more than 17 percent of the territory, 3 percent of the population, and about 10 percent of the output of the world. At present, the socialist countries cover about one-fourth of the territory of the globe, have one-third of its population, and their industrial output accounts for about one-third of the total world output.

This is precisely the explanation of the indisputable fact that throughout the past years, hotbeds of war breaking out now in one and now in another part of the globe--in the Near East and in Europe, in the Far East and in Southeast Asia--have been extinguished at the very outset.

What does the future hold in store for us?

As a result of the fulfillment and overfulfillment of the present Seven Year Plan of economic development of the U.S.S.R., as well as of the plans of the other socialist countries of Europe and Asia, the countries of the socialist system will then

account for a little more than half of the world output. Their economic power will grow immeasurably, and this will help to an even greater extent to consolidate world peace: the material might and moral influence of the peace-loving states will be so great that any bellicose militarist will have to think ten times before risking going to war. It is the good fortune of mankind that a community of socialist states which are not interested in new war has been set up, because to build socialism and Communism the socialist countries need peace. Today the community of socialist countries which has sprung up on the basis of complete equality holds such a position in the development of all branches of economy, science and culture as to be able to exert an influence towards preventing the outbreak of new world wars.

Hence we are already in a practical sense near to that stage in the life of humanity when nothing will prevent people from devoting themselves wholly to peaceful labor, when war will be wholly excluded from the life of society.

But if we say that there is no fatal inevitability of war at present, this by no means signifies that we can rest on our laurels, fold our arms and bask in the sun in the hope that an end has been put to wars once and for all. Those in the West who believe that war is to their benefit have not yet abandoned their schemes. They control considerable material forces, as well as military and political levers, and there is no guarantee that some tragic day they will not attempt to set them in motion. That is why it is so much the more necessary to continue an active struggle in order that the policy of peaceful coexistence may triumph throughout the world not in words but in deeds.

Of much importance, of course, is the fact that this policy has in our day merited not only the widest moral approval but also international legal recognition. The countries of the socialist camp in their relations with the capitalist states are guided

precisely by this policy. The principles of peaceful coexistence are reflected in the decisions of the Bandung Conference of Asian and African countries. Furthermore, many countries of Europe, Asia and Africa have solemnly proclaimed this principle as the basis of their foreign policy. Finally, the idea of peaceful coexistence has found unanimous support in the decisions of the twelfth and thirteenth sessions of the United Nations General Assembly.

In our view, peaceful coexistence can become lasting only if the good declarations in favor of peace are supported by active measures on the part of the governments and peoples of all countries. As far as the Soviet Union is concerned, it has already done a good deal in this respect, and I am able to share some experiences with you.

As far back as March 12, 1951, the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. adopted a "Law on the Defense of Peace," stating:

(1) Propaganda for war, in whatever form it may be conducted, undermines the cause of peace, creates the menace of a new war and therefore constitutes the gravest crime against humanity.

(2) Persons guilty of war propaganda should be brought to court and tried as heinous criminals.

Further, the Soviet Union has in recent years unilaterally reduced its armed forces by more than 2,000,000 men. The funds released as a result have been used to develop the economy and further raise the material and cultural living standards of the Soviet people.

The Soviet Union has liquidated its bases on the territories of other states.

The Soviet Union unilaterally discontinued the tests of atomic weapons and refrained from conducting them further until it

became finally clear that the Western powers refused to follow our example and were continuing the explosions.

The Soviet Union has repeatedly submitted detailed and perfectly realistic proposals for disarmament, meeting the positions of the Western powers halfway. But to solve the disarmament problem it is necessary for our Western partners to agree and desire to meet us halfway too. This is just what is lacking.

When it became clear that it was very difficult under these conditions to solve the complex disarmament problem immediately, we proposed another concrete idea to our partners: Let us concentrate our attention on those problems which lend themselves most easily to a solution. Let us undertake initial partial steps on matters concerning which the views of the different parties have been brought closer together.

It is perfectly clear that one of these questions today is the question of discontinuing atomic and hydrogen weapon tests. The progress achieved in this matter justifies the hope that an agreement on the discontinuation of nuclear weapon tests will shortly be reached. Implementation of this measure will, of course, be an important step on the way to the solution of the disarmament problem and the banning of nuclear weapons in general.

Attributing much importance to contacts and intercourse between statesmen of all countries, the Soviet Government a few years ago proposed that an East-West heads of government conference be convened in order to come to terms--taking into account present-day realities and guided by the spirit of mutual understanding--on concrete measures, the realization of which would help to relax international tension.

We also proposed that this conference consider those

international questions for the settlement of which realistic prerequisites already existed. As a first step toward such a settlement, we proposed to the powers concerned that a peace treaty be concluded with Germany and that West Berlin be granted the status of a demilitarized free city. I want to emphasize particularly that we were guided primarily by the desire to put a final end to the aftermath of the Second World War. We regard the liquidation of the consequences of the Second World War and the conclusion of a peace treaty with the two German states--the German Democratic Republic and the German Federal Republic--as the question of questions.

Indeed, 14 years have already passed since the war ended, but the German people are still without a peace treaty. The delay has afforded wide scope for renewed activities of the West German militarists and revanchists. They have already proclaimed their aggressive plans, laying claim, for instance, to lands in Poland and Czechoslovakia. Of course, the German revanchists are thinking not only of a march to the East; they also know the way to the West. In the Second World War the Hitlerites occupied Western Europe before advancing against the Soviet Union.

Will the direction chosen by the modern German revanchists for their aggression be any consolation to the peoples of Europe if a global war breaks out on that continent? The lessons of history should not be ignored. To do so often ends in tragedy.

Some say: The Soviet people are unduly sensitive. Can one assume that Western Germany is now in a position to precipitate another world war? Those who put the question thus forget that Western Germany is at present acting in the world arena not alone but within the military North Atlantic bloc. She plays a paramount role in this bloc. And more than that, life has shown that the North Atlantic Alliance is being gradually converted into an instrument of the German

militarists, which makes it easier for them to carry out aggressive plans. It is not at all impossible, therefore, that Western Germany, taking advantage of her position in the North Atlantic Alliance, might provoke hostilities in order to draw her allies into it and plunge the whole world into the chasm of a devastating war.

All this indicates how timely and realistic are the proposals of the Soviet Government for the conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany and for bringing the situation in West Berlin back to normal.

And yet, some of the Western opponents of the Soviet proposals say that if the Soviet Union really stands for peaceful coexistence it should even be asked to commit itself to the preservation of the existing status quo. Others argue that if the Western powers agree to the conclusion of a peace treaty with the two German states that would amount to a retreat on their part, and the Soviet Union should make some compensation for this "retreat."

There are no grounds whatever for these assertions, in our opinion. The task before us is to do away with the aftermath of the Second World War and to conclude a peace treaty. And any possibility of someone gaining and others losing, of someone acquiring and others making concessions, is out of the question here. All the parties concerned acquire a stronger foundation for the maintenance of peace in Europe and throughout the world in the shape of a peace treaty. Does this not accord with the interests of all the peoples?

At times, and of late especially, some spokesmen in the West have gone so far as to say that the abolition of the aftermath of the Second World War is a step which would allegedly intensify rather than ease international tension. It is hard to believe that there are no secret designs behind allegations of this kind, especially when attempts are made to present in a

distorted light the policy of the U.S.S.R., which is intended to secure a lasting and stable peace, by alleging that it all but leads to war. It seems to us, on the contrary, that the Soviet position on the German question corresponds most of all to the present-day reality.

It now seems that no sober-minded leader in the West is inclined any longer to advance the unrealistic demand for the so-called reunion of Germany before the conclusion of a peace treaty, in as much as more and more political leaders are becoming aware of the fact that reunion in the conditions now obtaining is a process which depends upon the Germans themselves and not upon any outside interference. We should start from the obvious fact that two German states exist, and that the Germans themselves must decide how they want to live. In as much as these two states, the German Democratic Republic and the German Federal Republic, do exist, the peace treaty should be concluded with them, because any further delay and postponement of this exceptionally important act tends not only to sustain the abnormal situation in Europe but also to aggravate it still further.

As for Germany's unity, I am convinced that Germany will be united sooner or later. However, before this moment comes--and no one can foretell when it will come--no attempts should be made to interfere from outside in this internal process, to sustain the state of war which is fraught with many grave dangers and surprises for peace in Europe and throughout the world. The desire to preserve the peace and to prevent another war should outweigh all other considerations of statesmen, irrespective of their mode of thinking. The Gordian knot must be cut: the peace treaty must be achieved if we do not want to play with fire--with the destinies of millions upon millions of people.

In this connection it is impossible to ignore also the question of West Berlin. It is commonly known that the German revanchists have made West Berlin the base for their constant undermining and subversive activity directed towards the provoking of war. We resolutely reject any attempts to ascribe to the Soviet Union the intention of seizing West Berlin and infringing upon the right of the population in this part of the city to preserve its present way of life. On the contrary, in demanding the normalization of the situation in West Berlin, we have proposed to convert it into a free city and to guarantee, jointly with the Western states, the preservation there of the way of life and of the social order which suits the West Berlin inhabitants best of all. This shows that the positions of the Government of the Soviet Union and the Governments of the Western states, judging by their statements, coincide on this question. We, and so do they, stand for the independence of West Berlin and for the preservation of the existing way of life there.

It is, therefore, only necessary to overcome the difficulties born of the cold war in order to find the way to an agreement on West Berlin and on the wider question of the conclusion of a peace treaty with the two German states. This is the way to ease international tensions and to promote peaceful coexistence. It would strengthen confidence between states and assist in the gradual abolition of unfriendliness and suspicion in international relations.

Implementation of the Soviet proposals would not injure the interests of the Western powers and would not give any one-sided advantages to anybody. At the same time, the settlement of the German question would prevent a dangerous development of events in Europe, remove one of the main causes of international tension and create favorable prospects for a settlement of other international issues.

The proposals of the Soviet Union were discussed at the

Foreign Ministers' Conference in Geneva. The Ministers did not succeed in reaching an agreement, but the Geneva conference did accomplish a great deal of useful work. The positions of the two sides were positively brought closer together and the possibility of an agreement on some questions has become apparent.

At the same time, we still have substantial differences on a number of questions. I am deeply convinced that they are not fundamental differences on which agreement is impossible. And if we still have differences and have not reached agreement on certain important questions, it is, as we believe, with adequate grounds--a result of the concessions made by the Western powers to Chancellor Adenauer, who is pursuing a military policy, the policy of the German revanchists. This is a case of the United States, Britain and France dangerously abetting Chancellor Adenauer. It would have been far better if the NATO allies of Western Germany would persuade Chancellor Adenauer, in the interest of the maintenance of peace, that his policy imperils the cause of peace and that it may ultimately end in irreparable disaster for Western Germany. All this emphasizes again that the representatives of the states concerned must do some more work in order to find mutually acceptable decisions.

I believe that my trip to the United States and the subsequent visit of President Eisenhower to the Soviet Union will afford the possibility for a useful exchange of opinions, for finding a common tongue and a common understanding of the questions that should be settled.

V

We are prepared now as before to do everything we possibly can in order that the relations between the Soviet Union and other countries, and, in particular, the relations between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A., should be built upon the foundation

of friendship and that they should fully correspond to the principles of peaceful coexistence.

I should like to repeat what I said at my recent press conference in Moscow: "Should Soviet-American relations become brighter, that will not fail to bring about an improvement in the relations with other states and will help to scatter the gloomy clouds in other parts of the globe also. Naturally, we want friendship not only with the U.S.A., but also with the friends of the U.S.A. At the same time we want to see the U.S.A. maintain good relations not only with us, but with our friends as well."

What, then, is preventing us from making the principles of peaceful coexistence an unshakable international standard and daily practice in the relations between the West and East?

Of course, different answers may be given to this question. But in order to be frank to the end, we should also say the following: It is necessary that everybody should understand the irrevocable fact that the historic process is irreversible. It is impossible to bring back yesterday. It is high time to understand that the world of the twentieth century is not the world of the nineteenth century, that two diametrically opposed social and economic systems exist in the world today side by side, and that the socialist system, in spite of all the attacks upon it, has grown so strong, has developed into such a force, as to make any return to the past impossible.

Real facts of life in the last ten years have shown convincingly that the policy of "rolling back" Communism can only poison the international atmosphere, heighten the tension between states and work in favor of the cold war. Neither its inspirers nor those who conduct it can turn back the course of history and restore capitalism in the socialist countries.

We have always considered the Americans realistic people. All the more are we astonished to find that leading representatives of the United States still number in their midst individuals who insist on their own way in the face of the obvious failure of the policy of "rolling back" Communism. But is it not high time to take a sober view of things and to draw conclusions from the lessons of the last 15 years? Is it not yet clear to everybody that consistent adherence to the policy of peaceful coexistence would make it possible to improve the international situation, to bring about a drastic cut in military expenditures and to release vast material resources for wiser purposes?

The well known British scientist, J. Bernal, recently cited figures to show that average annual expenditures for military purposes throughout the world between 1950 and the end of 1957 were expressed in the huge sum of about 90 billion dollars. How many factories, apartment houses, schools, hospitals and libraries could have been built everywhere with the funds now spent on the preparation of another war! And how fast could economic progress have been advanced in the underdeveloped countries if we had converted to these purposes at least some of the means which are now being spent on war purposes!

## VI

It is readily seen that the policy of peaceful coexistence receives a firm foundation only with increase in extensive and absolutely unrestricted international trade. It can be said without fear of exaggeration that there is no good basis for improvement of relations between our countries other than development of international trade.

If the principle of peaceful coexistence of states is to be adhered to, not in words, but in deeds, it is perfectly obvious that no ideological differences should be an obstacle to the

development and extension of mutually advantageous economic contacts, to the exchange of everything produced by human genius in the sphere of peaceful branches of material production.

In this connection it may be recalled that soon after the birth of the Soviet state, back in the early 1920s, the Western countries, proceeding from considerations of economic interest, agreed to establish trade relations with our country despite the acutest ideological differences. Since then, discounting comparatively short periods, trade between the Soviet Union and capitalist states has been developing steadily. No ideological differences prevented, for instance, a considerable extension of trade relations between the Soviet Union and Britain and other Western states in recent years. We make no secret of our desire to establish normal commercial and business contacts with the United States as well, without any restrictions, without any discriminations.

In June of last year the Soviet Government addressed itself to the Government of the United States with the proposal to develop economic and trade contacts between our two countries. We proposed an extensive and concrete program of developing Soviet-American trade on a mutually advantageous basis. The adoption of our proposals would undoubtedly accord with the interests of both states and peoples. However, these proposals have not been developed so far.

Striving for the restoration of normal trade relations with the United States, the Soviet Union does not pursue any special interests. In our economic development we rely wholly on the internal forces of our country, on our own resources and possibilities. All our plans for further economic development are drawn up taking into consideration the possibilities available here. As in the past, when we outline these plans we proceed only from the basis of our own possibilities and

forces. Irrespective of whether or not we shall trade with Western countries, the United States included, the implementation of our economic plans of peaceful construction will not in the least be impeded.

However, if both sides want to improve relations, all barriers in international trade must be removed. Those who want peaceful coexistence cannot but favor the development of trade, economic and business contacts. Only on this basis can international life develop normally.

## VII

Peaceful coexistence is the only way which is in keeping with the interests of all nations. To reject it would mean under existing conditions to doom the whole world to a terrible and destructive war at a time when it is fully possible to avoid it.

Is it possible that when mankind has advanced to a plane where it has proved capable of the greatest discoveries and of making its first steps into outer space, it should not be able to use the colossal achievements of its genius for the establishment of a stable peace, for the good of man, rather than for the preparation of another war and for the destruction of all that has been created by its labor over many millenniums? Reason refuses to believe this. It protests.

The Soviet people have stated and declare again that they do not want war. If the Soviet Union and the countries friendly to it are not attacked, we shall never use any weapons either against the United States or against any other countries. We do not want any horrors of war, destruction, suffering and death for ourselves or for any other peoples. We say this not because we fear anyone. Together with our friends, we are united and stronger than ever. But precisely because of that do we say that war can and should be prevented. Precisely because we want to rid mankind of war, we urge the Western

powers to peaceful and lofty competition. We say to all: Let us prove to each other the advantages of one's own system not with fists, not by war, but by peaceful economic competition in conditions of peaceful coexistence.

As for the social system in some state or other, that is the domestic affair of the people of each country. We always have stood and we stand today for non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries. We have always abided, and we shall abide, by these positions. The question, for example, what system will exist in the United States or in other capitalist countries cannot be decided by other peoples or states. This question can and will be decided only by the American people themselves, only by the people of each country.

The existence of the Soviet Union and of the other socialist countries is a real fact. It is also a real fact that the United States of America and the other capitalist countries live in different social conditions, in the conditions of capitalism. Then let us recognize this real situation and proceed from it in order not to go against reality, against life itself. Let us not try to change this situation by interferences from without, by means of war on the part of some states against other states.

I repeat, there is only one way to peace, one way out of the existing tension: peaceful coexistence.

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NIKITA S. KHRUSHCHEV, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and First Secretary of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U.

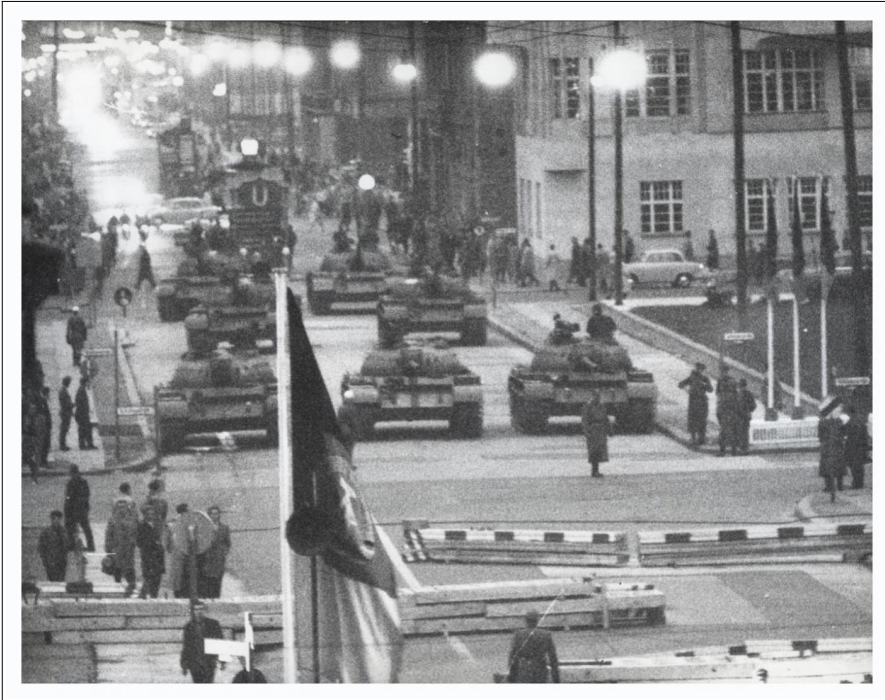
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# The Search for Stability

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*Henry A. Kissinger*



*Soviet tanks gather near Checkpoint Charlie where they engage in a tense face-off with U.S. tanks positioned on the western side, October 27, 1961.*

THESE lines are being written while the Foreign Ministers' Conference is still in progress. But even though its precise outcome cannot be foretold, the general nature of the diplomacy of the next few months is apparent. The West has presented a "package" proposal linking German unification to European security. This link has been rejected. The Soviet Union has insisted that German reunification should be left to the two German states and that the conference should concentrate on the issues which the Soviet leaders have defined as "soluble." It is clear, then, that the Western powers

are to be tested in their negotiation skill, their creativity and, most important, their convictions. Their response will influence importantly, perhaps crucially, the future of freedom in our time.

It is hoped that the Western performance in the months ahead will be more self-assured than that in the period just past. In an alliance, disagreements are unavoidable and different approaches may contribute to the vitality of a consensus finally achieved. Since in democracies policies are dependent on popular support, they are usually developed by a public debate which stresses conflicting approaches. Even bearing this in mind, we have reason for concern. The West's reaction to a clear Soviet menace to the very vitals of the Western alliance has been tentative and irresolute. More of the debate has dealt with what could be conceded than with the goals for which we should strive. The hesitation shown in developing the Western "package" does not augur well that it will be maintained with resolution. If the proposals presented at Geneva are valid today, one wonders why we lacked the imagination to present them before Soviet pressure made them appear as an improvisation to escape a difficult situation.

Nothing is more important for the West than to become clear about the causes of the present instability and to develop real conviction about the measures which it proposes for overcoming it. These measures may or may not prove negotiable. But it would be perilous to confuse the elements of stability with the terms on which the Soviet Union may be willing to settle. In our desire for agreement we must not lose sight of the issues at stake or of the goals for which to strive.

A lasting settlement is possible only if the Soviet leaders become convinced that they will not be able to use the West's desire for peace to demoralize it. If they are serious about their desire to avoid war, they must come to realize that

negotiations can be used for purely tactical purposes only so often and that, measured against the dangers of such a course, the gains they may score are paltry. We in turn should strive to demonstrate to the Soviet leaders that they have a real policy decision to make which we will do everything possible to ease: They must face the fact that the policy of applying relentless pressures on the West creates untold perils for all the peoples of the world. On the other hand, they must be convinced that they can increase their security through negotiation, that we will be flexible and conciliatory in working out reassurances for them against attack.

How valid, then, is the West's advocacy of German unification? What is the relationship of unification to European security? What measures are available to meet legitimate Soviet concerns for security?

## II

It is often maintained that one of the Soviet purposes in the present crisis is to win Western acceptance of the status quo in Eastern Europe, and we are urged to yield to facts that we are powerless to change. In passing, it may be doubted that the only reasonable response to facts is to adjust to them. But in the particular instance, it is important to distinguish the problem of Germany from that of the satellite countries of Eastern Europe. There the West has long since recognized the existing governments. Diplomatic relations have been established. Commercial agreements have been concluded. Even economic aid has been extended, as in the case of Poland. Hungary proved that the West is not prepared to support domestic upheavals with force. It is therefore difficult to assign any concrete meaning to the term "recognition of the status quo" or to imagine anything more the West could do to adjust to existing conditions. The danger to Soviet rule results from the inability of the Communist leaders to obtain domestic support in the countries concerned. The only

additional concession conceivable would be to collaborate in the Soviet repression of freedom by renouncing the principle of self-determination.

The case is different in Germany, however. Here a Communist régime has been established in only a portion of the country, a portion that has no historical, ethnic or cultural tradition distinct from Germany as a whole. The problem in Eastern Germany is not only that a puppet government has been forced on a hostile population; a separate state there--even were it non-Communist--would run counter to the German desire for reunification. Even Khrushchev on his trip to Eastern Germany found it necessary constantly to reiterate that unification was the ultimate goal, though not until Western Germany was ready to accept the Soviet system. As long as Germany remains divided the position of the East German régime is perforce precarious.

For the East German régime is basically threatened not only by the hostility of its own population but through the existence of a free and prosperous West Germany. Any West German government must advocate reunification, however moderate it may be in the means it chooses to pursue this objective and however patient it may be in bringing it about. No West German government can accept as permanent the forcible partition of German territory without undermining its domestic support. An alliance which demanded such a price from the German people would lose its meaning in German eyes. And whatever the self-restraint of either the Federal Republic or the Western allies, the history of Europe in the nineteenth century and of the anti-colonial struggles of the twentieth demonstrates that the desire for national independence cannot be ignored by governments. Or are we to assume that the desire for self-determination and national dignity is less strong in Europe than in Asia or Africa?

The Federal Republic would suffer a perhaps irreparable blow

if its allies accepted its present frontiers as final--even to the extent of not pressing for unification. The division of Germany may be unavoidable, but for the West a great deal depends on demonstrating what makes it so. An excess of "realism" about accepting the division of Germany will enable the Soviet Union to shift the responsibility for thwarting unification on us. This has already been foreshadowed by Khrushchev's statement to a group of West German editors that the West preferred a divided Germany for economic as well as military reasons,[i] and by the acts of the East German delegation at Geneva which has taken pains to project itself as the defender of German nationalism.[ii] If the Federal Republic is persuaded that it cannot achieve reunification through ties to the West, it is likely to seek its aims through separate dealings with the East. Unification could then be used by the Soviets as a lure to end, step by step, the achievements of European integration and to encourage a race for Moscow's favor. Alternatively, there may be a resurgence of virulent nationalism. Maintaining the Federal Republic as a willing partner of the Atlantic community is important not only for the future of Germany; it is even more vital for the peace of the world.

The present Soviet purpose goes far beyond perpetuating the status quo. The Soviet Union obviously sees in the consolidation of its East German satellite not only a means to destroy the cohesion of the West but also a first step in the Communization of all of Germany. "On what foundation should Germany be reunited?" Khrushchev said in Leipzig on March 7. "Can we agree when the capitalist world proposes to achieve the reunification of Germany at the expense of the German Democratic Republic and thus narrow down the front of socialism [*italics supplied*]? We have not been and we do not live to yield to capitalism. . . . The question can also be put thus: Why not reunite Germany by abolishing the capitalist system in West Germany and establishing there the

power of the working class? But it would be unrealistic today [italics supplied]. . . . If you want your children and grandchildren to remember you with gratitude, you should fight for the conclusion of a German peace treaty which would be an important step towards the reunification of Germany. . . ."

The Soviet draft of a peace treaty is not the end but the beginning of a process; it is a measure to consolidate a tactical base. Almost every clause in the Soviet treaty draft defines an opportunity for constant intervention. The Confederation proposed by the Soviet Union will relax tensions only until the Soviets are ready to press for a reunification of Germany under Communist aegis and in the meantime it would be used to demoralize Western Germany and to separate it from its allies. The history of coalitions in Poland, Rumania, Hungary and even China indicates that as soon as the Communists feel strong enough they will withdraw their recognition of the Federal Republic and claim that their puppet régime represents all of Germany, much as was done with the Lublin Government in Poland. This has already been foreshadowed by the violent attack on the West German government at Geneva and by Khrushchev's Leipzig speech: "The German Democratic Republic is a republic of the working class. It is a republic of workers and peasants, the homeland of all German workers" [italics supplied].

In all its negotiations the West must demonstrate the cynicism of the Soviet phrase that unification should be worked out by the two Germanys. If it is to be worked out by the German people, free elections are the best method. Confederation, on the other hand, would give the East German satellite a voice in West German affairs. By adding its weight to the opposition of any existing government it could demoralize political life in the Federal Republic or at the least force it into a rigid mold dangerous to democracy. It could press for weakening West Germany's European ties by

insisting that they conflicted with unification. If the Federal Republic refused to withdraw from those ties, Eastern Germany, having obtained recognition of its international status by the very fact of confederation, could leave the confederation as the advocate of German unity. If the Federal Republic accepted the Eastern overtures it would add fuel to Western suspicions of Germany and lead to even further estrangement.

It can be objected that the confederation principle works both ways. Would not the establishment of an all-German institution enable the Federal Republic to influence events in the East? This symmetry is more apparent than real. The apparatus of a police state makes the East German régime relatively immune to domestic pressure, especially if Soviet troops remain in Eastern Germany. But even in their absence little can be expected in the way of liberalization of the East German régime. The experience of Poland is a poor guide in this respect. Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Rumania have not been liberalized even though Soviet troops have been withdrawn; indeed in Czechoslovakia they were not even present when the Communist régime was established. In Poland there was a congruence of national and religious feeling supporting a liberal Communist régime to maintain national identity. In Eastern Germany these factors are not present; indeed the Communist régime is considered the chief obstacle to national aspirations.

Any negotiation on Germany thus faces two seemingly contradictory dangers: that we accept the division of Germany; or that in bargaining for unification we accept solutions which may lay the basis for the Soviet domination of all of Germany. Indeed the Western "package" plan has gone dangerously far in the latter direction. A commission of East and West German officials to expand contacts between the two parts of Germany has from the Soviet point of view many of the advantages of confederation. It is not surprising that

Mr. Gromyko described this proposal as "constructive." And the proposed plebiscite on an issue as technical as an electoral law may become a device to legitimize the existing voting procedure in East Germany--all the more so as there is no provision for a prior period of free political activity.[iii]

It thus becomes important for the West not only to advocate unification but to take its stand on issues that do not lend themselves to obfuscation. While we can offer formulas designed to save Soviet face--such as an interim period before free elections--we cannot surrender the right of the German people to determine their own fate at some reasonable stage. Once we leave the firm ground of this principle, we are in the realm of technical expedients where the opportunities for Soviet intransigence and manipulation are considerable. No voting formula, however subtle, can replace Soviet willingness to permit free popular expression. The Soviet leaders will not give up Eastern Germany through an oversight and we render neither ourselves nor the cause of negotiations a service by pretending that German reunification can be achieved by subterfuge. We can concede a great deal regarding the mode and timing of elections, but to give the East German régime a veto of unification, directly or indirectly, is either to legitimize the continued division of Germany, with dire consequences for the political stability of Western Germany, or to prepare the way for a Soviet Germany.

It is said by some that nobody really wants German unification. But surely it is within our control to set our own goals. If the West understands its interests, it must advocate German unification despite the experiences of two world wars and despite the understandable fear of a revival of German truculence. The West may have to acquiesce in the division of Germany but it cannot condone it. Any other course will in the end bring on what we should fear most: a militant, dissatisfied power in the center of the Continent. To strive for German

unification is not a bargaining device but the condition for European stability.

To be sure, the Soviet Union will oppose unification on any terms short of turning all of Germany into a Soviet state. But we cannot confine ourselves to proposals which the Soviet Union has said it will accept unless we are ready to settle all issues on Soviet terms. Flexibility cannot involve abandoning the principle of self-determination. Are our principles to cease having validity wherever the Soviet Union succeeds in creating a *fait accompli*? Are we to deny in Europe what we have defended in Asia and Africa? Adjustment to facts no doubt is often desirable, but if we elevate it into a universal principle we write a prescription for stagnation. During Suez we insisted that we would uphold our principles even against our allies. Are we to leave the impression now that we will uphold them only against our allies?

Our obligation is to make responsible proposals which are designed to take into account the legitimate security concerns of all parties. If the Soviet Union is sincerely concerned about the security of its territories, the West should be very generous in its response. What, then, of the proposals on European security?

### III

It has been said that the phrase "protecting Soviet legitimate security concerns" is without concrete meaning. But the experience of World War II and of a decade of cold war should give us some guide to understanding the problem. An agreement that takes into account the "legitimate" security interests of both sides must protect the Soviet Union against the danger of a resurgent German militarism and against an attack from NATO territory. But it must also safeguard the West against the risks of Soviet pressure and encroachment. It is true that the Soviet Union's experiences in this century

may make it unusually sensitive to German military strength. But it is also true that for over a century the Russian Empire in one form or another has been pressing on all peripheral areas, including Europe. The Soviet Union has a right to demand protection against military attack. Yet in a society of sovereign states, absolute security is obtainable only by reducing all other states to impotence. It is the road to Empire.

The stability of an international system depends on the degree to which it combines the need for security with the obligation of self-restraint. To rely entirely on the continued good will of another sovereign state is an abdication of statesmanship and self-respect. But to seek security entirely through physical domination is to menace all other countries. For absolute security for one country must mean absolute insecurity for all others. Where to strike this balance cannot be determined in the abstract; it is what makes diplomacy an art and not a science. But the balance must be established if the international order is to be stable.

In this sense the revolutionary quality of the Soviet Union has resided not in the fact that it has felt threatened--a measure of threat is inherent in the relations of sovereign states--but that nothing has been able to reassure it. Since the end of World War II, the Communist bloc has grown by the addition of Eastern Europe and Communist China; North Korea and northern Indochina have become Communist states; the Middle East has been penetrated; a nuclear arsenal has been created and with it the capability to menace the territorial United States; economically the U.S.S.R. is rapidly gaining ground. Yet the claim of being threatened has never abated. It is therefore futile to debate whether the Soviet Union is "really" interested in world domination. For the problem may be that the Soviet conception of security results in undermining all other states.

The prerequisite for an effective security system, then, is a Soviet policy decision to content itself with relative security and to forego the perilous quest of safety through Empire. At the same time, the West must overcome the confusions and evasions which have characterized its security effort. Since there is no agreement on the purpose or scale of the Western defense effort, it is not surprising that there has been lack of clarity about the elements of a European security system.

It has been argued, for example, that NATO has prevented a Soviet attack without ever meeting the force levels planned for it. Since Soviet ground strength has been preponderant throughout the existence of NATO, so the argument goes, peace has been maintained for one of two reasons or a combination of them: either the Soviet Union has never had any intention of making a military attack on Europe; or it was deterred from such an attack by the threat of a general war with the United States. A substantial capability for local defense, it is argued, could only weaken the deterrent by creating the illusion that an attack might evoke a less than all-out response. Advocates of this view hold that the importance of Europe is so great that any aggression against it must automatically trigger the American and British retaliatory forces into action.

The corollary of this line of reasoning has been that a limited war in Europe is "unthinkable." Consequently it is quite feasible to separate the opposing forces physically without thereby reducing the sanction available against a Soviet attack. To be sure, the Soviet Union might decide to reoccupy territories once vacated, but it could do so, in Mr. Kennan's words, "only once and only for the highest stakes: in the contingency, that is, of general war." Massive retaliation would furnish the deterrent against Soviet attack whether on the Elbe, the Oder or the Bug.

Arguments such as these have had the negative virtue of

pressing home the inconsistencies of present NATO strategy: The alliance has placed primary reliance on a weapon that is under the exclusive control of the two extra-continental allies, the United States and Great Britain. This in turn has led to the demand by our European allies for a substantial commitment of United States and British troops on the Continent; their role was conceived almost as that of hostages--to insure that the Western retaliatory power would in fact be employed against a Soviet attack. Because of the reliance on an all-out strategy, our continental allies have been reluctant to make a defense contribution which would give the commitment of United States and British troops military value. They have resisted the effort to achieve an adequate local defense not only for economic reasons but because they believed that it might reduce the United States' and British willingness to resort to the all-out war which Western strategic doctrine has defined as the sole obstacle to Soviet aggression.

Thus American and British troops in the center of Europe perform not only a military but also a psychological function: they are a token of our commitment to our allies and a warning to potential aggressors. But it also explains why thoughtful people have seen the military establishment on the Continent as a bargaining counter: since it was not expected to play a significant military role, it could be reduced in order to achieve a political gain. And its symbolic function could be met by a more solemn promise by the United States to defend Europe.[iv]

However, it is dangerous to assume that because the contradictions in NATO strategic doctrine have not been exploited by the Soviet Union in the past decade this will be true when the Soviet nuclear arsenal is fully developed; indeed, the challenge in Berlin would indicate precisely the opposite. And it would be a grave mistake to seek to apply the experience of the first decade of NATO to a future in which a

great deal will depend on a Western adjustment to a fundamental change in strategic relationships.

One of the difficulties of the nuclear age has been that no sooner has one technological revolution been assimilated in doctrine and policy than these have been made obsolete by new developments. There have been four phases: (1) the period when the United States possessed an atomic monopoly and a monopoly of the means of delivery; (2) the period when our monopoly of weapons was ended but when we still possessed an overwhelming advantage in the means of delivery; (3) the period when the Soviet Union began to develop a substantial delivery system but we still retained a decided advantage because of our superiority in numbers and in the strategic location of our base system; (4) the period when both in numbers of weapons and in the means of delivery the capabilities of the two sides began to approach each other.

During phases one and two--during the time, that is, of our atomic preponderance--our retaliatory force could be conceived of as a deterrent to any aggression we chose to resist. It was a positive deterrent in the sense that we did not have to make our response dependent on the magnitude of the threat. Rather our primary concern was to decide that some response was called for. A policy of massive retaliation could be reasonably effective because our invulnerability gave a certain credibility to the threat of all-out war. Even then, of course, our threat was incongruous in relation to most objectives likely to be in dispute, and it did not prevent the Berlin blockade and the Korean War.

But however useful massive retaliation may have been during the period of our atomic monopoly, the threshold of provocation which would unleash the United States and British retaliatory force has been rising with the growth of the Soviet nuclear and missile capability--or so an aggressor

might calculate at least. In these circumstances, the threat of all-out war will deter an ever smaller range of possible challenges. Its credibility will constantly decline, and it will so increase the inhibitions of the side relying on it that it may well produce appeasement rather than deterrence. The Soviet advances in missiles have to a great extent neutralized our strategic striking power, and the vast Soviet ground strength has thus been freed for pressure or blackmail.

Reliance on all-out war not only reduces the credibility of our deterrent, it also dooms us to a fundamentally irrational diplomacy. The threat of it can be made plausible only if in a given crisis we act as if we were prepared to throw sober calculation to the wind--if, for example, we avoid asking the question whether Berlin is "worth" an all-out war. But such a policy in the long run cannot be maintained by status quo powers with democratic institutions.

As a result, it becomes futile to continue to rely on the strategy of the past decade. In the era of nuclear plenty, the defense of Europe can no longer rest on the threat of all-out war alone. When every increase in destructive ability also magnifies the inhibitions against resorting to it, we cannot go on proclaiming that local defense of Europe is impossible. It is not at all obvious why Western Europe and the United States, whose combined manpower and industrial potential far exceed those of the Soviet Union, should not be able to make a much more substantial and successful effort to improve the capability for local defense, particularly in the conventional field.

It is argued by many that since European bases are no longer required in an all-out war, the need for a substantial military establishment on the Continent has disappeared.[v] But it is surely inconsistent to maintain that the United States should be prepared to run greater risks than ever for an area which has become strategically less important. If Europe is indeed

dispensable in an all-out war, a greater effort to create local defense becomes all the more necessary, lest the Soviet Union believe that the change in Europe's strategic importance will make us less ready to come to its defense.

Clearly, the Soviet effort to wreck NATO is directed against the capability for local defense. The Soviet Union must realize that a point will soon be reached where elimination of NATO would not decisively affect the over-all deterrent equation. NATO does represent an obstacle to the Soviet domination of Europe by means which will not seem "worth" an all-out war.

The line of demarcation between limited war and all-out war in Europe need not be determined in the abstract. The stronger the local forces of NATO, the less likely it will be that the Soviet Union will be tempted to adventure. The more effective the military establishment on the Continent, the larger must be the Soviet attack designed to overcome it. The more the required effort approaches the scale of all-out war, the clearer the challenge to our security and the more plausible our over-all deterrent. In short, as the horrors of all-out war multiply and cripple the will to resort to it, the minimum objective of the forces in Europe must be to raise the scale of the Soviet effort required to defeat them to a level that can leave no doubt about its ultimate objective. In the age of nuclear plenty a capability for local defense is required to give validity to the over-all deterrent.

The security problem of Europe may therefore be summed up as follows: (1) The Soviet Union can threaten all of Europe from its own territories. Consequently, alliances are not essential for its safety. (2) No European country is capable of withstanding Soviet pressure alone. Security for them is therefore inseparable from unity. (3) The threat of all-out war is losing its credibility and its strategic meaning. (4) The defense of Europe cannot be conducted solely from North America, because the aggressor can pose threats which will

not seem to warrant total retaliation and because, however firm allied unity may be, a nation cannot be counted on to commit suicide in defense of a foreign territory.[vi]

As a result, the question in security negotiations becomes whether it is possible to conceive of two military establishments on the Continent capable of defensive action but deprived through appropriate control measures of offensive power. Such a control system must take care not to wreck NATO, for this would enable the Soviet Union to bring pressure on the European countries one by one. It must not eliminate the possibility of a local defense, for this would in time isolate us and demoralize our allies. It must seek to assure the Soviet Union against attack from NATO territory. It should make progress towards German unity because this would remove the chief cause of political tension in Europe and the one most likely to produce an explosion. Can these objectives be reconciled?

The argument has been made that the Soviet Union cannot permit German unification under present conditions because it would mean the advance of NATO to the Polish frontier. But to place the frontier of NATO on the Oder need not mean that NATO forces advance to the Polish frontier. The Western proposal at Geneva specifically excluded that possibility. It might have gone further and offered the complete demilitarization of East Germany after unification.

A preferable solution would be to establish a comprehensive European security system along the borders of a unified Germany. It could be proposed that non-German forces withdraw the same distance from the Oder as non-Polish forces and that the size of German forces on one side and Polish and Czech forces on the other be brought into some relationship with each other, both in numbers and in equipment. For example, United States, British and French forces could withdraw to the line of the Weser while Soviet

forces could retire to the Vistula. The German forces between the Weser and the Oder would be restricted to defensive armaments, as would the Polish forces between the Oder and the Vistula. To decrease the danger of an attack from German territory NATO would agree not to station weapons of more than 700-mile range on German territory. An inspection system could be established. Obviously there are many variations of such a scheme, which could be the subject of negotiation both as to the width of the zone separating Western and Soviet forces and as to types of arms to be stationed in the area.

From a military point of view such a solution would make offensive operations difficult. The German and satellite forces would be approximately equal and they would separate the Soviet Union and the Western military establishment. At the same time, there would remain sufficient strength on the Continent and within Germany not to tempt aggression and to resist it should it take place. Continued membership in NATO would help protect Germany against Eastern pressure while the deployment of NATO forces would demonstrate their defensive purpose. Such a program would remove the chief source of political tension in Europe. It would provide protection to both the West and the Soviet Union against offensive operations. It would create a zone of arms control which, if successful, should bring about a climate of confidence leading to further measures.

But before the West can negotiate effectively on this it must admit to itself that the evasions and inconsistencies of NATO may cause the Soviets to believe that they would gain no additional security from any such control scheme. Thus effective negotiations may be inhibited not by the strength of the Western alliance but by its weakness and irresolution.

If, as seems quite probable, the Soviet Union rejects any reasonable program for German reunification, there is likely to be mounting pressure for various arms-control schemes along the present political division of Europe, such as a troop freeze or thinning out of forces. The difficulty with most of these proposals is that they do not in themselves come to grips with the real security problem. They do not reduce the likelihood of political upheaval in Germany--in fact they may increase it. They do not affect materially the capability of the United States or the Soviet Union to launch a sudden all-out attack. On the other hand, since present or planned NATO forces are already totally inadequate for offensive ground operations, most schemes for troop withdrawal would merely weaken the capability for local defense of the West without providing an additional reassurance to the Soviet Union. They would improve the offensive, but not the defensive, position of the U.S.S.R. Even a troop freeze has the result of keeping NATO from adapting itself to changed strategic relationships. Unless coupled with a reduction of Soviet forces, it would perpetuate an inequality which will represent a growing invitation to Soviet adventures as Soviet long-range missiles multiply.

The most frequent suggestion is that a zone free of nuclear weapons be established in the center of Europe. Given the range of modern weapons, a denuclearized zone in Central Europe would not of itself affect the military situation decisively, assuming nuclear weapons can be stationed in the Low Countries and France. It would create a psychological and political imbalance, for the aggressor would retain his full nuclear arsenal, while the area most menaced would be without the ability to retaliate. In these circumstances the Soviet Union may be encouraged to threaten Central Europe and to attempt to split the Western alliance by appealing to the countries controlling nuclear weapons that the issue was not "worth" a nuclear war. Moreover, once a denuclearized

zone is established, it will be difficult to deal with Soviet pressures to expand it to include eventually the entire Continent.

As long as the West bases its defense so heavily on nuclear weapons, it will be difficult for us to convince our allies that their security will not be jeopardized if they must rely on foreign weapons, stationed on foreign territory and under foreign control. After all, the British deterrent has been justified explicitly as necessary for contingencies where the United States might be reluctant to engage itself. The different approaches to the current crisis within the Western alliance should cause us to have sympathy for the reluctance of countries even more immediately threatened than Great Britain to depend solely on weapons based far away and in the use of which they have no voice.

The question then becomes: Can one create such a sense of unity in the Western alliance that certain areas can be stripped of nuclear weapons without giving our allies a sense of impotence and without encouraging pressure by the Soviet Union? One scheme that deserves examination would be to create an E.D.C. for atomic weapons, with Germany a member. Each partner would have a voice in the use of these weapons wherever they might be stationed. Such a grouping might then negotiate about the location of its common arms in return for sharp reductions of Soviet power in Eastern Europe. The areas without nuclear weapons might feel protected by the voice they have in the control of common weapons.

Similar principles could be applied to other arms control schemes. For example, a ceiling could be placed on NATO forces between the Rhine and the Eastern frontiers of the Federal Republic and on Warsaw Pact forces in the East German satellite so that the two military establishments would be substantially equal in number. Or else NATO and

Soviet forces could withdraw, say 100 miles, from the Elbe. A control system could be established between the Rhine and the Oder. But we must be frank enough with ourselves to admit that these schemes are in the realm of expedients and almost completely irrelevant to the real security problem in Europe. They will create a false impression of progress while leaving the basic situation unchanged. And any redeployment of NATO forces should be accompanied by a striving for greater unity expressed in concrete institutions. Verbal reassurances are not sufficient to remove the sense of insecurity of our European allies.

Would the withdrawal of foreign forces from Germany represent a means to achieve unification? It is thought by some that since the East German régime is maintained by Soviet troops, a mutual withdrawal would bring about the collapse or at least the liberalization of the East German satellite. The establishment of a zone of controlled armaments, followed by the withdrawal of American, British and Soviet forces, should be accompanied, it is said, by "some form of negotiation" between the Federal Republic and the East German satellite. This would, in an undefined manner, bring the two régimes closer together and lead to reunification on the basis of some kind of free elections at an unspecified future date.[vii]

It would seem incumbent on anyone advocating this to give some indication of the nature of the contact between the two parts of Germany and the manner in which it is supposed to reduce the gap between the two systems. As has been seen above, too much should not be made of the liberalization of Poland as a clue to development in East Germany. The East German Communists have at their disposal the apparatus of a police state. And the Kremlin has said repeatedly that it would intervene in case of an upheaval,[viii] in which case the involvement of the Federal Republic is extremely probable. At the very least, the two German governments, if left to their

own devices, would find themselves under nearly irresistible pressure to subvert each other. In turn, the Soviet satellites would be tempted to exacerbate the rivalry, for to them a divided Germany will for a long time seem the best guarantee of safety. Thus many arms-control schemes that would work along the borders of a unified Germany would prove ineffective or dangerous in the center of a divided country.

If, then, reunification is of such central importance, can it be purchased at the price of the neutralization of Germany? Should the West give up its demand that a unified Germany be free to determine its own relationship to NATO and agree to the Soviet proposal that Germany be forbidden to enter military alliances?

Many in the West advocate neutralization because they believe that once Germany supplies the preponderance of the shield forces of NATO it will be strong enough to make its own arrangement with the Soviet Union. According to this line of reasoning, it would be wiser to anticipate this eventuality by offering a withdrawal which may soon be exacted from us. For if the Western alliance ever appears as the obstacle to German unification it will lose its attraction for Germany.[ix] Others argue that the Soviet Union will never tolerate the liberalization of satellite régimes as long as there is a danger that the new government may join NATO.

Of course, the fact that German troops will soon comprise the largest element of a force which is itself too small is not an argument for weakening it even further by the withdrawal of Western forces. And if the Soviet Union's intervention in Hungary was caused by the fear that the former satellite might join NATO, then let it be proposed that Hungary rather than Germany be neutralized.

Nevertheless, a proposal to neutralize Germany in return for unification has tempting aspects, since unification would

undoubtedly contribute to political stability in Europe. Even if rejected, such an offer would demonstrate once and for all that German membership in NATO is a response to Soviet intransigence. The temptation is all the greater when it is considered that were Moscow ever itself to make such an offer it would be next to impossible for a German government to refuse.

It is important to be clear, however, as to what is meant by neutralization. It could mean that Germany would leave NATO and Western troops withdraw from the Federal Republic, while Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary would leave the Warsaw Pact and Soviet forces retire from these countries. Or it could mean the departure of Soviet troops into Poland only. It could involve a limitation of German forces so severe as to render Germany defenseless; it could apply to limitations only in certain categories of forces; or it could permit Germany to maintain its defense by whatever forces it considered necessary, provided it was not part of a military alliance.

If Soviet troops retire only to Poland and if German forces are limited along the lines of the Soviet proposals in the draft peace treaty, Russia would be able to exert an enormous pressure on an independent Germany. With self-defense against Soviet attack impossible, Soviet influence would be likely to grow relative to the West even if NATO could be satisfactorily based in the Low Countries and France--a possibility which, in the absence of careful study, cannot be taken for granted. On the other hand, Germany's capability to protect herself against a Soviet attack might increase European tensions. A militarily strong Germany without the restraints of NATO would surely disquiet the Soviet satellites and drive them closer to the Soviet Union, thereby increasing the cohesion of the Eastern bloc.

The most persuasive scheme has therefore coupled the neutralization of Germany with that of Poland, Czechoslovakia

and Hungary--the original Gaitskell plan. No doubt such a scheme involves a diminution of Western military security. At the same time, the end of the division of Germany would be an undoubted political gain. A great deal would depend on the ability of NATO to maintain a substantial military establishment in Western Europe to back up Germany. For in the absence of that establishment, the defense of the Continent would rest entirely on the American retaliatory power. And it simply does not make sense to assume that a deterrent which is losing its credibility under present circumstances would serve to protect areas never part of the Western defense system or from which U. S. troops have been withdrawn. Would we have resisted even in Korea if all-out war had been our only recourse?

At the same time, a neutral belt presents difficulties transcending the purely military. The notion that Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary would constitute a single bloc under the common guarantee of the Western powers and the Soviet Union hides great complexities. The memory of World War II and its aftermath would seem to insure that the territory to be neutralized would be unlikely to think of itself as a unit. The politics of Germany on the one hand and Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary on the other are more likely to be characterized by distrust if not animosity than by coöperation. In such a situation guarantee arrangements offer endless opportunities for interference. For a guarantee defines a right of intervention as well as a means to resist aggression--indeed Mr. Erler would grant a unilateral right in order to eliminate a Soviet veto.

Soviet pressure on Germany to "safeguard its neutrality" could be prevented only by a tacit understanding which placed Germany under the protection of NATO and the East European satellites under that of the Warsaw Pact. The practical result of the neutral belt then would be either Soviet domination of Central Europe or a situation envisaged in the

scheme outlined earlier: the Oder as the dividing line between NATO and the Warsaw Pact with a zone of controlled armaments on both sides to reduce the danger of surprise attack. An explicit arrangement to that effect would accomplish all the security objectives of neutralization without the political dangers of legitimizing Soviet pressure on a reunited Germany.

Moreover, the West ought to be clear about the political hazards of a decision to negotiate about the military neutralization of Germany. It may create a precedent where, under the guise of expanding the neutral belt, the United States is gradually pushed out of Europe. It may lay the basis for destroying all the achievements of European integration. The Soviet Union with its belief in the predominance of "objective" social forces is unlikely to be content with military neutralization. The Kremlin, which attacked both the Marshall Plan and the Common Market as "aggressive imperialism," has in its draft peace treaty already proposed that Germany should not be permitted to be part of any arrangement not also signed by the U.S.S.R.--a clause which spells the doom of European integration. Another danger to guard against is that the Soviet Union, having accepted the "principle" of neutrality, might gain the benefits of neutralization without paying the price of unification, simply by stalling interminably during the technical negotiations.

Finally, it is important to remember that Germany is the last country which should be encouraged to be "flexible." Germany's attempt to pursue an isolated policy in the center of the Continent has brought disaster to Europe twice in a generation. If it is once more placed in the position to make arrangements with both sides--the political expression of neutrality--it will also be capable of menacing both sides, if only by the threat of a change of front. Such a Germany would hardly be conducive to peace and stability in Europe. Western policy must seek to retain Germany as a willing member of

European political and economic institutions, whatever the ultimate security arrangements.[x]

A neutral belt, then, is an extremely risky course. It is conceivable only in these circumstances: (1) If it is made part of a satisfactory plan for German unification on the basis of free elections. (2) If a careful study shows that substantial United States and British forces can be stationed in the Low Countries and France; for otherwise the "neutral belt" would within a measurable time become a political appendage of the Soviet Union. (3) If a time limit is placed on the negotiations; for otherwise the Soviet Union will be able to achieve the paralysis of NATO and the end of European integration merely by engaging in endless negotiations. (4) If there is firm agreement among the Western allies that neutralization applies only to military relationships and that German economic and political ties to the other European countries cannot be sacrificed and may be extended; for if German unity is purchased at the price of European integration, the West would have cast away the fruits of the most helpful and constructive policy it has conducted since World War II. (5) If the remaining countries of NATO are confident that they can resist Soviet and domestic pressures against expanding the neutral zone to include all of Europe. (6) If Germany accepts such an arrangement and does not consider it desertion by its allies.

To state these conditions is to recognize the extremely hazardous nature of the proposals for a neutral belt. Such a course might be adopted by a cohesive, self-confident alliance, but not by one divided by doubts and lack of purpose. If it is nevertheless embarked upon, it should be without illusions and without begging all the principal questions. If, on the other hand, the goal is genuine stability, then we should strive for a demarcation line on the Oder, with Warsaw Pact and NATO forces withdrawn an equal distance, leaving a buffer zone manned by balanced German and Polish-

Czechoslovak defensive forces under a system of inspection.

V

Yet we face the problem that the Soviet Union is likely to reject any proposal compatible with our values and interests. In that case it is essential that we be prepared to admit failure and make neither agreement nor negotiation an end in itself. The reaction should be a closing of ranks and not a repetition of the recriminations of the past six months. The West must understand that its lack of cohesion is the deepest cause for the absence of flexibility; that the refusal to face strategic facts has created the weakness which has invited Soviet pressures; that we have relatively little control over Soviet purposes but a duty to articulate our own.

The West should not permit itself to be hypnotized by the Soviet challenge. There is much scope for creativity in the West and in areas where the sole requirements are not Soviet coöperation but our own imagination and dynamism, such as strengthening the West's internal relationships and those with the emergent nations. In particular, it seems time to examine carefully the possibility of creating some federal institutions embracing the entire North Atlantic community, however attenuated these may be at first. For the West, which first developed the nation state, is also the area where its limitations are most dramatically apparent. No country of the North Atlantic Community can solve its problems or realize its opportunities in isolation. The Western effort in the newly independent states will be haphazard if each member of the Community develops its own program in the absence of any over-all conception. The security problem is insoluble on a basis of individual national sovereignties. For it will create constant temptations to purchase immunity by neutrality, or at least by shifting the major effort and risk to some other member of the alliance. Europe must find in the North Atlantic Community an outlet for the energy and vision that in

previous centuries projected it into ventures overseas. And it can find security only if the Community thinks of itself increasingly as a unit.

As long as the West lacks direction and cohesion, the Soviet Union will be able to shift all disputes to our side of the line. The West will continue to be asked to "solve" problems which the Soviet Union creates and to applaud as a compromise a willingness on the part of the Russians to settle for something less than originally demanded. Indeed our eagerness to justify negotiations often leads us to see concessions in purely formal Soviet moves or a mere Soviet restraint from abusive language. Thus when President Eisenhower indicated his willingness to attend a summit conference, he explained that the Soviet note of March 2 had been "more reasonable," even though the note reiterated all the demands which had produced the crisis. Its only "concession" was to drop the demand for an immediate summit conference. Similarly, Gromyko's failure to insist on his proposal to seat the East Germans at the conference table at Geneva was greeted in the Western press as a "victory." In fact, the Soviets achieved their basic purpose: when East and West German delegations joined the foreign minister's conference as advisors an important step was taken towards giving the East German satellite the same international status as the Federal Republic and to lend color to the claim that unification should be settled by the two German régimes directly. In this manner, the Soviet leaders can draw a double advantage from intransigence: they can increase the uneasiness of the West by an extreme statement and then gain a reputation for being conciliatory by retreating to a position still considerably in advance of their starting point.

The confusion of negotiating technique with purpose causes the diplomatic debate to be confined to issues of maximum embarrassment to the West--issues, that is, which the Soviet Union has raised and on which the West feels obliged to

negotiate because, as the saying goes, no avenue of settlement must be neglected and because the mere readiness of the Soviet to talk about anything is considered "encouraging." Conversely, the West is deterred from raising issues of possible embarrassment to the Soviet Union because, it is said, such a course would destroy the climate of confidence. Diplomacy thereby becomes a form of Soviet political warfare. For if we can negotiate only on issues that the Soviet leaders have declared as soluble, it is not surprising that the attention of the world is focussed on the symptoms rather than the causes of the difficulties: on NATO, but not the Soviet hostility which produced it; on the all-too-inadequate Western defense effort, but not on the preponderant Soviet strength which called it forth; on the dangers to peace in case of another satellite upheaval, but not on the Soviet repression without which the danger of upheaval would not exist. The illusion is created that the cold war can be ended by proclamation.

The formalism of the Western approach to negotiations raises the question whether the real difficulty of the West is not the absence of moral assurance. Too often the laudable tendency to see the other point of view is carried to the point of refusing to make any moral distinctions. This leads to the preposterous argument that the brutalities of Stalin were due to the refusal to admit Russia into the League of Nations in 1923 and the current hostility of Khrushchev to the failure to accept the Soviet disarmament package of May 10, 1955.[xi] NATO is equated with the Warsaw Pact; the British landing in Egypt with the Soviet repression of Hungary; our overseas bases with the satellite orbit. And in some pronouncements Chancellor Adenauer is dealt with more harshly than Mr. Khrushchev and accused of wanting German unification only as an issue but not in reality.[xii]

Some of these reactions express the understandable fear that to admit claims to superior moral values would lead to the

demand for a crusade and thus to nuclear war--an attitude not dissimilar to that of many serious people towards Hitler in the 1930s. "I also agree in welcoming so far as Europe is concerned the attempt of the Government to establish contact with the rulers of Germany," a British Labor leader said in 1937. "Any attempt to separate the sheep from the goats and to have the world divided in two or more camps based upon ideological grounds would be absolutely fatal to the future welfare of mankind."[xiii]

Others are reacting against the popular tendency to see complicated political problems in absolute terms of black or white and to identify policy with the amassing of military force. But in attacking such over-simplification, many critics run the risk of reducing all issues to a single shade of grey. Surely we can avoid self-righteousness without falling into a fastidiousness which comes close to spiritual pride. And opposition to viewing all issues as military need not go so far as to deny in effect that a serious security problem exists. The tendency to equate our moral shortcomings with those of the Soviet bloc deprives the West of the inward assurance required to negotiate effectively. It leads to a policy of the guilty conscience.

So long as it is lacking in strong convictions, the West finds it increasingly difficult to deal with the problem of conjecture in foreign policy. Policy must always be based on an assessment of the future course of events or the intentions of other countries or even merely the limits of the possible. Since inaction may bring catastrophe, it sometimes happens that some measure must be taken even though it is based on evaluations about which we cannot be certain. And by the same token, difficult decisions can always be avoided by making the most favorable assessment of the relevant situation. Had the West stood up to Hitler in 1936, there would probably still be dispute as to whether he was a misunderstood nationalist or in fact represented a danger to

world peace. "Herr Hitler's statement [offering to negotiate]," said Arthur Henderson after German troops reoccupied the Rhineland, "ought to be taken at face value. Herr Hitler made a statement sinning with one hand but holding out the olive branch with the other which ought to be taken at face value. These may prove to be the most important gestures yet made. . . . It is idle to say these statements were insincere. . . . The dominant problem is peace and not defence."[xiv]

In the months ahead the argument will be made that since both we and the Soviets have put forward unacceptable proposals the correct solution is a compromise somewhere in the middle--even though this merely evades responsibility for judging the substance of various proposals and further encourages the Soviets to make extreme offers for purposes of compromise. It will also be urged that the West has an obligation to break a deadlock by bringing forward new proposals--even though such a principle encourages Soviet intransigence by giving rise to the belief that if Soviet negotiators hold out long enough they will elicit ever more favorable offers.

Negotiations are essential. But it is important to conduct them without illusions. We do not need to believe in a basic Soviet transformation in order to believe in the possibility of a settlement. Nor is it a prerequisite to successful negotiation to pretend that a relaxation of tensions is entirely within Western control. If the Soviet Union obtains only half of its demands on Berlin, this is not a compromise but a fundamental and perhaps fatal weakening of the Western position. The West must have a much more serious goal than to divine the Soviet intent. We do ourselves an injustice if we make an issue of the desirability of relaxing tensions or of ending the cold war. We have no time to argue about the obvious. The task before the West is not to prove the desirability of peace--which should be taken for granted--but to determine what are the possibilities of a settlement which

does not hazard our security and is consistent with our values.

[i] The New York Times, May 16, 1959.

[ii] For example, their proposal that German become an official conference language.

[iii] The New York Times, May 15, 1959.

[iv] See speech by Adlai Stevenson, The New York Times, March 6, 1959.

[v] See speech by the Italian Ambassador to Germany, Signor Quaroni, at the University of Frankfurt, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, April 1, 1959.

[vi] See the author's "Missiles and the Western Alliance," Foreign Affairs, April 1958.

[vii] See Denis Healy, "Disengagement and German Reunification," The New Leader, March 20, 1959.

[viii] To be sure, Khrushchev has qualified this by saying that Soviet troops would intervene only if called by socialist leaders or if the upheavals were inspired from the outside. Some Communist functionary can be certain to ask for assistance on the model of Kadar; and as Hungary and Tibet have proved, uprisings against Communist rule are considered by definition to be inspired from the outside.

[ix] See, for example, Fritz Erler, "The Reunification of Germany and Security for Europe," World Politics, April 1958.

[x] Against this background the rigidity for which Chancellor Adenauer has recently been criticized may have been his greatest contribution to European stability and at worst may have reflected the defects of his virtues: his refusal to take advantage of the possibility of a policy of petty manoeuvre

inherent in Germany's history and geographic situation; and his insistence on gaining Germany a reputation for reliability.

[xi] See broadcast by Philip Noel-Baker, the Norwegian Broadcasting Company, reprinted by the New England Regional Offices, American Friends Service Committee.

[xii] See for example an appeal by Norman Thomas signed by a number of eminent Americans, The New York Times, May 8, 1959, p. 15.

[xiii] Hansard 330, December 21, 1937, col. 1841.

[xiv] Hansard 309, March 10, 1936, col. 1976-77.

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HENRY A. KISSINGER, Associate Director of the Harvard Center for International Affairs;  
author of "Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy"

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# The Challenge of Change in the Soviet Bloc

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*Zbigniew Brzezinski*



*John F. Kennedy meeting Nikita Khrushchev, 1961.*

THE declaration issued by 81 Communist parties in Moscow last December 6 marks a seminal date in the history of international Communism. For the first time in the history of the Soviet bloc a conference of Communist leaders ended not merely with the usual "unanimous agreement" but also with a silent agreement to disagree. For the first time in about 35 years the general strategy of the Communist parties scattered around the globe is no longer to be set purely in terms of Soviet estimates of what will most benefit the interests of the

Soviet Union. Cast aside is Stalin's categorical dictum that "a revolutionary is he who, without arguments, unconditionally, openly and honestly . . . is ready to defend and strengthen the U.S.S.R . . . ." What is good for the Soviet Union is no longer automatically also good for the Soviet bloc and for International Communism.

The Moscow conference thus highlights a process of transformation of the Soviet bloc into a Communist one. This process was inherent in the shift of Soviet power beyond the Soviet frontiers. However, Stalinism, with its insistence on absolute centralization of power in Moscow and on Soviet ideological infallibility, involved a conscious effort to prevent such a transformation. In fact, Stalin did not fear only national Communism--he even rejected its much more subdued variant, "domesticism," i.e. the effort to make some domestic adjustments while accepting the principle of bloc unity and absolute Soviet leadership.

The Yugoslav break in 1948 was the first signal that an international Communist system could not work effectively merely by applying Stalinist domestic practices to the new Soviet bloc. The change became more rapid after Stalin's death. Several factors prompted it. The new ruling Communist élites in East Europe gradually--and not everywhere at first--became somewhat more confident of their ability to build "socialism," especially if given sufficient leeway to make some domestic adjustments. The presence of an indigenous and independent Communist régime in China "objectively" (as the Marxists would put it) strengthened the case of those within the ruling élites who felt that perhaps Stalinism should be viewed as a transitional phase leading to a more genuine Communist internationalism rather than as an enduring prescription. Another factor prompting change was the accumulated tension of popular, national reaction against Soviet domination--a sentiment which local Communist leaders could not afford wholly to ignore.

In response to these pressures, the post-Stalin Soviet leadership, particularly from the time of Khrushchev's ascendancy, began to search for a new formula for unity of the Soviet bloc. The years 1954-1960 can be said to have been dominated by this search. Khrushchev and Bulganin were the first Soviet leaders to visit China, where they sought to warm the frigid relationship created by Stalin's reserve. Later, the Soviet leaders attempted to repair the break with Yugoslavia. They talked of "many ways to socialism." However, the search for unity clearly did not mean that the Soviet leaders were prepared to preside over the dissolution of the bloc. It is evident in retrospect that Khrushchev hoped the bloc could be transformed into a comity of states led by the U.S.S.R. but not terrorized by it. Marxist-Leninist ideology would be the common bond and the source of unanimity.

These efforts were opposed at home and abroad. Some of Khrushchev's colleagues felt that Soviet leadership would be undermined. Others warned that too rapid reform could lead to crises. The vacillations in Soviet policy during this period reflected these conflicting assessments and the sudden pressures of unexpected events. The change in Poland, the eruptions in Hungary, Khrushchev's realization that Tito was not interested in shoring up the Soviet bloc but in sharing in its leadership, all resulted in hesitations and often in retrogressive steps. The secret circular letter in August 1956 warned the other parties not to follow the Yugoslav path, and after the Polish and Hungarian outbreaks the Soviet leadership began to seek some organizational device to substitute for the Cominform, which had been abolished in 1956 because it was thought to be outmoded.

From 1957 on, the focus of the problem increasingly shifted eastward. The Chinese leaders shared Khrushchev's desire to create a healthier camp. Just a year earlier they had encouraged the Soviets to improve their relations with the Poles, even while recommending the suppression of the

Hungarian revolution. Subsequently the Chinese joined Khrushchev in containing Polish diversity and in November 1957 they helped Khrushchev obtain Polish recognition of Soviet leadership of the camp. Mao Tse-tung personally insisted that Communist unity required an affirmation of Soviet leadership. Yet helping to consolidate the bloc did not mean to the Chinese that they should remain silent on the various issues facing it. On the contrary, in the course of helping Khrushchev, they appear to have become convinced that the post-Stalin leadership needed further advice from experienced revolutionaries like themselves. Liu Shao-chi alluded to this last year when he is reported to have stated that Peking had been concerned for some years with the indecisiveness and vacillations of the Soviet régime since Stalin.

In the fall of 1957 an event occurred which quickly assumed overwhelming importance in the Chinese perspective on world affairs and which colored subsequent Sino-Soviet relations. The successful Soviet firing of the I.C.B.M., followed by the launching of a sputnik, was interpreted by the Chinese as signalling a decisive shift in the balance of military power between East and West. The east wind was prevailing, Mao Tse-tung proclaimed. In his view the Soviet Union now had the means to effect further revolutionary changes in the world, in spite of the militarization of imperialism. But if the means were available in Moscow, the will seemed strangely lacking. The Chinese, therefore, felt duty-bound to infuse international Communism with the will to prevail. Bloc unity was the essential point of departure but still a means and not an end. Nothing could be done without unity, but unity should not become a substitute for action. Indeed, vigorous action against the common enemy could forge even greater unity than reliance on increased Soviet economic aid to the various Communist régimes or the elimination of the more obtrusive signs of Soviet domination. The almost simultaneous shift in

intra-party politics in China in favor of a more radical wing and the great leap forward provided the domestic underpinning for these views of the international scene.

The Chinese did not desire war per se, but they were convinced that increased pressure on the West, including that of local wars, was justified and that the West would yield step by step. Furthermore, the Chinese feared that fear of war would inevitably lead to the fear of revolution and hence to the extinction of revolutionary zeal in the international movement itself. As a result, they did not hesitate in 1960 to characterize the conception of "a peaceful transition to socialism," propounded by Khrushchev in 1956, as "stupid." They felt that continuous pressure by the militarily superior Soviet bloc would encourage revolutionary upheavals, particularly in the colonial areas. The disintegration of imperialism would soon follow.

The Soviets welcomed the Chinese aid in reconsolidating the bloc. However, in assessing the nature of the present phase of world history, the Soviets tended to see their opportunities in a somewhat different light. Their acquisition of nuclear weapons, and particularly of a delivery capability, forced them to rethink their earlier military assumptions and gave them a greater appreciation of the dangers of mutual annihilation. As a result, the Soviet leaders very carefully abstained from repeating Mao's claim that they had reached a turning point; they have merely reiterated that there is a definite shift in favor of "socialism." In their view, the military balance of destructive capabilities is in itself a new and important step forward. It makes possible the encouragement of revolutionary trends in Asia, Africa and Latin America and the deterrence of Western counter-actions in these areas. At the same time the I.C.B.M.s could be exploited politically: in recent years the Soviet Union has threatened nuclear destruction against its neighbors on at least 40 different occasions. In addition, under the protective shield of military

power, the Soviet bloc could now bring to bear a new and vitally important factor--its economic strength and technical skill. The combination of mutual military paralysis, political revolutions and Communist economic power would prevail, without the risk of provoking a desperate reaction from the West.

These basic disagreements were reflected in a host of specific issues. In 1958 China urged a more aggressive attitude in the Middle East crisis and later ignited a new campaign for Taiwan; in 1959-60 there were agitated ideological debates on the significance of the Chinese pattern of revolution as a model for other nations; in 1960 China showed a distinct lack of enthusiasm for Soviet participation in disarmament talks; during 1958-60 there were growing divergencies concerning "revisionism" and its implications. Many of these conflicts were veiled in euphemistic terms, but it required no exegesis to recognize their meaning. They were accompanied by a marked decline in Chinese-Soviet cultural exchanges, and there were even hints of some uncertainties on the subject of the Sino-Soviet frontier.

It is obvious that different degrees of alienation and involvement in international affairs, the disparity in stages of economic, social and revolutionary development, as well as such specific matters as unsatisfied territorial ambitions (e.g. Taiwan) provided the environmental background for such differences. Furthermore, it is very important to realize that the conscious commitments of the two régimes to a jointly shared Weltanschauung makes any disagreement between them even more intense. The purposeful effort to define reality and stages of historical change makes consensus more difficult, especially in the absence of a powerful arbiter such as Stalin. In the Communist outlook, general questions of interpretation are usually the points of departure for more specific strategies and tactics. For that reason it is more difficult in some respects for Communist parties to reach

consensus, once they are able to assert their independence, than for Anglo-Saxon nations whose approach is pragmatic and not so concerned with conceptualization or long-range goals.

At the same time these disagreements over appropriate strategy and tactics operate within the framework of a larger agreement--namely a mutual method for assessing reality and a common objective. In effect, the common ideology, which defines mutual ends and selects common enemies, and which can be a source of intense friction, also serves to limit the dispute and prevents it from erupting into an open split. In the case of the Sino-Soviet divergencies of the last three years, it would appear that the dispute was confined by three limits, consciously observed by the parties involved: 1) Both sides have recognized that both would lose by an open split, hence that unity must be preserved; 2) each realized that the other's leadership is firmly entrenched and that, for better or for worse, Khrushchev would have to deal with Mao Tse-tung and vice versa, a situation quite unlike the one which prevailed in 1948 when Stalin calculated that Tito would fall from power after an open split; 3) the Chinese, for the time being at least, have striven to reassure the Soviets that they are not trying to displace them as leaders of the bloc but are merely anxious to persuade them to adopt a different strategy. The Chinese presumably realized that they could not, at this stage, replace the Soviets as leader since they do not possess the means to enforce such leadership.

The foregoing limits, however, have tended to make the weaker party stronger and the stronger weaker in as much as the partner who is better able to demonstrate overtly his disregard for unity has the advantage of initiative. The burden of responding in kind, thereby further straining unity, or of compromising, rested on the more passive of the two. Furthermore, it can be argued that subjectively the Soviet Union stands to lose more by an open split than China since

so much of the international prestige of the Soviet Union and the internal strength of the régime rest on its role as leader of a united bloc of one billion people marching together toward Communism. Indeed, with two partners desiring unity, the one who can appear to be less cautious about preserving it might well gain the upper hand. Thus in the internal bargaining that has recently gone on between the two parties, the immense military and economic preponderance of the Soviet Union has probably not been decisive. China has been able to persist in her views and even to voice them openly. At the Moscow conference of November-December 1960 and also at the earlier July session in Bucharest, the Chinese delegation openly assaulted Khrushchev's policies, despite obvious Soviet displeasure.

The Moscow conference, however, was not a Chinese victory. If, in terms of the crucial issues, the statement issued by the 81 parties is carefully compared with earlier Soviet and Chinese pronouncements,[i] one finds that by and large the Soviet formulations have prevailed, with some adjustments to meet Chinese objections. It may be surmised that the somewhat greater emphasis on the dangers of war and on the aggressiveness of American imperialism, on the relevance of China to the revolutions in Asia, Latin America and Africa, on the militant character of national liberation struggles, and the direct condemnation of Yugoslav revisionism, all involved adjustment to the Chinese point of view. But on a larger number of issues the statement bears greater resemblance to earlier Soviet positions. This is so with respect to such matters as: the decisive character of economic development and the role of the "socialist world system" in shaping our age; the destructiveness of war (its horrors were explicitly reiterated); the significance of peaceful coexistence and the possibility of the prevention of war; the importance of the 20th and 21st C.P.S.U. Congresses, and the universal relevance of Soviet experience; the peaceful transition to

socialism, the character of "national democracy" and the evils of dogmatism. This impression is corroborated by the unusually frank account of the conference provided by Walter Ulbricht's speech printed in Neues Deutschland of December 18. In it he indicates clearly what the controversial issues were and how the various points were resolved.

There appears to be a twofold reason for the relative Soviet success. The first is rooted in the nature of the Chinese position; the second involves the bargaining process in the meeting itself. Because China is more radically hostile to the outside world, her freedom of action is more limited, even if initially the Chinese succeeded in putting the Soviet leadership on the defensive. Given their impatience in dealing with the West, the Chinese leaders would probably shrink from actually splitting the Communist bloc, since in their minds the chief beneficiaries of such a split would be the United States and "imperialism" in general. Thus the range of their bluffing is limited. Furthermore, since their overt support consisted only of the Albanians and a few of the non-ruling parties, a split, or even the threat of a split, could not bring about the desired Chinese objective: a change in the line pursued by International Communism.

The Moscow conference thus had the important effect of articulating a common line for the various parties, and of narrowing somewhat the cleavage between the Soviets and the Chinese. Explicit limits to unilateral action by any one party were adopted and the principle of interference in the internal affairs of member parties for the first time was formally established. Unlike the November 1957 statement of the 12 ruling parties, which stressed "non-interference in one another's affairs," the 1960 declaration states: "When this or that party raises questions about the activity of another fraternal party, its leadership turns to the leadership of the party in question and, when necessary, meetings and consultations are held." It goes without saying that the

principle of interference is likely to benefit the stronger rather than the weaker parties. In his report on the conference, Ulbricht apparently alluded to the Chinese when he stated that "there were objections to the formulation 'general line.' However, if we abandon this principle of 'general line,' vacillations may occur in complicated situations, such as in border problems."

At the same time, the length of the conference and the apparently calculated ambiguity of some parts of the statement suggest clearly that while the Sino-Soviet relationship remains based on common, conscious emphasis on unity, an element of divergence is inherent in the fact that both parties are independent and organizationally distinct. While it is likely that henceforth disagreements between them will be more muted and harder to detect, the relationship of divergent unity between them is likely to persist and could easily erupt anew into an open dialogue. The different emphases put on the Moscow statement by subsequent commentaries in Pravda, Trybuna Ludu or Neues Deutschland, on the one hand, and in Hsinhua or Zeri I Popullit, on the other, portend continuing dissension.

## II

The changes that have taken place, and are continuing to take place, within the Communist world have important policy implications for the West. In analyzing these changes, we should abandon the tendency to operate in simple and extreme terms. The bloc is not splitting and is not likely to split. Talk of a Sino-Soviet conflict, of even a war between them, merely illustrates a profound misconception of the essence of the historical phenomenon of Communism, which, while affected by traditional national considerations, has from its very beginning reflected a conscious emphasis on supra-national perspectives. Similarly, a change within the Soviet bloc should not be viewed as presaging its disintegration or,

conversely, its soon becoming one Communist state. The tendency to see the bloc in terms of such extremes simply obscures the important, if less dramatic, changes within it.

For years the Soviet bloc was in effect an international system run by one national Communist party. Today, it is becoming a Communist camp, with the various member régimes participating more actively in the important process of defining the camp's "general line." The events of 1956 served to reassure the Communist chiefs that the West was either unable or unwilling to challenge their domestic power, while the Sino-Soviet "divergent unity" achieved within the bloc meant that opportunities have now been created for more manoeuvre, without running the risk of expulsion or condemnation as a deviationist.

The last Moscow conference, as well as subsequent events, bear this out. The leaders of the smaller parties, as for instance, Gomulka, played a more active role than ever before and have been reliably credited with strongly influencing the Soviet course. Some leaders, like Togliatti, could afford to show their misgivings about the conference by staying away from it. Some of the Latin American representatives offered amendments to the draft of the conference. Others, like the Albanians, could choose to defy the Soviets, even at the risk of incurring the wrath of pro-Soviet parties. It is symptomatic of the new conditions that Ulbricht broke all precedents to accuse the Albanian party leadership in public and in print, of "sectarianism" and "dogmatism." Yet both Albania and East Germany remained bona fide members of the bloc. Similarly, on the occasion of the Chinese anniversary, the Chinese sent the Albanians greetings that were both warm and personal--qualities missing from similar messages to Moscow and elsewhere, and notably lacking in Moscow's New Year's message to the Albanians. Similarly, in the course of the recent Albanian Party Congress, the C.P.S.U. refrained from greeting Enver Hoxha, while the Chinese heaped praise on

the Albanian leader. Still, the Soviet boycott of the Albanian party chief took place within the framework of the camp. The prolonged and successful defiance of the most powerful party by one of the smallest could have infectious consequences, irrespective of the specific issues involved in this case.

Apart from the more overt sympathies of some parties for Moscow or Peking, there are now pro-Soviet or pro-Chinese factions within most parties. Also, for the first time in the history of the bloc, the various national leaders can quietly exercise options within the bloc itself, rather than having either to choose unity, ergo subordination, or a split. In effect, the smaller parties can take advantage of the implicit agreement of the two major ones to disagree.

As a result, relations between the Soviet Union and the Communist states and parties vary greatly. In the past one pattern generally prevailed: close subordination or open hostility (e.g. Yugoslavia). Now, there is far greater diversity. In the Soviet-Polish relationship, state and party ties are good, while the Poles enjoy some domestic autonomy. On the other hand, East Germany and Czechoslovakia are completely subordinate to the Soviet Union, while state and party relations are also excellent. State and party ties with North Viet Nam are good despite its earlier dependence on China. With China itself there are good state relations but disagreements between the ruling parties. Finally, with Albania, there are correct state relations but apparent frigidity in party relations.

Perhaps the most dramatic illustration of a further change was the reversal of the Soviet attitude toward some organizational expression of unity, like the Comintern or the Cominform. Previously the Soviet leadership desired such an institution as a means of strengthening its hand. At the conference Khrushchev is reliably reported to have opposed the very thing he earlier promoted--precisely in order to

protect Soviet leadership! In the days when Soviet freedom of initiative was almost unlimited--particularly in the international arena--a Cominform type of organization was useful in ensuring that the other parties followed loyally. The protracted discussions in Moscow made the Soviet leaders sensitive to the possibility that today such an organization could limit their freedom of manoeuvre. They thus preferred to rely on ad hoc multilateral meetings of party chiefs, meetings which need not be called regularly and which would be less likely to interfere with Soviet international activity.

Furthermore, if Khrushchev's version of the conference can be trusted, it was the Soviet delegation which suggested that the conference no longer refer to the Soviet party as the leader of the camp. In 1957, the Soviets, supported by the Chinese, had insisted on this designation since the status of leadership helped to ensure automatic support for any Soviet initiatives. But today, as Khrushchev put it, "the fact that we are called the leader gives no advantages either to our party or to other parties. On the contrary, it only creates difficulties." One may surmise that the elimination of such a reference could forestall any Chinese claim to co-leadership of the camp. In fact, the Soviets might be arguing that if the Chinese want a united, militant bloc, they should respect in practice the Soviet line. Another difficulty which Khrushchev might have had in mind was the danger that the other parties could claim that the formal status of leader puts the C.P.S.U. under special responsibility to its followers, and perhaps Soviet freedom of action would be greater without such a formal designation. Finally, the status of leader implied responsibility for actions which the Soviets could not control (e.g. China towards India). In any event, the Kremlin could be certain that parties fully loyal to it would continue to do its bidding. The East Germans, for instance, have continued to make references to Soviet leadership even though the conference used the vaguer term "vanguard" to describe the

role of the C.P.S.U.

This role should not be minimized. As Khrushchev put it in his January address: " . . . the Communist parties must synchronize their watches. When someone's clock is fast or slow, it is regulated so that it shows the correct time. Similarly, it is necessary to check the time of the Communist movement . . . " The emphasis in the statement of the conference on the fundamental importance of the C.P.S.U.'s experience left no doubt that its clock was to be the Greenwich Mean Time of international Communism. None the less, the absence of a formally designated leader, capable of acting as arbiter, is bound to complicate further the internal situation in the Communist world, even if abroad it makes the camp look more "democratic." While bringing to bear on any issue its own power, the Soviet leadership must now, to a far greater extent, anticipate the reactions of its followers, especially in view of some of the available options.

The Moscow conference may thus be the end of Khrushchev's search for a new relationship with the bloc. But he did not find what he sought. Indeed, there appears to be a curious and striking parallel between the Eisenhower and Khrushchev records. Both men strove to bolster the power of their countries by making more stable alliances. Yet, in spite of their efforts, or perhaps because of them, they each appear to have presided over a decline in the independent power of their respective nations. Nor did the conference fulfill Chinese hopes. Instead of achieving united militancy, they have contributed to greater heterogeneity within the bloc.

This heterogeneity involves both advantages and liabilities. By appearing less autocratic and more flexible, the Communist camp can now support more effectively the pseudo-Marxist régimes in Cuba or Guinea and encourage others in a similar direction. Thus a new type of expansion--indirect--may replace the old, direct type. Many of the new nations throughout the

world are not only nationalistic in the nineteenth century sense; they are ideologically oriented and think in social and economic terms similar to those of Marxists. They use words like "imperialism" and "capitalism" much as the Soviets do. And modernization, which they seek, does not mean to them political democracy. The relationship of the Soviet Union and of the other camp members to these new states is already one of courtship and not of Stalin-like domination. In this relationship, the Poles, the Czechs, the East Germans, can be of great help to the Communist cause. They civilize Soviet Communism, their social and cultural level makes it more appealing, while the greater internal diversity within the camp makes Communism seem less threatening to the newly independent states.

At the same time, the new external strategy is likely to further the internal processes of change within the camp. One may increasingly expect Soviet allies helping to court a Cuba or a Guinea to seek a "most-favored-nation clause" from the Soviet Union, much the way the East Germans did when the U.S.S.R. was courting Gomulka's Poland in 1956, or the way that Latin American states have recently done with the United States, after watching our Marshall Plan aid going to Europe. This is all the more likely because of the new opportunities created for internal manoeuvring by the various parties. And these opportunities will probably increase when China acquires a nuclear capability.

From a Western point of view, a prolonged situation of formal Sino-Soviet unity with some degree of divergence is distinctly preferable to an open rupture. A thoroughgoing split would bode ill for the world. The Soviet Union can afford to tolerate within the camp a dissident but lonely China. Thus a break involving expulsion from the bloc could occur only if China were sufficiently strong to threaten Soviet leadership and to carry with it a significant number of Communist parties. A China capable of unilateral action could be very dangerous.

The danger is no less if China should feel strong enough to leave the bloc on its own initiative. Presumably it would do so only if its leaders felt confident of their ability to go it alone and to influence the course of events more effectively outside the bloc.

In either case, the Chinese would be in control of a significant portion of the international Communist movement. They could thus effectively develop a more actively militant line and presumably back it with their own resources. The Western reaction would necessarily involve a more militant posture also, perhaps the use of force, certainly higher military budgets. Under those circumstances, the Soviet Union would have to follow suit, lest the West gain an over-all military preponderance. Furthermore, the C.P.S.U. would inescapably be forced to condemn Western countermoves to Chinese initiatives, for not to do so would involve an insupportable loss in Soviet revolutionary prestige and probably precipitate further defections to the Chinese side. Hence, a break in the partnership would gradually push the Soviet Union toward more radical attitudes in an effort to regain leadership of the Communist camp. In a world polarized in open hostility between the United States and China, the Soviet Union could not afford therefore to be neutral, and certainly could not side with the United States.

The most advantageous situation from the Western standpoint is one which involves a gradual adjustment of the common Marxist-Leninist ideology to the divergent perspectives of its various subscribers. The existence of the Sino-Soviet dialogue has already forced the Soviet leaders to think through what was formerly only a generalized statement that a war would be disastrous; it has contributed a great deal to increased Soviet sophistication on the subject of nuclear weapons. Unanimity is often a shield for ignorance and, if for no other reason than to argue with Liu Shao-chi, Khrushchev probably had to read some RAND studies! In his emphasis on the

destructiveness of a nuclear war he has come close to admitting that a purely subjective factor, such as someone's decision to start a war, can possibly interfere with an immutable historical process. This necessarily involves a gradual relativization of the formerly absolutist ideology.

Furthermore, divorced from a single power center, this ideology is more and more stretched to embrace the diverse experiences and perspectives of élites, whether on the banks of the Elbe or the 38th Parallel. Increasingly each party becomes confident that its interpretation of the common doctrine is the correct one. Ulbricht highlighted this dilemma when he stated in his account of the Moscow conference that "somebody has raised the question as to who is the one who determines what is truth, and what complies with the principles of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine." There is no easy answer. Stalin was once the ideological arbiter and he possessed the power to enforce his interpretations. Today, the alternative to splits between the parties is some form of adjustment. Yet such adjustments mean that the formerly absolutist ideology is becoming increasingly a relative one.

The Communist leaders are aware that relativization could lead to dangerous erosion. To counteract it they are promoting closer economic ties and integration of the various members of their camp. In his speech of January 6, Khrushchev gave special attention to the problem of unity, insisting that all parties must continuously strive for it and asserting that the C.P.S.U. has made "every effort" to maintain unity with the Chinese. The Communist leaders are seeking rapid external victories to keep afire the sense of an inevitable and worldwide triumph. But the changes that have taken place within the Communist world were inherent in its expansion and can be viewed as part of the process of differentiation which all large-scale social organizations experience. The West had little directly to do with the emergence of these changes and precipitous moves overtly

designed to promote splits will only push the Communist régimes together.

The West can, however, strive to create favorable conditions for the further growth of the diversity which has developed within the Communist camp. We should, for instance, explore the possibility of recognizing Mongolia, thereby encouraging the growth of a sense of independent statehood which almost certainly would lead to more assertive nationalism. We should reexamine critically our policy of non-recognition of the Oder-Neisse line, since this policy helps to inhibit any Polish régime from "playing the game" of using the Sino-Soviet divergence for the consolidation of its domestic autonomy, and instead forces it to bolster its patron and only source of security, the Soviet Union. We should encourage some of our allies to exploit more the traditional bonds of friendship which have existed between them and some of the nations presently within the Communist camp. We should continue to address ourselves directly to the Communist-controlled peoples, thereby encouraging domestic pressures for change which each régime must now consider, given the greater flexibility of the camp. Finally, we should not make concessions to Khrushchev on such issues as Berlin, in the mistaken hope of bolstering him, but in effect depriving him of the argument which he has used against the Chinese--namely, that excessive pressure on the West might lead to a dangerous war. We should consider all these measures, and more. But perhaps it would suffice to note that the Soviet bloc is not immune to the flow of history in the name of which the Communists claim to act. The prophets of history may be gradually becoming its prisoners--and the time has now come for the West to prod history along.

[i] For instance, O. V. Kuusinen's important work, "Foundations of Marxism-Leninism," published early in 1960, and Soviet and Chinese statements on the occasion of Lenin's anniversary last year. The Moscow statement itself was

apparently prepared originally by the C.P.S.U. This preliminary draft was then reviewed in October by an editorial commission representing 26 parties (including all 12 from the bloc) before submission to the conference as a whole.

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ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI, Associate Professor of Public Law and Government, the Russian Institute, Columbia University; former Associate of the Center for International Affairs, Harvard University; author of "The Permanent Purge," "The Soviet Bloc: Unity and Conflict" and other works

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# The Practice of Partnership

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*Dean Acheson*



*President Kennedy meets with General Curtis LeMay, reconnaissance pilots, and Major Richard Heyser. CIA*

In the crisis precipitated by the discovery of Russian strategic nuclear weapons and delivery systems in Cuba, many Americans came to a new understanding of the great accretion of strength which membership in our alliances in this hemisphere and in Europe brings to a confrontation of power. They got a new understanding, too, of the vast importance of having choices of means, other than nuclear means, of meeting a hostile threat. These truths, seen in the sharp light of experience, bring into clearer relief the central problem of our European alliance.

In the immediate postwar years, the United States wisely helped Western Europe restore itself to economic health. Equal wisdom led the way in binding together Western Europe and North America in the defense of this center and powerhouse of an environment for free societies. Since then inspired European leadership has brought about economic integration of the Continent, paving the way for even greater development and political unity. At the same time new problems have confronted and new strains divided the Atlantic Alliance. Sometimes they have come from the dissolution of colonial ties which has caused many of our allies the most acute distress and, in the case of Suez, led to conduct, by both this country and its allies, gravely damaging to the alliance. Sometimes strains have come from inherent limitations of our power, as in the case of our balance-of-payments difficulties.

But a principal difficulty of the alliance today-if not its chief difficulty-comes from failure to think through to an agreed solution its primary task: the defense of Europe and America. Let me obviate here at the start, if possible, a distracting misunderstanding. I do not believe that military security, or such as is attainable, solves the problems of the free world, or of the Atlantic nations. On the contrary, I believe that a sound allied military defense must rest upon conviction by the peoples involved that it is essential to protect basic values and lively expectations which stir their deepest loyalty and devotion. To create the basis in truth and reality for these values and expectations requires domestic and international policies of great complexity; and this, in turn, calls for statesmanship in all the allied countries of so high and sustained an order that it is likely to be only approximated. Finally, a military strategy and establishment which by its burdens or methods destroyed what it was intended to preserve would be worse than futile.

In short, a successful military policy is possible when, and

only when, it is one of at least three strands of the policies of the allied countries. The other two are the political and the economic. Each of us may have other strands which we may like to add. It is plain, then, that the perfect discussion of alliance policy would be like the performance of an orchestra in which a host of instruments from the kettledrums to the piccolo weave together all the elements of a symphony. But unfortunately an individual can play only one instrument at a time, discuss one subject at a time. I am discussing here only the need of a master military strategy for the alliance, fully aware that it cannot stand self-contained or alone; but aware, also, that unless the alliance is capable of developing-and sooner rather than later-military forces and an effective strategy for their use to provide what security is possible, both political and economic policies within the alliance and in relation to other states may take truly disastrous courses.

Let us begin with a look at the history of NATO's strategy. Its first strategic thoughts were simple and short-lived. The political commitment undertaken in the treaty-"an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all"-combined with the sole possession of nuclear weapons by the United States was to furnish the necessary deterrent to a Soviet move into Western Europe. The treaty, said the State Department in its analysis, with its clear intention of united action by members, "should remove the danger of miscalculation by any potential aggressor that he could succeed in overcoming them one by one."

Second thoughts soon raised doubts about this happy conclusion. Soviet forces in Eastern Europe could, it was pointed out, move westward with only token resistance in Europe. Our nuclear weapons would be worse than useless there, and the use of them in Russia after an attack began might well come too late. Our European allies had no enthusiasm for another occupation and liberation-if the latter

would have any meaning. So in 1950 came the unified NATO command and force in Europe under General Eisenhower, and the strategic concept of the shield of conventional forces on the spot to hold and protect until the nuclear sword wielded by the United States struck down the aggressor.

Unhappily, the conventional shield, while by no means negligible, has still a long way to go even to perform that temporary function. At the outset, it could not develop until Germany should become a part of it, which was not even agreed to for another four years. By the time Germany came in, French military power had been absorbed in Algeria, Britain's meager resources had been divided between an attempted nuclear force and garrison needs from Aden to Singapore, leaving little for the army of the Rhine; and the Eisenhower Administration had adopted nuclear retaliation as its defense strategy. The result is that, while there is a quite decent conventional structure to build on, it has not reached the limited shield dimensions, and is wholly inadequate. The nuclear retaliation decision, strangely enough, almost coincided with the first Russian thermonuclear explosion in 1953. NATO took the first step toward reliance on nuclear tactics in 1954, and became deeply committed in 1956 and 1957 as a result of an American effort to meet the near collapse of European confidence brought on by Suez, and the Russian sputniks close afterwards. In 1959 General Norstad proposed that NATO become the fourth nuclear power and be armed with medium-range ballistic missiles based in Europe. The next year Secretary of State Herter endorsed the idea with the amendment that the missiles be on Polaris submarines under what was called "multinational control," to be worked out.

As the years went by without adequate shield forces, our allies became less confident in their defense; and, as Soviet nuclear capabilities increased, the rationalization of allied defense, called "the strategic concept," grew, as Alice

remarked in Wonderland, "curiouser and curiouser."  
Metaphors multiplied. The "shield" melted into a "trip-wire," over which the aggressor would stumble, setting off the retaliatory atomic blast. But the Soviets now had a counterblast; and, since intermediate-range missiles- 1,000 to 1,500 miles-were more numerous and accurate in the late 1950s and early 1960s than the intercontinental types, Europe seemed to the Europeans more exposed than the more distant United States.

So the trip-wire was thought not to be enough. Accordingly, nuclear weapons were added in the form of fighter-delivered weapons and army battlefield weapons delivered by artillery as well as by several comparatively short- range missiles. The purpose was to defend Europe against the invading Russians during the general war which would result if the trip-wire were tripped. For a time it was the hope-and, perhaps, the fact, though it is no longer-that the Russians were not adequately supplied with similar battlefield weapons. The next decision came in 1957; in order to counter sputnik and bridge over our development of intercontinental missiles it was decided to send slower-firing, and vulnerable, intermediate-range missiles and nuclear warheads. The custody of all warheads remained, at least theoretically and legally, in the President of the United States. General Norstad explained to the NATO parliamentarians in November 1960 that increasing the firepower of the small NATO force would cause an aggressor to pause at or near the threshold to consider the full consequences of his ill-advised intentions.

This new metaphorical twist seemed to mean that arming European NATO forces with tactical and intermediate-range ballistic missiles gave them a new significance and, to soldiers at least, a more appealing role. They ceased being a rather ignominious tripwire and took on a certain deterrent quality. But a closer look disclosed defects. To General de Gaulle, the defect lay in the fact that the control of the

deterrent, such as it was, was not in Europe but in Washington. To others the defect lay in leaving no apparent alternative between yielding to Russian threats and bringing on a nuclear exchange in which Europe was certain to suffer heavily. No comfort came from the suggestion made at just this time that the two nuclear giants might wisely refrain from attempting to destroy one another and confine hostilities to tactical nuclear war in Europe.

The Kennedy Administration has, thus far, given cautious support in principle to a multinationally manned and controlled seaborne nuclear force; has announced that some Polaris submarines (to be followed by more) were on station assigned to the defense of NATO in event of attack; has taken the lead in the development of rules designed to determine in advance when nuclear weapons should and would be used to defend Europe; and has pressed our allies for an increase in NATO's conventional forces. Meanwhile General de Gaulle continues adamant in his determination to develop a French nuclear force; and, due in large part to the Algerian revolt, most of the French Army and all of the Navy were withdrawn from NATO command. The British Government is weary of its disappointing military nuclear venture, but is undecided whether to struggle on or to give up; while the German authorities are making it clear that, whatever decision may be reached on nuclear arms or their control, Germany does not intend to be left out or accept an inferior position.

In short, when President Kennedy in his first State of the Union Message of January 30, 1961, said that the NATO alliance was "unfulfilled and in some disarray . . . weakened by economic rivalry and partially eroded by national interest" and "has not yet fully mobilized its resources nor fully achieved a common outlook," he was not exaggerating its malaise then or now. A beginning cannot be made to end this unhappy and dangerous state until the alliance has a strategic theory, a master plan, for carrying on the defense which it is

charged with providing, and an agreement, tacit or expressed, for making the decisions and issuing the commands which are necessary for its execution.

In this discouraging recital, two facts stand out with singular clarity. First, since the development of Soviet nuclear weapons, NATO has never had an adequate long-range plan for the defense of Europe. The military explanations given from time to time-the so-called strategic concepts-were largely rationalizations of what was thought practicable action under varying political and economic circumstances. Second, the United States, by its policy of resting defense in Europe so heavily on nuclear weapons, inevitably made the control of nuclear weapons appear to be the primary and essential requirement for that defense. On the Americans' own strategic theory it could be, and was, said in Europe that European defense was wholly dependent upon the United States. Could the United States be relied upon, it was asked, in view of possible consequences to itself, to use nuclear weapons unless the security of the United States itself was immediately in danger? Europe quite understandably thought it had its answer, when Under Secretary of State Herter, on April 21, 1959, said before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, during the hearing on his nomination to be Secretary: "I can't conceive of the President involving us in an all-out nuclear war unless the facts showed clearly that we are in danger of devastation ourselves, or that actual moves have been made toward devastating ourselves."

At any rate, these ambivalent attitudes of our government and publicists have brought on a series of controversies among and with our allies about the control of nuclear weapons which distracts us from, and obscures, the more fundamental problem of working out and putting in train a strategic plan for forces and their use in the defense of Europe. In this plan, nuclear forces will play a vitally important part. But that part, and also the matter of their placement and control, will look

very different in the light of an entire strategic plan with the organization and forces to execute it than it does in isolation. Furthermore, the control of nuclear weapons is impossible to solve at the present moment because of intractable differences between the allies which for their solution require, in part, the erosion of time.

A sound strategic plan or theory for the defense of Europe does not consist of a catch-phrase or slogan around which can be built a speech or a justification of the status quo, or a dream unconnected with reality. It must be a plan of operations based on political objectives, responsive to the needs and interests of those for whose benefit it is devised, which brings together and applies at critical times and places the forces and resources which can be made available to accomplish the result desired with the minimum harm to those doing it. It should not be designed, like the monstrous giants who guard the entrance to the temples at Nikko, to deter evil spirits and the ill-intentioned from entering the sacred precincts, even though they scare the daylights out of the faithful as well.

A strategic plan must be one which the participants are willing to engage in, if they have to, fully conscious that the price, though high, has been kept no higher than necessary and is preferable to accepting the imposition of a hostile will. To devise the plan and all the means for its execution is a vast undertaking of infinite complexity. It requires major attention by the most highly placed civil and military persons with the best brains to help them, a progression of decisions, the wiser the better, firmly adhered to, and a disciplined military establishment which accepts decisions made and builds upon them. The first step in attaining a strategic plan for NATO is for the United States to develop one upon which the entire executive branch, civilian and military, is united, which it is prepared to stand behind and therefore to propose to the other members of NATO.

The test whether a strategic defense plan is sound and workable will lie in millions of details, but enough is known now of the placement of military and economic power in the world, of the state and trend of weapon development, and of the temper and temperament of peoples, to make tentative predictions of some of the major elements in a workable defense plan. They are probably correct enough to show the nature of the political problems which a common defense will soon present, their order of importance, and the way in which we can best go about solving them.

First of all, a sound defense plan should increase the importance and the size of the non-nuclear defense force in Europe and redefine its function. Secondly, the function, positioning and command of strategic nuclear weapons in such a plan should be based, not on fear that the alliance will break up or that the United States will not use them when necessary, but on providing as many alternatives to their use as possible; on defining "when necessary" and tying the nuclear power of the United States integrally into the plan; and on the most effective use of the weapons. Let us turn to the function of the non-nuclear force.

That force should not be designed as an instrument for bringing on a nuclear response to an armed attack, which is the function inherent in the analogy of a trip-wire. Nor should it be designed to be merely enough more substantial than a trip-wire force to stop something larger than a border raid, or to "produce a pause" in fighting during which an aggressor might reflect on possible nuclear implications. Its purpose should be to deny the Soviet Union the capacity to impose its will in Europe by conventional force. At present, if an issue should be pushed to the point of using force, the options open to the NATO alliance are acquiescence or, very shortly, a nuclear response. If the situation should be reversed and the Soviet Union should itself be faced with the necessity of relying upon nuclear force in attempting to impose its will,

more glittering prizes than are now apparent would be required to justify assuming the risks involved. Let us see, therefore, how far this purpose is possible of achievement, being careful not to claim too much,

It can be stated flatly that Western Europe can be defended well to the east of the Rhine in the face of a massive Soviet attack which included forces mobilized, deployed and supported from the Soviet Union. This view flies in the face of much received doctrine, but should not cause surprise if one pauses to consider (1) that the combined manpower and resources of Western Europe and North America far exceed those of the Soviet Union; (2) that the Soviet satellites would be most untrustworthy allies, especially in an offensive operation of this sort; (3) that the Soviet communications system and general war-support apparatus is distinctly inferior to that in Western Europe; and (4) that NATO has more men under arms than the Warsaw Pact countries. So we can conclude that it is entirely feasible to stop conventional forces of the Russians in Europe without the use of nuclear weapons. And without a very large increase in defense budgets.

Nevertheless, the danger of nuclear war would remain and would probably dominate any major crisis or conflict. But the inhibitions against a projected offensive Soviet action would have been greatly increased. A conventional offensive would have been rendered incapable of success, and the risks of attempting one would include the near certainty of an escalation to nuclear war. The suggestion is sometimes made that to increase conventional armaments would carry the implication that the United States would not use nuclear ones. I should suppose that the opposite would be more nearly true. It would clearly carry the implication that the United States wanted an initial alternative to fighting with nuclear weapons. But surely our determination and capacity to fight with conventional weapons, if forced to do so by

threat or attack, would make more, rather than less, credible our willingness to throw the nuclear ones into the scales either to protect our troops, if necessary, or to anticipate a blow from a deeply committed enemy.

That this should be credible is essential if the issue presented is, not stopping a Russian advance into Western Europe, but countering the use of Russian force behind the present frontier-for instance, in Berlin. I am not claiming that the conventional force suggested could, without the use or threat of nuclear weapons, prevent an occupation of Berlin. But I submit that the threat to use nuclear weapons, if necessary, in a clash over Berlin, which Mr. McNamara made on September 29, becomes more, and not less, menacing as the number of our own and allied troops at stake along the front increases.

How large a conventional force would be required or how it should be armed or employed is not for an amateur strategist to decide. But one must have some order of magnitude in mind to discuss the matter with any sense of reality. Clearly, larger forces are needed in Europe than now exist there, but it would surprise me if a pretty good job could not be done by a well armed, supplied and supported force on the central NATO front in the neighborhood of the 30 divisions now talked about, with an equal number of quickly mobilized reserves. This is quite within practicable possibility.

One may ask whether it is realistic to talk in terms of this magnitude since in the past our European allies have not provided for NATO the smaller forces asked of them. I think that it is, and that the development of such a strategic plan is an essential precondition to making the talk realistic. In the past, our allies have believed-partly, as I have pointed out, because of our own attitudes-that the conventional effort asked of them had little real military importance and would be a mere curtain-raiser to nuclear blows. Furthermore, they

cannot believe that we are asking them to do what we ourselves are unwilling to do-that is, provide conventional forces. Today we have in Europe, including the sailors of the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean, over 400,000 men. Indeed, our forces in Europe are larger than the total men under arms in any but two NATO countries, Turkey and France.

The removal of Soviet dominance on the eastern front would also have important political effects. The stability of the satellite régimes in Eastern Europe rests upon this dominance. Present Soviet policy toward East Germany and Berlin would be much more difficult without it. Much of allied hesitations and doubts stems directly from it. The essence of Soviet policy in Eastern Europe is to take action supported by force, as in Hungary and East Germany, confident that no counterforce exists capable of supporting local opposition and that "massive retaliation" by nuclear weapons would be regarded as too hazardous. If the Soviet Union were confronted on its western front with equal conventional forces, and in some localities with superior forces, calculations of actions and risks both in the Soviet Union and in Europe would be very different. Calculations of actions and risks make governmental policy.

Consider now the nuclear armament of the alliance. At present a common complaint in Europe is that the Government of the United States has an inordinate control of the calculations of actions and risks because of its vast preëminence in nuclear weapons. But one hears no speculation upon the dramatic change in relative military weight which would occur, if, in accordance with the defense strategy for NATO barely suggested above, Europe provided conventional forces within the magnitudes outlined. In that event, plainly, those who provided the power which would be called upon initially to block a Soviet attempt to impose its will-as, for instance, in an effort to change or impair movement to and from Berlin-would have an immense

leverage on political and military strategy in the West. This would be an inevitable reflection of new power assumed by Europe within the alliance. It might stimulate realistic methods of agreeing on action and carrying it out. Obviously, an allied defense force such as suggested, operating on a strategic plan such as suggested, cannot be controlled by a town meeting requiring unanimity for decision. It should surprise no one if the needs of supranational organizations grew fast in this forcing bed. But plainest of all would be the certainty of a greatly enhanced position for Europe-so much so that the United States might not find it easy to obtain a voice equal to the importance of its nuclear capabilities, essential though these would be to policy and strategy but pushed out of the forefront of a confrontation.

In other words, the basic problem before the Atlantic Alliance is not how to control a particular weapon, but what ends the alliance proposes to accomplish, how it proposes to accomplish them, and how to make the decisions to use force to meet force-that is, force of any kind-knowing the full risks involved, but knowing also that its first incidence may be local. Even when all the allies are wholly convinced that nuclear weapons are available and will be used at the critical moment, the basic decision will remain that of entering on a concert of action which may involve them.

Discussion of the positioning and control of nuclear weapons has been bedeviled by its involvement with pride and fear. For instance, it is asserted as a requirement that the defense of France should not depend on any other country. The defense of France-and, indeed, that of Europe-does depend, and throughout this century has depended, on association with the United States, just as the security of the United States is vitally bound up with Europe in no less important-though different-ways than when the sanction behind the Monroe Doctrine was the British fleet.

The same idea is put differently when it springs from fear rather than pride. Then it is said that some day the United States may withdraw from Europe into isolation. Against that day Europe must have an independent European-supported nuclear capability, or it will be without power to deter or resist Soviet domination. The withdrawal of the United States from the defense of Europe would, indeed, be an evil day for the whole free world, and neither Europe nor the United States could long or successfully maintain their free institutions or resist the domination of a Communist system embracing Eurasia, Africa and South America. To plan and act on the assumption of that eventuality will ensure the failure of any common defense plan for Europe. For neither the conventional forces nor the nuclear forces required for that defense can then be made available.

It is an illusion to believe that Europe can or will produce an independent nuclear deterrent within any time relevant to military planning, even if given the necessary technological help. Our European NATO allies spend annually on all defense about \$15 billion. Secretary McNamara has told us that in the coming fiscal year the United States will spend \$15 billion on nuclear weapons and delivery systems alone. The British nuclear effort over many years has strained available resources, reduced conventional forces to a minimum and produced a nuclear capability that may be, perhaps, 2 percent of the nuclear striking power which the United States could now bring to bear in the NATO area. If we assume that France is capable of equalling that result and that the rest of NATO Europe could add as much again, the total would not be a significant addition to nuclear power contributed by the United States, or to what the United States would be adding to that power during the same time. Furthermore, it would be made, as in England, at the expense of essential strengthening, perhaps even of maintaining, present non-nuclear forces. In other words, a European-produced nuclear

force would be a tragic misuse of resources essential to provide basic elements of defense. Nevertheless, we must ask whether this waste would give Europe either a significant deterrent against the Soviet Union, or an increased "say" in the direction and control of NATO, or any other element in the defense of Europe.

Viewed as a deterrent, a European-and certainly a French-nuclear strategic force would contain little threat against Soviet nuclear power. It could cover only a fraction of the targets and plainly it could not disarm the Soviet Union or seriously weaken its nuclear strength. As a weapon in use, it would be soon destroyed or spent. As an anti-city weapon, a small European force could threaten serious damage. But the threat would work both ways and would also impose grave risks to European, and also American, cities by way of retaliation. It would have a measure of deterrent power, like that of a determined man with a drawn revolver. He inhibits some action, but in doing so he incurs risks which eventually mature; and his career ends in violence or reform. Too many have an interest in ending it.

Sometimes it is said that an independent, even though small, European nuclear power would gain Europe a larger "say" in the use and control of nuclear weapons by the ability to initiate a nuclear strike and thus "trigger" the Strategic Air Command. The alliance would, indeed, be in sorry shape if joint planning and control of defense had to be coerced by this sort of blackmail. As Secretary of Defense McNamara has said both publicly, in general terms, and to the NATO Council, in specific terms, in order for us to have the best, indeed the only, chance of survival in case the dread nuclear weapon has to be used, it is indispensable that we have unity of planning and unity of command. A scattered sputtering of feeble shots to begin with spells doom for everyone.

An infinitely more important, possibly controlling, "say" would

come to Europe from a defense strategy and the forces to execute it to which Europe would furnish the bulk of the conventional power and the United States the nuclear power, as well as very substantial conventional forces. As I have already pointed out, such a policy would give Europe the dominant voice in adopting a political policy of opposition to Soviet demands and threats, in regard to which some Europeans have feared that the United States might be headstrong. It would also steady and strengthen alliance policy by binding the United States firmly to that policy through a most precise prior assurance of the engagement of our nuclear power at the point where an agreed and adopted defense plan would commit it.

In so far as demand for a European nuclear deterrent does not stem from pride or fear, it stems from lack of knowledge of the facts, for which United States policy has been largely responsible. Secrecy, which is desirable, has been rated ahead of understanding by our allies, which is indispensable.

One hears arguments from time to time, often connected with the claimed obsolescence of manned aircraft, that there should be stationed in Europe, under the command of the Supreme Allied Commander Europe, strategic nuclear weapons adequate to cover sources of threatened attack upon Europe. If those charged with high responsibility among our allies could share with us knowledge of the nuclear disposition made for their defense, it would be clearer to them that Europe could not produce weapons adequate for the purpose, and that to transfer from present locations outside Europe weapons now assigned for this purpose, and others available for it, would not strengthen but would greatly weaken the defense and security of Europe. They would know, too, the degree to which the nuclear defense of Europe and that of America are inseparable, and that a comprehensive plan and unified command can provide infinitely greater effectiveness both in the power and

versatility of the defense and in the security of the weapons involved. Our partners could then see clearly that participation in devising the master plan and making the force dispositions most desirable for its execution are of the essence of a common defense. Splintering the strategic weapon and its military command would utterly destroy it.

Furthermore, this understanding and participation are the best, and probably the only, way of meeting a divisive and weakening diversion of allied effort into "independent" nuclear forces. Strong-willed persons are not going to be persuaded or beguiled into abandoning cherished plans; nor will other nations long accept an "Uncle-Sam-knows-best" attitude. But, over time, knowledge and intelligent self-interest often mitigate determined courses, or influence others not to join in them.

What is involved in devising and putting into effect a comprehensive plan for the defense of Europe is much more far-reaching than current talk of multinational nuclear forces and other proposals for "nuclear sharing." For the comprehensive agreement proposed here is not merely agreement upon a sound theoretical blueprint of a plan of operations, with a list added of the forces, including reserves, armaments, supplies and logistics necessary to execute it. To accomplish this much is difficult enough to have defied achievement up to the present. It is, of course, an essential prerequisite. Nor does the proposal stop with allied agreement to execute such a plan, nor with the provision of the funds and legislation (military service, etc.) needed to do so. A NATO civilian defense establishment is necessary to coördinate and see that it is carried out. The NATO Secretary General's office, suitably staffed and empowered, might lend itself to this task.

At the very heart of the problem will lie the creation of real intimacy and confidence between the nuclear and non-nuclear

components of this combined force and combined operation. Though much has already been done, still more can be done toward allied participation in coordinating the targeting for NATO defense, both European and North American. This has already produced both knowledge of nuclear realities and mutual confidence in those who have experienced it. Selected European personnel could be brought into United States operational units. Already proposals have been made by the President to allocate to the defense of Europe Polaris submarines, armed with intermediate-range ballistic missiles, and kept on station. The plan proposed here would commit all of the United States Strategic Air Command to the same duty. Out of the arrangements, over time and with experience, a real NATO nuclear command could develop.

The great point should be to avoid grandiose proposals and to make progress step by step and with care. Done in this way, the security risks, which would be real, would be far outweighed by European knowledge of the nuclear strength of the United States and confidence in our commitment to Europe's defense.

These tasks, hard enough in all conscience, are enough for the immediate present. If we are successful in performing them, we shall come face-to-face with even greater ones which already loom through the mist around us. I have already suggested them. They involve agreement upon common policies for the Atlantic allies in a number of fields on which judgments are presently divided. After agreement upon policies, there remains the most perplexing problem of all-how to execute policy as tensions rise, how to make the final, critical decisions which are essential to vigorous action. This is hard enough for a national executive. It is much harder for an alliance. But, plainly, the task is made simpler, not more difficult, if a master strategic plan and the forces to carry it out are ready at hand.

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DEAN ACHESON, Secretary of State of the United States, 1949-53; author of "A Citizen Looks at Congress" and "Power and Diplomacy"

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# The Framework of East-West Reconciliation

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*Zbigniew Brzezinski*



*Joseph Stalin, Lenin, and Mikhail Kalinin were all members of the Bolshevik Party before the Russian Revolution of 1917.*

Europe is increasingly restless with the division imposed on it more than twenty years ago. To end that division, and thereby to take a step toward a larger community of the developed nations, is a task requiring the often conflicting virtues of perseverance and imagination. It also requires asking explicitly: What can be done in the next twenty years to change this condition-and to change it in a way that is compatible with historical trends and more immediate requirements of political reality?

## I. THREE CONCEPTS IN SEARCH OF REALITY

Several concepts currently purport to provide an answer to the above questions. Three among them particularly stand out

and deserve closer attention: The Atlantic conception, the "European Europe" Gaullist vision and the Soviet idea of a European security arrangement. Let it be said immediately that each, though in different ways, is inadequate or only partially satisfactory. One, rooted in the transitional setting of the cold war, even if generally in tune with the wider sweep of history, fails to respond to the growing political concerns of Europe; the second reflects current political moods but ignores historical trends; the third fails on both scores.

Usually, the Atlantic concept is employed to express not only an existing reality-that America and Europe have a special affinity-but a desire for a particular kind of relationship between them. The spectrum ranges from the notion of an intimate and integrated Atlantic community, with the United States and individual European states merging into one, to the famous concept of partnership between America and a more united Western Europe. Such a partnership, it is asserted, would generate an irresistible magnetic attraction to the East, and eventually the European problem-particularly the division of Germany-would somehow be resolved. Such a Europe would also share with America certain global responsibilities-a hope voiced more frequently by American than European spokesmen.

The nature of the eventual European settlement, and the ways and means of reaching it, are rarely spelled out in any detail by the Atlanticists. This is not surprising. The concept of Atlantic partnership presupposes the creation of a united (or integrated) Europe; this is bound to take a long time, certainly longer than originally assumed. Till then, the problem of the other half of Europe must be held in abeyance, given the scale of priorities subscribed to by the Atlanticists. Premature ties with the East would dilute Western institutions and bring alien systems and ideologies into the family setting. This would delay the appearance of "the partner" in the Atlantic partnership.

Moreover, the question of Germany introduces a special complication. An implicit and necessary component of the Atlantic concept is the idea that the West European partner cannot prosper and endure unless all its member states have identical status in all respects. The futility and tragedy of the Versailles-type solution for Germany has often been cited as the reason for eschewing arrangements that would imply a discrimination against the Federal Republic. To the extent that the united European partner in the Atlantic community would also presumably be a party to Atlantic security arrangements, including the nuclear field, the right of Germany to participate on an equal basis in a European nuclear defense force follows logically.

Thus, in so far as the problem of Europe's unresolved partition is concerned, the pure Atlantic approach poses two basic dilemmas. Until a united Europe appears, East-West relations are relegated to a secondary position, primary emphasis being put on creating an undiluted Western Europe. Even Eastern entry into or association with existing Western bodies, such as O.E.C.D. (Organization for Economic Coöperation and Development), is opposed, either as premature or inherently subversive of the fundamental purpose of Western multilateral coöperation. At the same time, the fear (or suspicion) of some Western European states that the Atlantic concept is essentially a scheme for the preservation of American hegemony in Europe and for relieving American burdens in the Third World stiffens European resistance to the partnership, thus postponing indefinitely the moment when the West can address itself seriously to the unresolved legacies of World War II.

In addition, emphasis on complete uniformity within the European component of the Atlantic partnership, including the nuclear security field, introduces an element of unreality into discussions of the German problem. No spokesman for the Atlantic idea has yet been able to spell out how-and why-

the East should accept the notion of German reunification if the end result is an automatic accretion of strength to a Western Alliance that includes a German finger on the nuclear trigger. Unwillingness to draw a distinction between inequality-which rightfully cannot serve as a solid foundation for a united community of several nations-and a special position dictated both by the reality of political circumstances and the desire to change them peacefully, has led to the formulation of an Atlantic position on German reunification that assures continued German-and thus also European-division.

Finally, implicit in the Atlantic concept, although never deliberately asserted, is the idea that Europe is really Western Europe (indeed, Atlanticists usually say "Europe" when speaking of its Western half). It is thus unresponsive to the strongly held European feeling that the cold-war division of the Continent into American and Soviet-dominated halves no longer corresponds either to security or political needs, and that the time has come to end Europe's partition. The inherent inapplicability of the Atlantic concept, in its pristine form, to this condition explains much of our own difficulty in making the United States relevant to new East-West relations, even though in fact it has creatively pioneered in developing these relations.[i]

Indeed, failure to adapt the Atlantic concept to what might be called the post-cold-war era in Europe has distorted the meaning of the actually farsighted, imaginative and usually constructive American initiatives on the East-West front. Since we have pursued our initiatives in the context of a concept that to some implies U.S. hegemony and to others an American preference for the status quo (including partition), they have tended to reinforce the European suspicion that we want to strike a bargain with Russia, even at the expense of Europe. Misgivings concerning that kind of détente have not been restricted to Western Europe; even Easterners have

whispered that this is not what they hope for. The attraction of de Gaulle thus has grown in direct proportion to our efforts to promote East-West reconciliation.

To some extent, President Johnson in his path-breaking speech of October 7, 1966, strove to cope with this difficulty by emphasizing that progress in strengthening the Atlantic Alliance was interdependent with further growth of East-West ties. However, the basic conceptual difficulty remained unresolved; the lingering tension between Western unity and détente was not overcome. This condition was aggravated by the Vietnamese war, which intensified cross-Atlantic suspicions, and by de Gaulle's peremptory moves, which created openings for Soviet diplomatic diversions. The combined effect was to push the Germans (as hinted in Kiesinger's and Brandt's speeches in June-July 1967) toward a basic reappraisal of their interest in close Atlantic ties and a growing interest in exploring bilateral dealings with Russia. In the process, American relevance to both Western and Eastern Europe declined.

De Gaulle exploited both this decline and the conceptual inadequacy of the Atlantic approach. Far from desiring a reunited Germany, though occasionally going through the ritual of referring to it, he strove to create a new European equilibrium. De Gaulle has never spelled out his ideas to the extent that the Atlantic concept has been, but his central objective has been to reduce the presence in Europe of the two external "hegemonial" powers. This he hoped to accomplish by creating a West European hard core, led by France-detached from an integrated Atlantic relationship but continuing to enjoy U.S. nuclear protection-which would then proceed to forge a "European Europe to the Urals," i.e. translating the East-West détente in Europe into an eventual entente.

While murky in specifics, it is evident that to accomplish his

ends de Gaulle played on European restlessness and shrewdly strove to exploit the Asian involvement of his two powerful adversaries. He counted on the Sino- Soviet dispute to drive Russia into Europe, and he exploited American involvement in Viet Nam to generate a sense of distinctively European interests. Though cautious not to detach himself too much from U.S. nuclear protection, de Gaulle indicated that the eventual solution to the partition of Europe would come through the dissolution of the two confronting alliances, NATO and the Warsaw Pact, both de facto agencies of the respective hegemonial centers. A Europe built on bilateral relations, respecting the primacy of national sovereignty, engaging whenever expedient (especially to France) in closer economic coöperation, would be a Europe restored-indeed, a Europe ascendant.

The General's concepts are superficially plausible. Moreover, his dedication to the nation-state responds to traditional European nationalist notions. At the same time, the anti-hegemonial components of his concept are a useful additive, especially attractive to some in the younger generation who are tired of what appears to them to be excessive American or Soviet preponderance on the European scene.

Yet it is more than doubtful that de Gaulle's concepts are any more relevant to Europe's present-not to speak of its future-than the ideas that he rejects. The dissolution of the two alliances perhaps might solve the problem of confrontation but it would certainly create new ones. The argument that the cold war can be abolished by abolishing the blocs, or vice versa, is not only deceptively attractive, it is dangerously wrong.

In fact, if a loosely organized Europe sought détente with the East, the result could only be the West's acceptance of the status quo, in particular the permanent acceptance of two German states. A politically fragmented Western Europe

would be a Europe incapable of steering in a common direction on behalf of commonly shared goals; détente for the sake of détente could be the only common denominator. Inevitably, it would lead to Western rivalry in seeking to improve relations bilaterally and to develop advantageous trade with the East.

Accordingly, it is probably true that a loosely organized Europe, lacking an integrated political and defense structure, at most a free-trade area and without close ties to the United States, could more easily reach a détente with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. For the East, accommodation with such a Europe would not require any substantial ideological evolution, especially since no special concessions or adjustments in the Eastern position would be required. The communist élites, having nothing to fear from a Europe of this kind, would probably be quite responsive to Western overtures because they could thus have their cake and eat it too: they could savor the tangible benefits of closer economic contacts with the West without any substantial change in the overall political situation.

In this connection, it is important to bear in mind that the present communist élites, especially in Eastern Europe, are in the first stage of post-peasant political awakening. By and large, their political attitudes are a curious mixture of communist formulas and of rather primitive and intense nationalism. Their outlook is basically parochial and conservative. A détente that perpetuated their domestic dictatorship and left the European political map unchanged would be for them the ideal solution.

Whether a détente of this kind would be stable is another matter. There are strong reasons for skepticism. It would mean a recreation of a Europe based on the old principle of state supremacy, with a major European nation- Germany- condemned to division. In those circumstances, frustration

and insecurity in West Germany would almost certainly follow. Having attained neither national unity nor fulfillment in a larger European community, the Germans could be expected to seek accommodation with the Soviet Union. Irrespective of original Soviet motives-even if it is assumed that the Soviets sincerely seek a stable détente in Europe-the temptation to exploit German anxieties could be too strong for Moscow to resist. The result could be a new phase in European tensions, with the Continent's stability in general and East European security in particular being its first victims.

Yet that is what de Gaulle seems to be precipitating, not only by exploiting the involvement of the United States in Asia and the end of the Atlantic orientation in Bonn (the latter clearly demarcated by the coming to power of Kiesinger-Brandt), but by his apparent determination to quit NATO altogether. Perhaps deliberately, the French President, in his speech of August 10, 1967, has given the world his reasons for rejecting the Alliance:

By withdrawing from NATO, France, for her part, extricated herself from [United States-Soviet] subjection. Thus she would not find herself drawn, eventually, into any quarrel that would not be hers and into any war action that she would not herself have wished. Thus she is capable of practicing- as she considers right, from one end of Europe to the other-entente and coöperation, the only means of achieving the security of our continent. Thus she can uphold, in a world that many old and new abuses hold in a state of ferment, according to her vocation, the right of each people to self-determination, a right that is today the necessary foundation of any confederation, the imperative condition of international agreement, the indispensable basis of a real organization of peace.

In so doing, he may well be hastening the day when a German

leader will make a similar pronouncement.

The Soviet Union also has an entry in the competition for the best European solution. The Soviet formula has developed slowly, in response to external opportunities appearing in the West and internal political turmoil in the East. Under Khrushchev, the Soviet Union did not really have a European policy; it was too busy pursuing a global chimera. Anxious to become coequal with the United States, and then even determined to dethrone it as the world's number-one power, Khrushchev alternated between a grand courtship and a grand contest. Both ended tragically: the courtship was buried in May 1960 in a meadow near Sverdlovsk, marked by the remnants of a fallen U-2; the contest ended ignominiously with Soviet ships submitting to armed inspection by the United States while ferrying Soviet missiles from Cuba back to Soviet ports.

From that time on, the Soviet Union gradually shifted to a more regional foreign policy. Its outlines took clearer shape after Khrushchev's fall, especially given the opportunities created by the growing American involvement in Viet Nam. Exploiting them, and also taking advantage of de Gaulle in a manner somewhat reminiscent of earlier U.S. support for Tito, the Soviet leaders proceeded to forge, through words and actions, a new European policy. The Soviet leaders exchanged an unprecedented number of visits with their NATO European neighbors and became eloquent exponents of the separate identity and interests of Europe. Indeed, even the terms "technological gap" and the "brain drain" became part of the peripatetic Soviet leaders' lexicon. Although it was not made clear how a semi-developed Soviet Union could be of much help to Western Europe in these regards, it may be assumed that raising such issues was calculated less to produce a practical common response to the American challenge than to evoke a sense of shared emotion in the face of the alleged American threat.

More important was the Soviet sensitivity to the growing feeling in Europe that gradual improvements on the East-West front cannot be confined to the economic and political fields. Western public opinion increasingly has felt that the time is becoming ripe for doing something about the European security problem. Although careful not to spell out precisely what the nature of an eventual European security arrangement might be, communist leaders, especially from 1966 on, began to reiterate the need for a European security conference designed to address itself to this issue. In calling for such a conference, Soviet leaders were deliberately coy about American participation; while not explicitly excluding it, they obviously hoped that some Western states would be willing to discuss the question, thus drawing a distinction between European powers, including the Soviet Union, and non-European intruders.

Soviet motives were not difficult to discern. On the immediate tactical level, even a low-key dialogue with West European chancelleries on the subject of a security conference, with its consequent impact on West European public opinion, could contribute to the isolation of Bonn, in turn stimulating West German anxieties. A weakening in European-American ties was also not unwelcome, although Moscow presumably realized that a total Atlantic rupture could increase German influence in Western Europe. But short of such a sharp break, which the Kremlin probably calculated was in any case unlikely, the intensification of Atlantic "contradictions" was desirable. Finally, there was a tactical payoff inherent in making proposals which seemed reasonable and appealing to men of good will.

From the longer point of view, the Soviet Union no doubt hoped that any broadly gauged East-West security discussion would legitimize the status quo in Central Europe, and particularly the existence of the two German states. In addition, by reducing Western attachment to the notion of

Atlantic interdependence in security matters, a trend could be set in motion toward the eventual neutralization of Western Europe. Although it may be an exaggeration to say that the Soviet goal is to make Western Europe into a Finland, the Soviet leaders could not be unaware of the increased political leverage that they would gain over a Western Europe less intimately tied to the United States in matters of security.

Finally, even if treated at face value as a bona fide effort to find a solution for the problems of Europe, the Soviet approach still has grave shortcomings. It simply disregards the fact that the unsolved legacies of World War II cannot be resolved by a fiat that transforms them miraculously into a generally accepted and enduring settlement. Unwilling to separate those aspects of the status quo which perhaps may- and in some cases even should-endure as a consequence of the traumatic upheavals of World War II from those that are merely a temporary manifestation of the cold war, the Soviet leaders proffered a solution which was really not a solution but a means of obtaining a ratification of maximum Soviet objectives.

It is therefore more than doubtful that merely convening a European security conference-presumably with the participation of East Germany, which in itself would be a major Soviet success, and also of the United States, which naturally some of the more gullible Westerners would classify as a generous Soviet concession-would settle anything. A conference which ignored the problem of Germany's division would serve only to stimulate West German frustrations and disappointment. Indeed, while one can easily catalog the unsettling consequences of the Soviet initiative on the West, one is hard put to find similar costs for the East. This asymmetry simply deprives the Soviet proposal of political relevance.

## II. THE SHAPE AND STAGES OF RECONCILIATION

The long-range goal of the United States in regard to East-West relations is to transform the present hostility, of which Europe's partition is both the cause and the symptom, into an increasingly stable East-West coöperation designed to end that partition. This means deliberately promoting new patterns of relations and, in so doing, gradually eliminating those factors that prevent stability. The status quo must not be an end in itself but the point of departure for gradual change; in escaping from the rigidity of two tightly knit blocs facing each other across the Elbe, we must avoid dissolution of the two existing alliances into the traditional multi-state system.

In my personal judgment, a more stable European solution, one more in keeping with present trends and historical tendencies than any of the three concepts discussed earlier, should eventually involve an interlocking structure based on four entities: America and Russia as the peripheral participants, and Western Europe and Eastern Europe as the two halves of the inner core (in time, perhaps, becoming still more closely linked). Each would enjoy differing degrees of internal homogeneity and each would engage others in varied patterns of relations, with differing degrees of intimacy and intensity.

The Atlantic concept would thus be retained but readapted to become one aspect, somewhat diluted, of the larger whole; the "European" elements and the security emphasis of the other two approaches would be similarly readapted, in order to formulate an approach that met more symmetrically the real interests of the parties involved and the needs of European stability.

In the course of the next decade or so, Western Europe is almost certain to move further toward an integrated economic community; there may also be the beginning of some European political consultations. Some common defense

arrangements are also likely, especially after de Gaulle. It will hence be an increasingly important force, with an emerging identity of its own, though probably reluctant to share in U.S. global responsibilities.

Eastern Europe, given its relatively backward stage of political development and social modernization, will certainly be less homogeneously organized. None the less, it too is already moving toward some subregional coöperation, exclusive of Soviet participation. It may be expected that this trend will continue, although probably more on the basis of a network of bilateral economic and political arrangements. Eventually, some confederal arrangements may develop, creating by the mid-1980s a loose community of about 130 million people with a G.N.P. of about \$215 billion. In any case, greater coöperation within Eastern Europe should be encouraged, for without it the region will continue to be a source of instability and a political vacuum filled by outsiders. For example, as the East European nations decentralize their economies, Western assistance in creating currency convertibility would make a great deal of sense.[ii] Another useful possibility would be a Balkan customs union consisting of Yugoslavia, Rumania, Bulgaria and Greece, and one that included Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and even, perhaps, East Germany.

The American-West European relationship will presumably continue to include a security arrangement, although greater unity in Western Europe will necessitate a restructuring of the presently integrated NATO command, composed of one giant and fourteen "non-giants," into something more like a bilateral United States-West European agency for security planning and coördination. West European integration, including a defense treaty among the European members of NATO, might eventually permit the redefinition of NATO into a more equal-and bilateral-Atlantic defense agreement. U.S. assistance in developing a European A.B.M. system that was

patently defensive technologically could accelerate movement in that direction, thereby downgrading the significance of small national nuclear forces while not stimulating East European fears of Germany's offensive potential.

More important than NATO in stimulating close Atlantic coöperation will be the inescapably growing economic, technological and monetary ties between the United States and Western Europe. Tariff and fiscal arrangements, the possible appearance of a technological Atlantic community, increasingly joined efforts to help the Third World, all will probably stimulate the development of new coöperative institutions.

At the same time, one may expect the number of East-West agreements within Europe to increase. Growing West European integration will inevitably act as a magnet for an Eastern Europe increasingly self-assertive and anxious to participate in the European adventure. This growing East-West coöperation will not be confined to bilateral agreements; even more important will be the many new multilateral bonds, with East European states increasingly wishing to become associated with common all-European institutions and ventures. In effect, a looser all-European economic community will be taking shape, with Western Europe as its more homogeneous hard core.

In some respects, East-West relations will be purely European; in others, they will involve also the United States and the Soviet Union. This is especially likely in regard to security arrangements. Eastern Europe's fear of a united Western Europe allegedly prone to domination by the Federal Republic will decline if the scope of collaboration includes some East-West security relationships between the two existing but looser alliances. While the old dichotomic confrontation will have faded, it is unlikely that either the West or the East Europeans will wish to face the other side

without some backup strength from the respective superpower. The East Europeans, as de Gaulle learned in Warsaw and as the Czechs have made clear, will not wish to face alone a Germany that is so much more powerful than they; this is likely to remain the case even if West Germany is more fully absorbed into an integrated European community. Lingering fears will make them desire some assurance of continued Soviet protection and even American involvement.[iii]

Since Soviet-East European security ties would automatically skew the delicate European balance in favor of the East, West Europeans may be expected to be similarly anxious to maintain a U.S. commitment. Thus security arrangements linking all concerned will probably be preferred, in spite of present French and Rumanian attitudes. If the objective is a broader community of the developed nations, such wider security arrangements are also preferable. An East-West security arch, resting on the four pillars needed to support the peace, would require more systematic political consultations, including not only the Europeans but Americans and Russians as well. In addition, bodies such as O.E.C.D. and E.C.E. (Economic Commission for Europe) would provide the framework for more intensive economic and scientific coöperation among themselves and in relation to the Third World. The economic, political and security links would thus provide an institutional framework for the four units.

In addition to security links, some East European states may also wish to retain ideological ties with the Soviet Union, although it seems almost certain that with time these will wane in importance. It is hard to predict what will happen to the Warsaw Pact as regards its real substance. At the least, it probably will remain a political-contractual link, legitimatizing Soviet involvement and political influence in Eastern Europe. If current trends continue, it seems unlikely that communist military integration will progress much further. Thus, as the

status of NATO changes, the two military alliances will become somewhat more analogous.

East European economic ties with the Soviet Union will probably become more bilateral-or involve more specialized and limited forms of multilateral coöperation. CEMA (Council of Economic Mutual Assistance), an essentially political-ideological body, which includes an economic giant, the Soviet Union, and an economic irrelevancy, Mongolia (much as if the Common Market contained both the United States and Haiti), is not likely to duplicate the success of the E.E.C. (European Economic Community) in achieving economic integration. It is more likely to become a communist equivalent to O.E.C.D., which in itself would make it quite important and useful. (Accordingly, coöperation between O.E.C.D. and CEMA could be quite constructive.)

Finally, outside of ties that traverse Europe, special United States-Soviet relationships are bound to proliferate. The two nuclear superpowers will either compete globally, or coöperate, or, more likely, do both at the same time, be it in space or in the Third World or in respect to new weapons systems. The continuing rivalry and the growing coöperation will perhaps induce a greater realization of their mutual responsibility in world affairs, and create-even without formal expression-a special political relationship. Both will have to be careful, however, to avoid creating the semblance of a condominium; in this respect the identical interests of both Western and Eastern Europe are likely to exercise a major restraint on relations between the superpowers.

None the less, coöperation between them and among the European nations will remain the key to any long-range solution. This lesson was drawn as early as 1946 by Willy Brandt, when he wrote: "Hitler's Germany was defeated by a coalition of the major allied powers. Germany is occupied by these powers. It can emerge from this crisis as a unified state

only if the recovery takes place in agreement and coöperation with both East and West."[iv]

### III. THE MEANS TO RECONCILIATION

For all this to happen, quite extensive changes will have to take place in Europe, especially in the East, which holds the key to the future of East Germany. Since politics is the art of making one's preferences come true, the discussion which follows takes current trends as its point of departure, and to the extent that the European dynamics are susceptible to some outside influence-seeks to relate them to those policies that are compatible with the long-range goal outlined above. Despite currently intensified Soviet hostility, it is deliberately an optimistic projection. A sudden recrudescence in international tensions or Soviet aggressiveness could halt or even reverse the trends discussed here.

None the less, it is not unreasonable to expect that the next decade will probably see continuing erosion of the more militant aspects of Marxism- Leninism. The Sino-Soviet dispute and domestic pressures in the Soviet Union both conspire to bring on such a change in perspective. Ideological change will help to bring on political change. To be sure, for a long time to come the Soviet Union and most of the East European states will remain single-party dictatorships. The ruling bureaucracies are becoming increasingly nationalist and that, combined with their étatist and socialist tendencies, gives them some resemblance to prewar social-fascist movements in Eastern Europe.

Nevertheless, as these countries become aware of their growing social and economic complexity, they will probably show more tolerance for political and intellectual dissent. Progressive decentralization of the communist economies will facilitate international economic coöperation, hitherto handicapped by centralized national planning. It will also

facilitate the emergence of ore independent, technologically oriented élites, likely to be strongly interested in economic coöperation with Western Europe and the United States.

Indeed, some communist countries already recognize that they have at least an economic stake in Western unity.[v] East European trade with Western Europe is the primary source of hard currency for communist economies, and the development of a prosperous European economic community has become a factor in the further economic development of the communist states. In time, a changed economic perspective might lead to a changed perspective in politics.

There is already considerable evidence that not all East Europeans welcome a communist policy designed to split the West and to detach Europe from the United States. A number of voices have been heard in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Jugoslavia to the effect that such a policy is shortsighted, and that it will result in a revival of German nationalism. Eventually, the communist élites may come to view an integrated Western Europe, absorbing German energies and ambitions, as something in their interest as well.

In this connection, the East Europeans would be especially attracted by Western invitations to participate in common efforts to avoid a "technological gap" between Europe and America. They have only recently become aware of this problem, but their concern has been magnified by their unspoken fear of becoming technologically obsolescent not only in relationship to the West but also to the Soviet Union. Hence the extraordinary interest of the East Europeans in such initiatives as the Fanfani proposal to create a transatlantic technological community, open also to communist states; hence the spate of comments in their journals about the desirability of broader international coöperation.

The participation of the communist states in a wider multilateral framework of East-West coöperation would be bound to have a Europeanizing impact on the communist élites themselves. It would help to develop in the East a European-minded technical and economic élite, and would eventually encourage the appearance of more broadminded, less parochial attitudes within the political élite. Moreover, since multilateral coöperation is incompatible with a high degree of internal state-controlled and centralized planning, pressures for domestic liberalization would be intensified. Thus greater involvement of the East European states in institutional and multilateral forms of coöperation with an integrated Western community would help the internal processes of evolution in the East, all of which cumulatively would promote the emergence of a new political attitude.

Eventually the communist élites would become less inclined to feel that their security depends entirely on maintaining the status quo. Once the political issue of Germany becomes less intense, and it becomes less important to maintain the doctrinal rigidity of East Germany, the problem of the division in Europe would become more susceptible to peaceful change.

However, one very important qualification has to be made. The Soviet Union will not let East Germany simply slide over into a Western community that, from its point of view, could become easily dominated by a powerful and rearmed Germany. Such a change would mean a fundamental shift in the balance of power, not to speak of the loss of Soviet control over the very important economic resources of East Germany. West German access to offensive nuclear weapons would inevitably intensify Soviet fears and phobias. This is even more true for the East Europeans. There is simply no realistic reason convincing enough to justify an argument that the Soviet Union would permit East Germany to be absorbed by a politically, economically and militarily integrated Western

Europe.

Soviet concerns would likely be somewhat reduced-and Soviet willingness to countenance some form of German reunification increased-if there were a special security arrangement precluding West German participation in a European nuclear strike force and if broader East-West security arrangements were developed. Similarly, it must be recognized that East Germany, whatever its ties with West Germany, cannot be excluded from a special relationship both to the Soviet Union and to whatever remains by then of CEMA.

It follows that the reconciliation of East and West will not be achieved by a single act of settlement, nor will a solution to the German problem be an event isolated in time; it will have to be a process of growing together of East and West and, in a different way, of the two Germanys. This process will have economic, cultural, political and security aspects, and it will eventually require an institutionalized multilateral framework.

Extensive development of East-West bilateral ties began in the late fifties and early sixties. It is to be expected that in the late sixties and early seventies these bilateral relationships will expand and also that East-West multilateral economic coöperation will develop significantly. In the next several years it is likely that the E.C.E. will become more active in developing East-West economic and technical coöperation. O.E.C.D. may also become involved in assisting East-West scientific and technological collaboration, thus responding to the intense East European concern with the "technological gap."

It is not unreasonable to expect that in the 1970s there will be created a special East-West economic assembly, perhaps sponsored by O.E.C.D., E.C.E. and CEMA. It could foster joint

East-West ventures, communications and technological coöperation; it could study ways of coping with the difficult problem of multilateral coöperation between market and state economies, and develop common all-European projects, such as a Lisbon-Moscow superhighway. It is also reasonable to expect that in the course of the next five years surplus labor will be permitted to flow from East to West. This could have a considerable social and cultural impact as workers returned home.

During the same period, most of the East European states and the Soviet Union will probably have become associated with GATT and I.M.F.; in addition, they may perhaps have negotiated special preferential agreements with the E.E.C.; and Yugoslavia may have become an associate member, having achieved full convertibility. Broader East-West convertibility should be possible by 1975, but probably not earlier.

Another possibility in the next several years is some movement toward the creation of an East-West Political Assembly in which direct and continuing discussions could be held. Initially, at least, there may be some advantage in keeping it a rather informal body for off-the-record discussions comparable to the Bilderberg meetings. (Indeed, as a test, some Jugoslavs could be invited to the Bilderberg.) Eventually such an assembly could also become a forum for the development of common positions toward the problems of the Third World. Even more rapid may be the gradual involvement of the communist states in the specialized functions of the Council of Europe, perhaps leading eventually to its transformation into the East-West Assembly.

If the present rigidity of the partition of the two Germanys can be lifted, it is likely to bring stronger assurances by Bonn that it accepts the Oder- Neisse line as Germany's permanent Eastern frontier. This would do much to reduce the Polish and

Czech stake in the existence of two German states. Some day European frontiers will become unimportant; first, however, they must become accepted as permanent.

Although the security issue remains the hardest nut to crack, progress seems possible once economic and political relations are improved. This view is also gaining acceptance in Eastern Europe. For example, in a remarkably candid and balanced article, which indirectly criticizes the Soviet Union for "unwise attempts to test one's strength on the German question," the previously cited Czech author calls for a two-phased approach toward "the process of European unification," the first being in the field of increasing economic coöperation, the second in that of security.

Given sufficient Western initiative and prior allied consultations, it should prove possible before long to initiate open-ended discussions of security in Central Europe between the two alliances, thus obviating the problem of East Germany's direct participation. If held on a continuing basis, initially at a level lower than ministerial (on the model of the lengthy talks prior to the Austrian peace treaty), they could lead, perhaps by the early 1970s, to the creation of a European Security Commission, based on the two alliances. Its more specific purpose would be to monitor troop movements in Central Europe and make periodic inspections of troop postures. It might also advance other schemes designed to moderate the military confrontation, in keeping with the suggestion contained in President Johnson's speech of October 7, 1966. Reciprocal troop withdrawals from Germany may take place even earlier than that.

The basic point to remember here is that alliances in the past were designed to wage war; in recent times, they have helped to deter war; in years to come, they must concentrate on promoting peace. Accordingly, NATO could play a constructive role by actively promoting East-West security

and disarmament arrangements. A Special Commission, designed to provide the kind of impetus to thinking on disarmament and East-West security which at present comes from only a few national governments, could give NATO new purpose and political meaning.

A continuing expansion in all-German links is to be expected, especially following Ulbricht's death. It will probably take the form of mixed commissions, economic ties, joint German development of mail, telephone and television service, a common electric power system, increased freedom of individual movement and so forth.

All of the foregoing will gradually create a favorable setting for more formal and systematic all-German economic relations, perhaps in the form of an economic community, thereby making possible also a formal relationship between East Germany and the E.E.C., even while the former retains its links with CEMA and some of its existing obligations to the East. (Jugoslavia's formal coöperation with CEMA has not prevented it from expanding relations with EFTA and E.E.C.) Assuming positive developments in economic, political and security fields, and assuming that these processes are kept apart from West German efforts to establish normal diplomatic relations with East European states, and assuming, finally, that other non- communist states do not allow themselves to be seduced into a formal recognition of the two Germanys, the development of all-German ties will gradually contribute to bridging the partition politically. By the mid or late seventies the process of German reassociation, in the context of growing East-West reconciliation, may be quite advanced.

#### IV. A SHIFT IN EMPHASES

A long-range goal serves as a beacon. It helps to determine not only the desired end; it also signals the best way to get

there. Developing and then articulating a relevant concept is the first stage in the pursuit of an effective policy.

The approach suggested in the preceding pages would associate the United States with the preponderant desires of the Europeans-both West and East. These are becoming clearer, especially now that the limitations of de Gaulle's concept have emerged in sharper focus after his September trip to Warsaw; and the tactical character of the Soviet posture was underlined by Moscow's behavior in the Middle Eastern crisis.

This broader approach would keep the United States true to its long- standing commitment to the cause of closer West-European integration and Atlantic coöperation. The Atlantic idea would not be abandoned, but it would cease to be the central and, for some, exclusive, concern of American policy in Europe. Nor would it be replaced by an effort to construct a U.S.- Soviet arrangement-the traditional alternative of those Americans who have reacted against our established policy. Burying the cold war does not, and should not, mean reviving Yalta.

The gradual fading of the cold war, and its transformation into a more coöperative relationship, is predicated on the assumption that there will not be any significant change in the existing strategic balance. Both the Soviet Union and the United States, even while developing more coöperative relationships in Europe, are likely to remain rivals in the Third World. Precisely for this reason it is important that the United States retain its present security advantage. Otherwise, conflicts in the Third World could feed back into the European relationship, presenting the Soviet Union with a tempting opportunity to alter the European status quo through military blackmail.

Pursuit of the policy of peaceful engagement favored here

would entail some shifts in emphases and methods. Along with important changes in German attitudes,[vi] the United States could likewise put greater stress on the process of German reassociation, which might include transitionally a special status for East Germany, in the setting of broader security arrangements for Germany and its neighbors. Moreover, to compensate for the somewhat less vital role of NATO as the principal Atlantic bond, the United States will probably find it necessary to emphasize more its economic and technological ties with Western Europe, thus giving the Europeans a greater sense of shared destiny than is provided by one-sided efforts to keep NATO as the primary focus of American-European relationships.

Indeed, it is ironic that the country that least needs NATO for its own security should today appear the most anxious to preserve it; more than this, it is counter-productive, for it feeds European suspicions that the Alliance is an instrument of American control over its allies. It would be better if the United States simply took the position that it will remain as committed to NATO as the Europeans themselves, but not more, and that eventually NATO could become the Western component of an all-European security system. Unless given a new goal, old alliances do not die; they just fade away.

One thing appears certain: if the United States remains inactive, which some recommend as being the better part of wisdom, or merely concentrates on the American-Soviet relationship, it will become increasingly estranged from Europe and most Europeans will seek to settle their destiny outside the Alliance. Discussion with the Europeans of our concepts and proposals for common initiatives will help to revitalize Atlantic ties and will revive the feeling of interdependence with America. Indeed, we should not fear provoking occasionally a lively controversy. A spirited dialogue is preferable to a quiet divorce.

[i] It has become fashionable to credit de Gaulle with having invented the idea of détente in Europe. The truth is that the United States pioneered- first by aiding Yugoslavia and then Poland, by developing cultural exchanges with the Soviet Union and the other states, and by exchanging top- level visits. At the time, de Gaulle scorned these moves and only later began to emulate them.

[ii] See the proposal by H. W. Shaffer, "An East European Payments Union?", *East Europe*, March 1966.

[iii] Thus a Czech commentator, J. Sedivy, in "European Coöperation- European Security," *Literarni Noviny*, Feb. 25, 1967, flatly states that a European security arrangement would have to be safeguarded not only by the U.S.S.R., but "certainly by the United States."

[iv] As cited by *Industriekurier*, February 14, 1967.

[v] After predicting for years the inevitability of the Common Market's disintegration, communist spokesmen have finally realized its durability. Thus S. Albinowski, in his appropriately entitled "Condemned to Success," *Zycie Warszawy*, March 20, 1967, admits past skepticism and concludes that "the Common Market is a permanent institution which will influence our trade relations with Western Europe more and more."

[vi] The German concept of reunification, it should be noted, is undergoing a most profound change. In Chancellor Kiesinger's words: "The desire for reunification means nothing else to the Federal Government than to create an opportunity for our compatriots in the other part of Germany to express their will clearly and distinctly." (Press Conference, March 7, 1967.) Herbert Wehner went even further, hinting at the possibility of recognition of East Germany if it "could be liberalized according to the model of present-day Yugoslavia."

(Washington Post, Jan. 31, 1967.) And on June 17, the Chancellor said that it is "difficult to imagine that a united Germany, given a continuation of the present political structure in Europe, could easily associate itself with one side or the other."

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ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI is Professor of Government at Columbia University and Director of the Research Institute on Communist Affairs; member of the Policy Planning Council, Department of State, 1966-67

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# The Limits of Détente

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*Robert Conquest*



*President Lyndon B. Johnson (behind) with Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin*

Like many other observers, Karl Marx noted that from the time of Peter the Great Russian foreign policy showed a general tendency not merely to expansionism, but to "unlimited" power. He put this even more strongly in a speech of January 1876, when he spoke of Russia's lodestar being "the empire of the world." Engels, too, wrote of her "dreaming about universal supremacy." They were referring not to any fixed plan, or wholly explicit intention, but rather to the spirit and character of the Russian State. The extent to which this general tendency (though, of course, with different content) still subsists, and the degree to which it is expressed in actual practice, are clearly central to any but a superficial estimate of Soviet foreign policy.

Even under the Tsars expansion was not constant. There were periods of stasis, even of withdrawal. The provisions of the Treaty of Paris, which limited Russian naval power in the Black Sea, were not repudiated until the opportunity at last arose in 1871. And comparably, the Soviet Union abandoned expansion for more than a decade before 1939.

The assurances given that this would be permanent were various and formal. In the sensitive matter of the Baltic republics, for example, a series of treaties provided against any conceivable Russian pressure. The renunciation of "all rights of sovereignty forever" in a treaty signed (to take the Lithuanian case) on July 12, 1920, was followed on September 22, 1926, by a nonaggression pact, twice renewed in the thirties, guaranteeing Lithuanian sovereignty in all circumstances. This was strengthened in 1933 by a convention defining aggression, which said that "no considerations of a political, military, economic or any other nature" would justify it. Even when, on October 10, 1939, Lithuania signed under pressure a "Mutual Assistance Pact," under which Soviet troops set up bases in the country, its Article 7 guaranteed that this would "not in any way affect the sovereign rights of the contracting parties, in particular their state organizations, economic and social systems, military measures and, in general, the principle of nonintervention in internal affairs." Annexation came the following summer (and is one of the "Stalinist" measures not repudiated by Khrushchev: "he wept but he kept"). In fact, of the multifarious pacts the U.S.S.R. signed with various neighbors, there was only one which was punctiliously observed, and that was with a power disposing of formidable military sanctions-the Nazi-Soviet Pact. "What have we done," Molotov justifiably complained when the German attack came, "to deserve this?"

This was all a generation ago, and there would be no point in raising it if it could be shown that the Soviet leaders have in

principle abandoned the attitude to foreign affairs then prevailing; or that present circumstances have, regardless of any question of abstract good will, made it obsolete.

Stalin, in foreign affairs, might be described as a prudent aggressor. His moves against Finland and Poland in 1939, the attack in Korea in 1950, were made when he was, or felt he was, safe in making them. The Berlin Blockade of 1949 was conducted with a sort of brutal tentativeness and abandoned when failure pronounced itself. The Greek Civil War was allowed to go ahead in the likelihood that it would cause trouble to the West without leading to retaliation-even though Stalin himself (as Djilas tells us) saw that there was no real chance of victory.

On all the evidence, Stalin's heirs and pupils, Russia's present rulers, seem to be motivated in the same sort of way. They have not abandoned the principle of hostility toward the West. It is not to their own good will but to their prudence that our policies should be directed.

Their desire to avoid nuclear war is of course solid and genuine. The great expansion of industry has long been regarded as the régime's leading achievement. Pure dogmatists might perhaps be willing to suffer the vast economic and human loss that war would involve, if world revolution were to be the fairly certain result. But such certainty is, in any case, unlikely to be attained. The Chinese "dogmatists" have indeed been accused of willingness to sacrifice whole nations in such a war. But their stake is inevitably a smaller one. Not only is the dogmatism of the Soviet rulers considerably more attenuated, but they also see that a Soviet-U.S. nuclear exchange would end by reducing both countries to the level of China. As a leading Soviet defense commentator pointedly wrote, it is not merely that half the world's population would perish, but "moreover, the most active, capable and civilized portion of mankind would

be wiped out."1 For Peking, of course, the opposite consideration applies. If China cannot catch up with the advanced countries, here is a mechanism for bringing them down to the Chinese level.

Yet even on the part of the present moderate Soviet leadership there is no reason whatever to believe that all this represents more than an accommodation mainly based on a particular balance of weaponry. To be sure, this is something well worth having for its own sake. And, if we are very fortunate, it may harden into a permanent truce, with consequent erosion of the anti-Western certainties at present so deeply rooted in the minds of the Soviet leaders. But to misinterpret it, to overestimate it as signaling the abandonment of the very principle of hostility, must almost certainly lead to a relaxation of that vigilance and preparedness which is one of the fundamental conditions of the *détente* as we have it. "He's a good fellow and 'twill all be well" is not an adequate substitute for careful estimation of "his" real attitude and intentions.

It is sometimes said that because communism is no longer monolithic it no longer presents a threat. This seems to resemble the application of a linear equation to a problem requiring at least a quadratic. That Christianity was split by deadly feuds did not save the Saracens in the Crusades. The Tripartite Pact was by no means monolithic, but it contrived to present a most unpleasant threat to the rest of us. And so on. Splits and divergencies doubtless make such threats less effective, but they do not remove them.

It is true that to the Soviet Union some communist régimes are now illegitimate. But all non-communist states remain illegitimate. The solution proposed for "bad" communist states is the replacement of the aberrant leadership-and the success of plots and intrigues such as those of Marshal Peng in China and Admiral Sejko in Albania are all that are

required to restore communist normality. A communist régime may indeed evolve into a "bourgeois-democratic" position, as Imre Nagy's did in 1956 and the Czechs seem to be doing now. And from our point of view this represents the hope of tempering the intransigent hostility of the movement. But this is a move from heresy into actual paganism; it is quite unlike the lapse of adequately despotic communisms into mere doctrinal and political error.

Of course, when we look into the detail more carefully, we can see that the foreign policy of the U.S.S.R., like that of any other state, is not generally conducted with the clarity of intention and the consistency of action a political philosopher might think proper. It does not at a given moment take the form of a settled plan-even a flexible plan-being put into action; it is the product of various forces. Action is often plainly the result of compromise between various political tendencies within the leadership. Odd gestures of international amity, particularly in the field of cultural exchange, may accompany (and even distract attention from) hostile moves in more substantial spheres.

The evidence of a more aggressive trend in Soviet circles, even as to nuclear war, is clear.<sup>2</sup> Among the Soviet military considerable divergence of view was noted in 1961 and even earlier. But 1965-66 saw the frankest expressions of a "hard line." A whole series of articles in the military press argued against regarding nuclear weapons as a "threat to the physical survival of nations and states;" urged that victory in a nuclear war was attainable and depended on building up superior weapon strength; and suggested that to spurn the possibility of victory was to relapse into passivity and "fatalism."<sup>3</sup>

There is no doubt that these views (to be printed at all) were receiving some measure of political protection-and little doubt that this came from the "dogmatic" section of the leadership

represented by Suslov, Shelepin and others. The Brezhnev-Kosygin majority reasserted itself in 1966, and such intransigence has ceased to be voiced. But in general the tone even of later pronouncements has a more militant tang than in Khrushchev's post- Cuba years.

More important is the fact that Soviet politics is in principle highly unstable. A single major setback-which would not be at all unlikely in Eastern Europe, for example-might at any time panic the lesser leaders on whom the present group relies for its majority, throwing them into the arms of the hard-line extremists. And other political issues, including internal ones, could also change the balance of forces in the Politburo and Central Committee. Whatever the reason, a differently aligned leadership would then face the West.

Of course it can be argued (and there is much to be said for such a view) that a more extremist, dogmatic leadership might not necessarily be more imprudent. In a sense Molotov was more hostile and yet more prudent than Khrushchev. But the considerations make the matter not one of mere tactical prudence, but rather one involving a whole outlook on the present world situation. A policy of détente, the Soviet hard-line military have argued, serves the capitalists' interests by lessening their fears and giving them a margin for "aggressive" initiative in the Third World; at the same time it undermines the unity and the revolutionary dynamism of the communist countries. This is a serious argument, and to some degree a sound one from the communist point of view. It is certainly taken into account, if only partially, by the present leaders. It would be a formidable brief for a more intransigent set.

The Soviet launching of a "thin" anti-ballistic missile system in 1967 seems to have been in part a concession by the leadership to these more "activist" arguments. But one must accept as at least equally important a motive common to the

United States and the Soviet Union: the desire to cope with the problem of proliferation, and in particular the growth of Chinese nuclear power. Even the U.S. response in the autumn, though attacked as a "useless escalation,"<sup>4</sup> was said by the Soviet press not to represent an obstacle to the discussions at Geneva and in the General Assembly on antiproliferation agreements.<sup>5</sup>

Soviet development of ICBMs has meant challenging the United States in a field where the decisive factors are advanced technology and material wealth. The Soviet Union's technical and economic resources, if strained heavily, can just produce an adequate, though inferior, counter to the U.S. nuclear forces. A crucial factor that has seldom been noted in argument about an ABM race between the two countries is that, costly though it would be for the United States, at a certain point it would probably strain Soviet resources beyond the breaking point.

## II

Soviet policy remains a "forward" one in principle. In practice it is so only in areas where prospects seem promising and where the American interest and involvement are not judged sufficient to lead to a direct and dangerous confrontation (the peril here being that the Soviet assessment may be incorrect). This tactical line was summarized by Brezhnev in September 1965: "We are striving to make our diplomacy vigorous and active and at the same time we exhibit flexibility and caution."<sup>6</sup>

All factions, it would seem, agree that an activist approach should be adopted where it is feasible and seems to involve no serious risk of world war. The dispute is rather about the degrees of risk in each case. Even Shelepin would doubtless not recommend an assault on England or the Low Countries; even Brezhnev would hardly refrain from at least some

forward action in the Aden area.

To see how these distinctions work out in practice, we can divide the world into three or four areas of Soviet interest. In spite of occasional hopeful soundings of the trumpet outside the walls of West Berlin, there appears little prospect of serious political opportunities for the Russians in Western Europe, and military adventure is excluded by the guarantee of successive American presidents that any attack would automatically mean nuclear war. Perhaps the lesson here is that this is indeed a sound method of reserving peace. The real problem in Europe should be formulated differently: Will developments in Eastern Europe provoke fighting and Soviet intervention, as they did in 1956? And if there is a crumbling of communist power in Eastern Europe, what sort of political crisis may occur in the U.S.S.R. itself?

Latin America, too, seems not to be regarded as an area of opportunity. As with Stalin's attitude to Greece in 1948, the Soviets appear persuaded that the United States would not tolerate a serious thrust there. They are stuck with Castro's Cuba but their support is qualified. As we know, they oppose Castroite tactics elsewhere, and while not altogether abandoning a policy of exploiting advantages and footholds vis-à-vis China as well as the United States, they would prefer on the whole to keep the area subcritical.

In Asia, in the sphere largely influenced by the Chinese, Moscow has a special problem. Viet Nam in particular constitutes a most awkward and peculiar case. At one level the arguments are familiar: the U.S.S.R. enjoys having the United States entangled; failure to support Hanoi would weaken communist loyalty elsewhere; the testing of Soviet military equipment is a valuable bonus; and so on. On the other hand, the Soviets are no doubt fearful of the danger of serious escalation. All these points have some validity, though as regards the communist ideological "commitment" all but a

few disaffected Asian parties would certainly accept a Soviet-sponsored compromise. The difficulty is rather that Ho Chi Minh is not under control.

But more basic in Moscow's thinking on Viet Nam is its relations with China. The strongest argument of the pro-Soviet faction in China (usually in the army) is that modern arms are needed to defeat the Americans, and that these can be obtained only from Russia. The true Maoist view is, of course, that an American attack on China proper could effectively be met by retirement to the interior and resort to guerrilla warfare. Therefore, the more weapons the Russians can send to Hanoi, the bigger the object lesson in favor of the anti-Maoist thesis and the stronger the possibility of rallying a pro-Soviet power group to take over in Peking. This interpretation, originally put to me by Dr. Uri Rana'an, I find largely convincing. It raises the curious possibility that a blockade of Haiphong would have been in the interests of both the Americans and the Maoists.

And the new Chinese nuclear capability certainly complicates all these issues. Although it may be true that, as President Kennedy said, what the communists are quarrelling about is the best way to bury us, it does seem that for the Maoists the Soviet Union now appears as the most immediate threat. The whole area, in fact, is one in which the Soviet leaders face special-and perhaps temporary-problems of great intricacy, which to some extent confuse the issue of confrontation with the West.

With Europe, East Asia and Latin America taken as special cases, we are left with the traditional major area of Soviet interest-the area south of the national territory, in the direction of the Indian Ocean.

Africa south of the Sahara, the most distant extension of this area, is presumably not an immediate target. Soviet policy in

Africa has been extraordinarily inept, partly in consequence of an attempt to impose Marxist class analyses on refractory material. The distances have been too great-as in the case of the Congo troubles-and the régimes supported by the Russians have been insufficiently solid, with the result that in one of the most advanced black African countries, Ghana, the people have now been effectively vaccinated against anything even remotely resembling communism. Though more sophisticated policies now seem to be emerging, it still appears unlikely that much can be achieved-unless the East coast is left in a power vacuum by British withdrawals.

The Middle East then, or rather an area centered on the Middle East and stretching from Morocco to the Gulf of Bengal, is the sector in which the activist element in Soviet policy receives its chief exercise. It is an area whose politics have long proved unmanageable and unpredictable to every outside power which has become involved. Nor does the U.S.S.R. appear to have a coherent policy, except to buy friends, keep the pot boiling and await any suitable opportunities. The political-military investment in Syria and Egypt has so far proved unremunerative. Moreover, throughout the area, the Soviet Government is faced with an old dilemma: Is it best to rely on indigenous anti-Western movements and régimes or try to replace them with reliable communists? The first choice usually leads eventually to divergence and hostility; the second throws the local nationalists into the arms of the West straightaway. The usual solution has been an attempt to combine the two, which leads to endless friction.

But there is also a special geographical difficulty in the area. The Soviet Navy cannot for the foreseeable future match the American, and its communications through the Dardanelles are vulnerable. In the air, the Soviets suffer similar difficulties. Turkey and Iran remain resistant obstacles to a real move south. Politically and economically, they appear to

be growing stronger; to subvert their governments grows increasingly difficult. To attack them would be to take the ultimate risk. And so the prudential element in Soviet thinking dominates the scene in the Northern Tier, leaving activist elements the upper hand (though not exclusive control) in the softer but less accessible Arab lands. The extremist group in the Kremlin has tried to make the most of trouble in the Middle East, though serious disputes arose in the U.S.S.R. over the Arab-Israeli war of 1967, leading to the fall of Moscow party secretary Egorychev, one of Shelepin's associates.

From this we conclude, once again, that dangerous policies are given rope unless and until to develop them further would lead to a direct confrontation with the United States. In the 1967 war, the U.S.S.R. produced the maximum trouble compatible with this final precaution. The fact that one faction wanted to go further is not reassuring.

A most significant development has been the creation, particularly in the last two years, of the ability to deploy conventional forces on a world scale-long-range aircraft like the AN-22 and a blue-water fleet, including tank- and troop-landing ships and helicopter-carriers. This force is not, or not yet, capable of challenging the great fleets of the United States, and to make it so would mean a further heavy strain on the Soviet economy for a perhaps chimerical advantage. The amount that must already have been allocated, however, is a strong indication that the Soviets want the ability to intervene in hitherto immune areas-or to deter the United States from doing so. It reflects an activist rather than a prudential policy and is the more dangerous because it tends to draw the Soviet Union into situations in which its leaders might prefer to avoid involvement.

Conversely, when we consider that the governments of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania all were saved quite recently from

military coups simply by the intervention of a few companies of British Marines (just as a small force of French paratroops has done the same for ex-French African states), the projected withdrawal of Britain from the Indian Ocean leaves an area where- unless and until the Americans accept responsibility-a couple of Soviet cruisers with a few hundred troops could play a decisive part in immediate crises.

### III

What many observers overlook is that all the present leaders are the product of a specific tradition. Kosygin, Brezhnev, Suslov, Mazurov, Kirilenko and the others took the first big steps in their careers precisely during the great purge of the thirties, when only the most ruthless advanced, or even survived. Their subsequent careers have confirmed this. The political machine they now embody is precisely that created by Stalin, and their repudiation of certain Stalinist excesses has not meant abandoning the principle of strife against all other political entities. Understanding this party background is essential to any realistic assessment of the present leaders. This is not to say that no more moderate group than Brezhnev's can possibly arise within the apparat. A leader could conceivably come to power who would want to revert to the policy of noninvolvement. Recognizing that the U.S.S.R. could not outface America, he would retire his country from the competition temporarily, to concentrate on building up its economic, as well as military, capability. An intelligent despot might make such a decision. But it would be less easy to do so now than a generation ago. This is partly because of objective circumstances, like the existence of Mao's China. But it is also partly because an exaggeratedly confident spirit prevails among the Russian apparat.

Because the Soviet Union remains in principle in a position of permanent hostility to the non-communist world, the détente must inevitably remain limited, whatever the possibilities of a

stable truce. Brezhnev put it flatly in his speech of March 29, 1968, to the Moscow City Party Conference: "Our Party has always warned that in the ideological field there can be no peaceful coexistence, just as there can be no class peace between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie." There cannot be, he added, "political indifference and passivity or neutralism" in this matter.

What will affect the stability of the *détente* is the firmness of the United States. It is only when the initiatives of the extremists in the Kremlin are thwarted, are shown to lead to the risk of serious confrontation, that they are overruled and defeated. It is also true that the U.S.S.R. must not be pushed into a situation where its rulers feel that there is no future for the régime except in nuclear confrontation. But for the moment the greater danger for Western policy is perhaps in encouraging the extremists by too complaisant an attitude to their adventures, thereby helping to ensure the rise of a dangerously imprudent leadership. One finds at present, in the Western press and elsewhere, a notion implicitly expressed that the *détente* between the Soviet Union and the United States is based not merely on a common interest in avoiding nuclear war but also on a growing Soviet tolerance-a complete misapprehension.

I conclude, then, that the present *détente* is real, sensible and vital from both Russian and Western viewpoints, and with some luck it might eventually develop into a genuine world peace; but that it is not based on Soviet acceptance of any basic principle of permanent coöperation or of pacific orientation; and that it is in practice ill-defined, variable and subject to instabilities. To exaggerate it is to do a disservice to peace, which cannot be secured on a basis of misunderstanding of fact and misconception of motive. 1 Major-General N. Talensky, *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn*, no. 10, 1960. 2 See Roman Kolkowicz's "The Dilemma of Super Power: Soviet Policy and Strategy in Transition," Institute of

Defense Analyses, 1967. 3 Krasnaya Zvezda, December 7, 1965; Kommunist Vooruzhenykh Sil. no. 17, 1966; ditto no. 1, 1966; Krasnaya Zvezda, September 22, 1965; and Kommunist Vooruzhenykh Sil. no. 24, 1965. 4 Pravda, September 24, 1967. 5 Izvestia, October 4, 1967. 6 Pravda, September 30, 1965.

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ROBERT CONQUEST, author of many works on Soviet topics, including "Marxism Today" and "Russia after Khrushchev;" editor of the recent "The Politics of Ideas in the USSR"

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# After the Cold War

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*George F. Kennan*



AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY IN THE 1970S -- IN the years since the end of the Second World War, American foreign policy has consisted primarily of the effort to cope with two immensely difficult problems which the events of that war brought into being, neither of which had been adequately anticipated and which the discussions among the victor powers at the end of the war failed to solve. One was the question of how should be filled the great political vacuums created by the removal of the hegemonies recently exercised by Germany and Japan over large and important areas of the Northern Hemisphere. The uncertainty and emerging disagreement over the attendant questions concerned not

only much of Central and Eastern Europe but also parts of East Asia that had been overrun by the Japanese, including Indochina; and the settlement of the Asian aspects of the problem came to involve not only the United States and the Soviet Union and the inhabitants of the affected territories themselves but also, with the completion of the Chinese Revolution, the new communist power in China.

The second great problem with which American policymakers of the postwar period had to struggle was one for which they were equally unprepared: what to do now, in time of peace, with the fearful new weapon of mass destruction they had created during the war and had used, at the end of the struggle, against the Japanese. The problem was effectively without precedent. It might well be argued (the writer himself adheres to this school of thought) that it should not have taken the nuclear weapon to persuade people that war, as a method for resolving conflicts among industrially advanced great powers, had become inordinately costly, dangerous and self-destructive. The First World War, one might say, should have been adequate evidence of this. But the nuclear weapon involved a change in degree of destructiveness so great as to be in effect a change in kind; and the questions as to how-or whether-it should be fitted into national arsenals, and what relation it should bear to traditional concepts of the role of weaponry, had never been faced before. It fell to the United States, as the first to develop this weapon, to take the lead in seeking solutions to the problem; and the subsequent agonies of decision-whether to base defense plans on the new weapon; what to do about sharing control of it; whether to magnify the problem along the way by proceeding to the manufacture of the hydrogen bomb; and how, finally, to react to the acquisition by a political antagonist of a comparable capability, along with adequate means of long-range delivery: these agonies of decision were all no more than stages in the effort to find correct solutions to the problem as a whole.

It remains to be noted that these two great bewilderments of the postwar period (if one may call them that) were mutually interconnected and interreacting. The political conflicts arising over the problem of the filling of the vacuums threatened-in the eyes, at least, of a world public conditioned to viewing war as the logical outcome of serious conflict among great powers-to lead to hostilities. It thus accentuated the significance of weaponry generally. The tendency, on the other hand, to see in the nuclear explosive the "absolute weapon" and to believe that a clear preëminence in its development would permit a power to dictate terms to any power which did not have it or was inferior in the development of it, suggested that this might turn out, in the end, to be the decisive factor in the solution of great political problems, such as those connected with the filling of the political vacuums in East and West. Each of these bewilderments, therefore, increased the other.

## II

Today, after the lapse of a quarter of a century, it must be recognized that at least one of these problems-that of the nuclear weapon-is still very much with us. Indeed, it is in some ways more serious and more urgently in need of solution than it was 25 years ago. The destructive power of existing arsenals of this nature has increased many fold. Our own monopoly of the weapon has disappeared. It has been developed in great quantity by our leading political adversary. Improvements in delivery systems have rendered our entire territory technically vulnerable to attack by it. It is steadily proliferating into the arsenals of other powers, not all of which can be depended upon to observe even that measure of restraint which the great powers have heretofore been able to muster. In so far as the two major nuclear powers are concerned, enormous interests, economic and bureaucratic, are now vested, on both sides, in the cultivation of this form of weaponry. And its proliferation into further hands is

stimulated by the fascination it holds for world opinion, particularly the opinion of those who do not yet possess it but cannot divest themselves of the belief that if they had it, it would bestow upon them some sort of magic power they do not now command.

It is instructive to compare this state of affairs with the hopes and objectives entertained by American statesmen in the initial postwar period, as they proceeded to design American policy in this new field. For neither has this policy led to any effective international control of the weapon, as many then hoped, nor has it given us any incisive increase in political bargaining power, as others may have conceived. With relation to our leading adversary it is politically useless to us, because it is checkmated by his reciprocal capability. With relation to the non-nuclear powers it is useless because it is not a weapon with which one achieves, actually, any specific political purpose (for that, it is too destructive, too little discriminating, too little susceptible of intelligent gradation). Appalling as has been the readiness of the American military establishment and successive American administrations to use other means to wreak devastation from the air on foreign territory, notably that of Vietnam, the United States has not yet come to the point where it would be prepared to inflict on helpless populations, whose governments had no ability to reply in kind, the fearful devastations of which the nuclear weapon is capable. However one looks at it, therefore, American policy in the field of nuclear weaponry-a policy marked by basing our defense posture upon it, by our early commitment to the principle of first use in any serious encounter with another great power, and by our attempt to assure ourselves a commanding lead in the development of it-has been a failure. Whether it could have been otherwise is anyone's guess.

The first tentative recognition, in practice, of the sterility of this policy has found its expression in the conduct of the SALT

talks with the Russians. This is, of course, only a small step. Even if successful, it will relieve only a small portion of the existing danger. Experience shows that there are limits to what can be achieved in the field of disarmament by formal contractual agreements, particularly such as would require congressional approval in this country. SALT will have to be supplemented by much more in the way of unilateral gestures of restraint in weapons development on both sides-gestures inevitably involving some degree of risk- if the ever greater dangers of the weapons race are to be substantially mitigated.

All this suggests that if and when the United States has finally extracted itself from the quagmire of Vietnam and has thereby recovered some peace of mind as well as some freedom of action, the time would be ripe for a searching critical examination, at the highest level, of the results of our policy of 25 years in this field, with a view to seeing whether different principles of action, including above all a greater readiness to accept minor risks in the interests of diminishing major ones, would not offer better prospects of success.

### III

If the nuclear problem, then, is still very much with us, the problem of the vacuums-at least as a prime claim on the attention of American policy-makers-has been largely resolved.

The first and most vital of these vacuums, from the American standpoint, was Western Europe itself. It, too, after all, had been largely under German occupation. With the withdrawal of the German forces its political future, too, was not without question. The state of shock and insecurity in which its peoples found themselves, as the Nazi grip was released, together with the great strength of Communist parties among the reviving political forces, raised questions which rightly concerned the Western statesmen of the post-hostilities

period. The problem was resolved, as we all know, by the successful insistence of the peoples of the region, with the aid of the United States, on continuing an independent political existence outside a Soviet hegemony. Soviet acceptance of this situation occurred, in reality, with the failure of the Berlin blockade in 1949.

This was, of course, never a complete or willing acceptance, valid for all time. Ideology alone would have forbidden it. Since 1949 the Soviet government has continued to press, wherever it could, for the disruption of NATO and the removal of the presence and influence of the United States from the region as a whole. Those West European Communist parties that retained the affiliation with Moscow have aimed, as a rule, in that direction. Clearly, this objective, if realized, would have provided the Soviet Union with important new possibilities for the exertion of influence in Western Europe.

But one cannot say that this effort has constituted, since 1949, a prime and immediate goal of Soviet policy; nor has it at any time shown serious prospects of success. In this sense we are able to say that to the extent Western Europe represented a political vacuum in the conditions of 1945 to 1947, that vacuum has now been satisfactorily filled and no longer represents a serious political problem between the United States and the Soviet Union.

As the strength, self-confidence and unity of the West European community grow, the importance of the American involvement naturally declines. We are already approaching a point where Western Europe could, if it so wished, effectively defend itself, by its own means and without American assistance, against any pressures or efforts from the Soviet side to exert undue influence. But this point has not yet been reached, particularly not in the consciousness of the West Europeans themselves, conditioned as they are to seeing their security as resting in the American nuclear umbrella. And it is

from this fact that there flows the continuing significance and necessity of NATO.

NATO is of course not a perfect instrument. Its effectiveness is threatened today by a number of factors: the sulkiness nonparticipation of the French; the vacillations of Iceland; the shortsighted acquisitiveness of the Mintoff government in Malta; the discontent of large portions of the West European public with the new régime in Greece; the parlous internal state of Italy; and the growing signs of potential instability in Germany, particularly the ineffectiveness exhibited by official authority in the face of student radicalism. It is no time for panic about the state of Europe; but it is also no time for complacency.

There are, of course, very narrow limits to what the United States could expect to do about any of this. There never was a time when Americans could be more to the West Europeans than they are to themselves. The success of their defense of their own independence depends in the first instance on what they themselves do. Meanwhile, however, NATO represents a solemn American commitment, the most important one we have, and the one most firmly anchored in the interests of our own security. Whatever changes the coming years may bring in the configurations of American policy, this is a commitment the United States must continue to meet-America must meet it loyally but modestly, recognizing the primary interest of the West Europeans in their own security, encouraging them to assume leadership in the assurance of it wherever they are prepared to do so, shifting to the other side of the Atlantic the burden of decision in such matters as rapidly as this may safely be done, but never giving the Europeans reason to doubt the reliability of America's commitment to the obligations of the pact. It is only too obvious that this definition precludes any hasty, unbalanced and unilateral withdrawal of American forces now stationed on the Continent.

It is difficult, in these circumstances, to see the justification for great indignation, apprehension or suspicion over the suggestions and proposals recently advanced for a European Security Conference and for a mutual and balanced reduction of forces in Europe. Suggestions of this nature, coming now from one side, now from another, have already been in the air for more than three years. The complexity of the problems they raise-particularly the question of force reductions-suggests that they will still be there three years hence.

There is no reason in principle why one should not wish to talk with the Russians and the other Communist governments of Eastern and Central Europe about such problems. The acceptance of a political division of Europe, as an arrangement expected to prevail long into the future, does not necessarily imply the perpetuation of the existing expensive, in some respects onerous, in some respects even dangerous, military arrangements. There should be better and safer ways for Europe to live; and what is important is not that one should decline resolutely to discuss such matters with people outside the Alliance but that the positions one adopts, when one discusses them, are reasonable ones, consistent with the security of the entire Western community and sufficiently anchored in a Western consensus so as not to represent a threat to Western unity. Sooner or later the West Europeans will have to think about such matters and to think about them independently, in the acknowledgement of their own primary responsibility. The present time, more than a quarter of a century after the end of the war which produced the problems in the first place, is not too early to begin; and there is no reason why people on this side of the water should wring their hands in nervousness because others have undertaken to do so.

The problems concerning consolidation and expansion of the Common Market are another matter. The sharp divisions of opinion that prevail in the European countries themselves

over the various component questions suggest that it is very difficult for anyone, native or outsider, to see very far into the future regarding the consequences of one or the other of the proposed courses of action. One may doubt that the outcome of these various controversies—who is to join the Market, what the terms of membership or association are to be, etc.—is really of vital importance to this country. We have problems, indeed, in our financial and commercial relations with Western Europe. It could scarcely be otherwise. But there is not sufficient differentiation today in these problems, as between large countries and small ones, between countries belonging to the Market and countries not belonging, to justify us in taking strong positions one way or another. Having enjoyed for many decades both the advantages and the headaches that go with great size, the United States has no reason to begrudge or to fear the same status in others. The restraint shown by successive American administrations in making judgments with relation to the tortuous quest for greater economic unity within the West European community has thus not been lacking in justification. Americans, writhing under the agonies of their involvements in other parts of the world, may take comfort in the reflection that here is at least one great problem the solution of which they may safely leave to others.

#### IV

The counterpart of the effective Soviet recognition of the division of Europe is of course the comparable acceptance by the West of the corresponding situation in the Center and East of the Continent. This acceptance was already implicit in the creation of NATO and especially in the association of West Germany with the Alliance. These arrangements created a situation in which it would be impossible for any of the countries of the Soviet bloc to move on a serious scale toward a normalization of relations with Western Europe without appearing, in Soviet eyes and in the eyes of the world, to be

undertaking something in the nature of a renversement des alliances and thus challenging Soviet military and political prestige. They signified the abandonment by the West of any realistic hope of unifying the Continent by peaceful means in the foreseeable future, and, implicitly at least, the acceptance of the de facto division. This, however, was for many years not openly acknowledged, particularly in West Germany. The recent initiatives of Chancellor Willy Brandt, founded on the reasonable conclusion that the continued refusal to acknowledge the real situation held more disadvantages than advantages for Germany and for Europe, merely brought into the open and sealed with the stamp of acceptance what had long been a fact.

If today a shadow of doubt continues to hang over the durability of the dominant Soviet position in Central and Eastern Europe, it flows not from Western policy but from the attitudes and reactions of the respective peoples themselves. That Soviet hegemony over this region involves serious strains has been made painfully evident, at one time or another, in every one of the countries except Bulgaria. To some extent, the strains have been eased here and there by relaxations in the rigor of Soviet control; but basically, the situation continues to be in many ways delicate and difficult, and there is a tendency for new forms of strain to arise as older ones are removed.

The West, having accepted the division of the Continent and made arrangements predicated on this acceptance, has no reason to exert itself to heighten these strains. On the contrary, since it is already amply clear that efforts in this direction can easily place the East European peoples in situations even more onerous and tragic than those they knew before, no Western statesman really has a right to take the responsibility of encouraging them. But the Soviet leaders, on the other hand, should recognize that the burden they have assumed, in endeavoring to keep these peoples for an

indefinite time within their own military, political and ideological orbit, is one of their own choosing, and is carried at their own risk. If it proves heavy at times, they must not blame anyone but themselves.

## V

A somewhat different, and more complex, situation prevails in East Asia. It may be said that the vacuum created by the retirement of the Japanese from the areas they had occupied in mainland China has now been filled-to at least the grudging satisfaction of all interested parties. But three great questions remain in which both the United States and the Chinese Communists have an interest: Korea, Taiwan and Indochina.

Even prior to the recent Vietnam involvement, the security of South Korea represented a serious American commitment. Its seriousness has been heightened by the unwise acceptance by the United States of Korean assistance in Vietnam. The Chinese Communists, too, will have to take account of that fact. There are times in life when one finds one's self committed even by an opponent's mistakes.

The United States has, of course, never made up its mind as to what might realistically and safely be sought as a permanent solution to the Korean problem. The best that could be expected, one might suppose, would be a return to something resembling the effective neutralization of the country that prevailed before the 1880s-before, that is, the delicate arrangement of earlier decades was disturbed by the bungling intervention of Americans in search of trade. It was a situation in which both the major interested powers-Japan and China-showed themselves prepared to refrain from attempting to make political and military use of the territory, leaving it to the Koreans to settle their own internal affairs in their own peculiar way. The United States, in the postwar period, never accepted this concept, preferring to pursue the

unrealistic goal of a wholly non-Communist and "democratic" unified Korea. But things have been changing, both in East Asia and in American policy. The effort, in any case, to find a better solution than the situation which prevails today should not be abandoned, for the present situation is not wholly devoid of danger. Meanwhile, the United States has no choice but to stay the course.

The position of the United States with respect to Taiwan is a weak one, and has been so ever since FDR and Harry Hopkins, acting with staggering frivolity and scant regard for the principle of self-determination, tossed the island to China at the Cairo Conference in 1943. Being viewed as part of China, the island will, so far as the United States is concerned, ultimately have to make its peace with the powers that be on the Chinese mainland. If, of course, the terms of this accommodation were to be a complete absorption into the life of the mainland, without any distinguishing status, it could be a drastic and unhappy outcome for the inhabitants. But the Chinese have more than once recognized the advantage to themselves of conceding special status (always in practice, never in theory) to areas which they claim as part of China, if this seemed useful to their own external commercial and financial exchanges; and the Chinese genius for unadmitted compromise may yet discover a similar solution for the Taiwanese people. The United States can perhaps use its dwindling influence in this direction, though it will have to have a very light touch to make it effective. More than that it cannot do. The bed it must lie on, here, is of its own making.

As for Vietnam, the less said at this point, the better. In this, the most disastrous of all America's undertakings over the whole 200 years of its history, the United States has not only contrived to do a great deal that is unconstructive in the immediate past but has precluded itself from doing much that is constructive for some time into the future. The only

graceful and halfway posture it can adopt will be one of total withdrawal, followed by silence and detachment, leaving initiatives to others.

## VI

The fact that the filling of the vacuums is no longer a serious problem in Soviet-American relations, coupled with the growing awareness on both sides of the unnecessary expense and danger of the unrestricted competition in the cultivation of nuclear-tipped missiles, and a readiness to try to arrive at certain minimal understandings in this respect, does not mean that the Soviet Union is no longer a serious problem in American foreign policy. The Soviet régime continues to be inspired by an ideology hostile in principle to the Western nations, from which it dares not depart. It continues to be dependent on certain habits of conduct, in part inherited from earlier Russian régimes—a passion for secrecy, an exaggerated preoccupation with internal security, a rather childish suspicion of foreigners, a tendency to propagandistic exaggeration and distortion, and above all, the maintenance of armed forces considerably greater than any visible external danger would seem to justify—which make it in many respects an uncomfortable neighbor. To this must be added the ties it continues to maintain to certain foreign communist parties. These ties no longer have the firm disciplinary connotations they had in Stalin's day, but still are not wholly devoid of political significance and present a further dimension of insecurity from the standpoint of the Western countries.

Yet the problem Russia presents for American policy-makers differs markedly, and in the main favorably, from what it was 25 years ago. The world communist movement, once a monolithically controlled instrument of Stalinist power, is now widely fragmented; only a portion of it retains a relationship to Moscow which could cause it to serve as a vehicle for Russian policies. Not only that, but the highest priority in

Soviet policy appears to be given today to the effort to resist encroachments by the Chinese on Soviet influence among radical-socialist and "anti-imperialist" movements across the world-an undertaking which does not greatly concern the United States and does not represent a field of conflict in Soviet- American relations.

This situation can, of course, change, as can Soviet policy toward Western Europe; and this warrants a continued wariness on the Western side. But altogether these circumstances mean that there are today no political issues between the Soviet Union and the United States which could conceivably be susceptible of solution by war, even if the state of weaponry had not made any major military conflict between the two powers unthinkable. And this being the case, the weapons race-a race which, admittedly, is not confined just to nuclear weapons alone-has to be regarded as essentially devoid of political justification. The two powers may have conflicting interests or desiderata in other parts of the world. The armed forces they maintain could conceivably have roles to play with relation to third parties. But none of these conflicts of interest are remotely great enough to justify the madness of a Soviet-American war. There is no reason, then, why the two powers, even if no fonder of each other than they are today, should not be able to coexist indefinitely without armed conflict-with no more than the usual maneuvering and skirmishing in relations with third parties.

One wonders whether the implications of this situation have been fully taken into account. Even the smattering of information that leaks out to the general public suggests that the greater part of the military activity carried on by both sides-particularly on the naval level-is inspired by planning scenarios in which the appearance of the other party as the major antagonist is taken for granted, and the encounter itself assumes the aspect of an inevitable certainty. Why? There is, as we have just seen, no political justification for such an

assumption, And who, with even a superficial glance at the historical record, could doubt the self- fulfilling quality of most military planning of this nature? In the light of what now goes on in the Soviet-American field, Woodrow Wilson's horror and indignation upon discovering, in 1914, that the War Department had a Division of Plans, seem less naïve than they have over the intervening decades. Perhaps he was right to be suspicious of such activity.

It is clear that one must try to be prepared for a variety of contingencies. But does this necessarily mean that the ships and submarines of these two powers must go on indefinitely shadowing each other across the world oceans in a never-ending game of blind-man's buff that is as ridiculous as it is dangerous? Could not the two navies bring themselves, pressed by their governments, to accept each other's presence on the high seas as a normal phenomenon and learn to exchange courtesies and even services in the spirit of comradeship and mutual respect that has generally united seamen of all nations? Could they not perhaps even collaborate occasionally on constructive undertakings? The idea of employing military and naval forces in the struggle against pollution and destruction of the environment is not new with this writer.[i] It has been suggested, for example, that the two navies might collaborate in helping the riparian powers of the Mediterranean Sea to master the problems of pollution that now threaten its natural salubriousness and usefulness. Perhaps the thought is practical, perhaps not. But where is the official willingness to examine it? Or others like it?

These last observations have been addressed to the Soviet Union because it is here that the military rivalry is most dangerous. They apply, of course, no less to Communist China. If the problems of Taiwan and Vietnam can be laid to rest (and without the liquidation of the second, in particular, no coherent thinking about the future of American policy is

possible at all), the two powers will have no really serious conflict of interest except possibly in Korea; and even here no general military conflict could be useful to either party as an approach to the solution.

In the case of China, the greatest danger would seem to lie not in military rivalry but in the entertainment, following the Nixon visit, of unreal dreams of intimacy. For reasons only a social psychologist could explore, euphoric dreams of this nature have long been a congenital weakness of American opinion. After two decades of frustration, this tendency is again appearing.

It is perhaps a good time to remind ourselves that Chinese and Americans, for all the courtesy of Chinese hosts and for all the impressive good order now evident in mainland China, are very different peoples. In international- as in personal-life, the best recipe for coexistence between very different people is elaborate courtesy-and distance. History suggests that Chinese tend to regard all overt manifestations of diplomacy-including exchanges on the official level-as a species of ceremonial, in the course of which due deference is always paid to the excellent qualities of the Chinese people and the dignity of the Chinese state. Real problems are discussed, or sometimes treated without discussion, in more delicate ways. Foreigners, furthermore, and particularly Western foreigners, are not really popular with the Chinese; it is plain that there are limits to the period of time over which their presence in China, even as guests, is fully appreciated. This leaves relatively little room for the more fulsome forms of international "contact" in terms of which Americans like to conceive of international friendship and collaboration. But if the United States is prepared to respect Chinese sensibilities, to accord to its relations with China that punctiliously ceremonious character which those sensibilities demand, and not to expect too much in terms of an American presence in China, there is no reason why an acceptable and outwardly

pleasant relationship should not be established and indefinitely maintained.

## VII

If, then, the United States does not have as many specific sources of conflict with the great communist powers as it accustomedly thinks of itself as having, and yet has some, the same might be said of its obligations to others. Aside from NATO and South Korea, already mentioned, it has only two major and serious commitments: one to Japan, the other to Israel. (The enduring and imperative need for the most careful cultivation of cordial relations with the two North American neighbors, Canada and Mexico, is too obvious to require special mention.)

Japan is the natural ally of the United States in East Asia. The United States has a vital interest in assuring that the immense industrial potential of the Japanese archipelago does not become associated, through any relationship of dependence or undue influence, with the vast manpower of mainland China or the formidable military potential of the Soviet Union. The fact that this is also a vital interest of Japan herself is what provides the basis of an effective Japanese-American alliance.

This does not mean, to be sure, that there must necessarily be an indefinite maintenance of American bases, or stationing of American forces, on Japanese territory. It means in fact that such arrangements should not exist at all unless they flow from clearly expressed Japanese desiderata and have the acknowledged support not just of precarious parliamentary majorities but of Japanese political opinion as a whole. But it also means that the United States cannot remain indifferent to the fate of Japan, as a fellow Pacific power, and must be prepared to take a friendly and coöperative interest in Japanese security whenever the Japanese need that interest

and are prepared to welcome it. Japan, by the same token, has a vital interest in the ability of the United States to carry on as a strong and effective force in international affairs; and Japanese statesmen have shown themselves, ever since the recent war, to be well aware of that fact.

These realities are, of course, already expressed in the existing Japanese- American Treaty of Mutual Coöperation and Security. But that pact was conceived in the most harrowing period of the cold war, and it was generally understood as reflecting the narrow anxieties and rigidities of that day. The treaty itself is unexceptionable. It will presumably continue to be supplemented periodically by agreements on specific questions of military collaboration to fit the circumstances of the moment. But it is important that it be understood, in the coming years, as the reflection of mutual interests broader and more enduring than those which led to its initial conclusion.

As for Israel, the commitment is founded less on demonstrable geopolitical interests than is the case with Japan, but it is no less real. No one could deny that the United States, by its conduct over the course of 25 years, has incurred a heavy moral commitment to the preservation of the state of Israel and the protection of its inhabitants against massacre or political disaster at the hands of their irreconcilable Arab neighbors. As in all such cases, the main burden of responsibility lies, of course, with the people to whom the commitment is made. The commitment assumes a reasonable degree of prudence, restraint and good will on their part. It is not a blank check for any and all behavior. The task of American policy-makers, as they themselves have well understood, consists of trying to assure to the Israelis that which is really essential to the maintenance of their existence as a state, of dissuading them from claiming more than is essential to that purpose, and of avoiding any escalation of the situation into a serious Soviet-American conflict. This is a

thankless, complex task- a species of Sisyphean labor-which the United States has been performing- not badly on the whole-for many years, and which it must expect to pursue for many years to come.

That the pursuit of this task has to proceed at the cost of America's relations with most of the Arab peoples is unfortunate but scarcely avoidable. In many respects this is, perhaps, less regrettable than it seems. Given the present passionate, volatile and intensely self-centered disposition of the Arabs, their friendship could be, as the Russians would probably testify, in many instances hardly less onerous than their hostility. But their state of mind does raise serious questions regarding the reliability of the Middle East as a source of oil for the West, above all, for Western Europe.

The oil business is of such complexity that any attempt by governments to regulate it or influence it presents formidable difficulties. But the steady increase in the costs of Middle Eastern oil, the ruthless greed with which the governments in question have pressed their advantage in negotiations with the companies, the justifiable doubt that they can or will spend to any very good purpose the enormous tribute they are now levying, and the growing unreliability of the countries in question as sources of supply to the West in this vitally important commodity: these factors raise serious problems, not so much for the companies, which regularly pass on their losses to the Western consumer, but for the consumer himself, who has no means for protecting his individual interest. Economic as well as strategic considerations may soon make it necessary for the Western governments to exert their authority individually and collectively, with a view to reducing Western dependence on the Middle East as a source of fuel. It is not too early for them to begin to study how this might be accomplished.

There remains the problem of the so-called "third world": the

band of states that sweeps from the Indian subcontinent through sub-Saharan Africa to the west coast of South America. In its relations with these many countries the United States finds itself face to face with two unpleasant facts. The first is the legacy of Vietnam.

In the fluid stream of international life, there is nothing which cannot and will not in due time be forgotten and forgiven, as are now most of the follies of the European colonial powers in earlier centuries. But these things take time. The cynicism about America's purposes which was to some extent endemic among the poorer nations even before Vietnam but which has been mightily fed by the Vietnam War, and of which our political antagonists did not fail to take due advantage, will not be overcome in a day. In the meantime, American initiatives will court misunderstanding, and for that reason will best be avoided.

To this must be added the fact that experience has now shown the insubstantiality of most of the concepts of foreign aid by which American statesmen were inspired as they attempted to design their relationships with the underdeveloped countries in the 1950s and 1960s. The assumption that aid should bring gratitude and admiration; the fetish of industrialization; the belief that others would be aided by becoming more like us; the concept of economic aid as a desirable and effective weapon in the cold war; the neglect of the factor of overpopulation; the belief that economic advancement is automatically conducive to political maturity and democracy; the failure to recognize that the pace of change is fully as important as its nature, and that instability can as easily be sown by desirable change too rapidly achieved as by change undesirable in nature: one by one, these misconceptions have now been revealed, leaving us disappointed, frustrated and sorely in need of rethinking the whole problem. That rethinking will take time. It can hardly be carried out, as a subject of national discussion, before the

great confusing element of Vietnam has been cleared away. Meantime, the best the United States can do is to channel through international bodies as much of its aid effort as possible (bearing in mind that these bodies can themselves be compromised if too large a proportion of their support comes from the United States), but to do this with its eyes open, regarding these donations as a species of goodwill advertising and not promising itself too much in the way of demonstrable results.

## VIII

This completes the listing of specific situations, dangers and commitments to which American statesmen will have no choice but to give serious and responsible attention in the remaining years of the 1970s. The list fails, as will readily be noted, to include a number of situations (the state of affairs prevailing in southern Africa might be an example) in which others, for one reason or another, would see weightier grounds for American involvement than does this writer. But it represents, as it stands, a fairly formidable set of problems: most of them complex, some of them highly recalcitrant, one or two of them, as of today, without visible possibility of solution. They suffice, at the very least, to make ridiculous the thought of a retirement of the United States into anything resembling the earlier posture of isolation.

Formidable as they are, these specific demands do not exhaust the range of either the challenges or opportunities facing American policy. They are flanked by two situations of a general and universal nature which not only will demand the attention of our government in these coming years but will present the greatest possibilities for constructive statesmanship that lie before it.

The first of these concerns international action for the improvement and preservation of natural environment on a

world scale. Two and a half years ago, in this same journal, I urged the establishment of an international environmental authority. I conceived of it initially as an agency only of the major industrial and maritime nations, both Communist and non-Communist, not universal in membership and not administratively subordinate to the United Nations. This concept was rejected, in effect, by the international community, including the United States, which preferred to follow the more leisurely and laborious course of further study within the United Nations, and action only on the basis of a universal consensus. This decision, for which there was admittedly much to be said, made possible the extensive but inconclusive airing of the problem which took place at, and in connection with, the recent Stockholm Conference.

But meanwhile, the deterioration of environment on a global scale, occasioned not least by the reckless abuse of the high seas, has continued essentially unabated. There is still no authority in the world charged with, and capable of, putting a stop to the pollution and destruction of environment where these processes occur in media, such as the high seas or the atmosphere, that are not under the sovereign control of any nation. Even conceding that the most serious excesses in pollution occur within national boundaries, those which do not are also far from negligible. An international authority continues to be needed not just to inhibit unsound practices in the international field but also to bring intelligent pressure on individual governments in exercising their own environmental responsibilities. Here is a rich field for American ingenuity and initiative, one that continues, Stockholm notwithstanding, to call urgently for attention.

The second great problem of universal significance with relation to which the United States has both a duty and a rare opportunity for constructive action is the restructuring of the international community and the development of the full potential of the United Nations. The effort to achieve a world

made up exclusively of sovereign entities, all completely equal in status; the absolute quality of the modern concept of sovereignty; the increasing fragmentation of the international community; the consequent phenomenon of the mini-state-an entity saddled with a modality of participation in international life to the demands of which its resources are patently inadequate; the damage done to international parliamentarianism by the wild incongruities produced by the principle of "one country, one vote;" the contradiction involved in this steady multiplication of sovereignties in certain parts of the world in an age when governments elsewhere-governments of greater age and more mature understanding-are trying precisely to bridge the rigidities of sovereignty and to recognize a higher and more unified pattern of obligations: all these factors call out for the sort of study of the problem, and leadership in attacking it, which the United States is outstandingly equipped to give. The failure to find reasonable answers to these questions has already had an adverse effect on the United Nations and has limited the contribution-so desperately needed-which that organization should be capable of making to the improvement of international life.

The possibilities of American diplomacy are not limited, therefore, to the correction of past mistakes, or the overcoming of the instabilities resulting from the heritage of the past war and the great process of decolonization. There are other possibilities : ones that have wider and more promising horizons-ones for the solution of which American strength is needed and the American genius is peculiarly suited. These possibilities can be tapped only in the measure that Americans contrive to put aside the fixations and rigidities of the cold war and to recognize that humanity is threatened by common dangers-in the field of weaponry, of environment, of the organization of international life-more important to it than the competitive ones that have

preoccupied statesmen in earlier ages.

[i] See article by Morris Janowitz entitled "Volunteer Armed Forces and Military Purpose" in *Foreign Affairs*, April 1972.

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GEORGE F. KENNAN, of the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton; formerly Ambassador to the Soviet Union and to Yugoslavia; director of the Policy Planning Staff in the Department of State, 1947, author of "Memoirs, 1950-1963," "Memoirs, 1925-1950," "On Dealing with the Communist World" and other works.

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# On Power: The Nature of Soviet Power

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*Robert Legvold*



*President Ford and Soviet General Secretary Brezhnev signed a Joint Communiqué in November 1974.*

For three decades Soviet power has obsessed American foreign policy. By it we have judged our own; because of it we have committed ourselves far from home and justified our commitment in terms of the menace it represents; around it we have made a world order revolve. For us, Soviet power has been the ultimate measure and the central threat, a seminal idea and a source of orientation.

Should it still be, however, now that international politics are changing so? Or should it still be, because Soviet power is

changing so? Is the evolution of the international setting altering the meaning of growing Soviet power? Or is the growth of Soviet power undermining the meaning of an evolving international setting? The ambiguous relationship between the two makes it much harder to know what role the Soviet Union ought to play in our concerns. Judging the significance of larger and more modern Soviet military forces becomes increasingly difficult when traditional frames of reference no longer hold, when the old rules and characteristics of international relations yield to new ones, when the uses to which military power can be put are depreciated, and when the concept of security as such loses its precision, swollen by strange anonymous sources of insecurity, many of them economic in nature. It is a world in which fewer and fewer of our problems are caused by the Soviet Union or can be solved by it, save for the ultimate matter of nuclear war.

Yet, amidst the loosening of the old order - the deteriorating hierarchies and orthodoxies, the growing number of political actors and political axes, the new imperatives of interdependence - there is also the distracting spectacle of ever-expanding Soviet military power. During these years of passage, the Soviet Union has busied itself with a vast buildup of its armed forces, introducing new technologies, enlarging numbers and most significantly venturing into areas far from its historic spheres of concern. The Soviet Union has spent the decade turning itself into an authentic global superpower able to apply military force in the remotest regions of the world. With the capacity has apparently come the vocation.

"Soviet Russia," Henry Kissinger and his closest counselors used to say, "is only just beginning its truly 'imperial' phase." The prospect does not fit comfortably with our image of the other processes reforming world politics. Hard pressed to reconcile these two perceptions - of an increasingly

interdependent (and decentralized) world and of an increasingly "imperial" Soviet Union - we have tended not to try. We have responded rhetorically ("The United States seeks to give the Soviet Union a stake in a more stable and humane international order.") rather than conceptually. And having no clear concept of the relationship between the transformation of Soviet power and the transformation of the global political setting, we have concentrated on familiar apprehensions: Where there is instability, what is the Soviet ability to interfere? How do we keep the Soviet Union from intervening in Angola or in Yugoslavia? Or how do we frustrate Soviet intervention when it occurs? (Phrased by the last Administration, the question was: "How do we create a calculus of risks and benefits that will induce the Soviet Union to behave?") What is the political and psychological impact on our NATO allies of strategic parity or the growth of the Warsaw Pact's conventional forces? What does the Soviet Union hope to accomplish by adding to its military advantage in Central Europe? How well served are Soviet aims by the tensions between Greece and Turkey, the West's economic dislocations, or the possible entry of French or Italian Communists into their governments?

Like our apprehensions, our perception of the Soviet Union as such tends to be narrowly cast. There is a remarkable consensus in most of what is being said about the Soviet Union and the nature of its changing power. People may disagree over details and over what it all adds up to for us, but on the central characteristics nearly everyone agrees. The common portrait is of a late-arriving military leviathan, in the bloom of military expansion, self-satisfied at last to have matched the power of its great imperialist rival, and fascinated by the potential rewards in the continued accumulation of arms.

But most are also agreed that the Soviet Union is a seriously flawed power: economically disadvantaged, technologically

deficient, bureaucratically sclerosed, and threatened by a society that is, in Zbigniew Brzezinski's words, "like a boiling subterranean volcano [straining] against the rigid surface crust of the political system." Something of a deformed giant, Enceladus with 50 withered arms, mighty in military resources and exhilarated by its strength, but backward in other respects and sobered by the need to enlist the West's help in overcoming these problems.

From these two perceptions it is only a short step to another widely shared impression: unable to influence others by the force of its ideology, plagued by an economy that does not measure up, and discredited by its repressive habits at home and among allies, the Soviet Union has but one major trump, its military power. Some argue that this is a historic condition, that all of the regime's expectations have been deceived, save for the accomplishments of force. The failure of the European revolution, capitalism's resilience despite the Great Depression and the constant cycle of lesser economic crises, the collapse of communist unity almost as soon as unity became a practical dream, the unruliness of change in the theoretically revolutionary regions of the Third World, all these are the wreckage of earlier hopes. The Soviet Union's triumphs, they contend - from the conquest of power to the spread of empire, from the early victories in the civil war to the historic defeat of Nazi Germany - have proved to generations of Soviet leaders the trustworthiness of force alone.

Others are simply commenting on what appears to be the Soviet Union's comparative advantage. But either way, because of this perception, our concluding observation takes on greater moment. For, in one form or another, nearly everyone who makes the Soviet Union an interest notes the contrast in what we and they want for the world. Even those who believe the Soviet Union is losing its taste for revolutionary transformations and settling down to traditional

power politics nonetheless stress the conflict in the two nations' underlying values. Whether the reasons reach back several centuries, as some insist, or merely back to different political systems, as others suggest, the Soviet Union remains an alienated competitor.

If there is truth in this assessment - and, to a degree, it is utterly true - it is a narrow-minded truth, which does not help us sort out the subtler aspects of the Soviet challenge. I say narrow-minded truth because it bears so little relationship to the Soviet Union's self-image; because it is so thoroughly our view of the world. Claiming greater honesty and accuracy on our side is only a partial way out and no service to ourselves, not if the Soviet Union is acting according to its own view. Thus, we have twice handicapped our analyses: first, by not grappling with the interconnection between the evolution of the international order and the evolution of Soviet power and, second, by giving short shrift to the way the Soviet Union views these issues.

We need a broader and richer framework within which to judge the changing nature of Soviet power, one that also incorporates the Soviet understanding of the changing nature of everyone's power. That is what I have tried to sketch here, starting with what seem to me the most conspicuous features of change in the international order, but measured against the lingering and complicating influence of the old order. There follows a brief description of both the new and the faded forms of power and a few comments on Soviet power judged accordingly. My primary concern, however, is the Soviet perspective on these issues. Therefore, I have devoted the second half of the essay to their perceptions of the evolving nature of power within an evolving international setting.

Five elements of change strike me as central. The first of these is the transformation of alliances, a specific manifestation of the general erosion of hierarchies. Not that partnerships are ended or that the power to compel loyalty has in all instances dissolved, but the premises of unity are in most cases no longer what they used to be. Among the industrialized countries of the West, the will to subordinate parochial national interests to traditional security concerns and common enterprises thrives less. In the other camp, the core alliance remains intact, but the original socialist alliance long ago disintegrated with Tito's challenge and the Sino-Soviet split. Moreover, the Soviet Union's extended alliance with West European communism is foundering at the moment on the same reluctance to subordinate national concerns.

The second element of change is the exponential growth of interdependence, confronting nations with the peculiar risk of suffering more the more others suffer, and fusing their prospects for prosperity - no longer merely their prospects for tranquility. Gradually and timidly the socialist countries are being drawn into the same process, a process with unfamiliar rules of restraint and mutual concern.

Third, in this increasingly interdependent world, the collapse of the old international economic order and the challenge raised to a new one of, by, and for the industrialized capitalist societies, have rewritten the political agenda, converted economics to a still higher form of politics, and introduced a critical revisionism, sponsored this time not by the East but by the South instead. Together the second and third elements of change have made the issue of national security far more complex than defending the integrity of one's territory and political values. Increasingly the stake is also in the security of foreign markets and key resources, in the freedom from economically dislocating external price increases, and even in the success of other governments' domestic economic programs.

Fourth, there is growing regionalization of international politics, the particular form taken by the disintegration of a simplistically bipolar world. Ambitious states like Iran and Nigeria exert greater leadership within their own regions, and in the regions of Africa, Latin America and Southeast Asia many of the local states make it increasingly plain that the stewardship of outside powers is no longer necessary. In Europe and Asia new or restored power centers have emerged, creating a looser and more complicated geometry underpinning the structure of international politics. And cutting across this new structure, the proliferation of nuclear weapons adds to the complexity and hazards of change.

Finally, at the pinnacle where power was once concentrated, a fundamental shift has occurred in the military balance between the two superpowers. The Soviet Union is no longer the United States' relative inferior in strategic nuclear power. For nearly a decade it has been our rough equal, and, in the minds of many, a self-confident military competitor eager to do still better.

This last development represents in fact a specter from the old order and is the chief reason we have been slow to think our way through the implications of the Soviet Union's altered power in an altered setting. For two things are at work and both stimulate ancient reflexes: one is the evolution of the whole of Soviet military power and the other is our enduring image of the role military power plays in Soviet conceptions.

Seeing the Soviet Union draw abreast in the strategic arms race has been hard enough. But to face in the same short period the realization that the Soviet Union is turning itself into a first-class naval power capable of challenging our mastery of the seas and meanwhile straining to improve its massive power in Europe has been vastly more disconcerting. All at once the Soviet Union has as many, indeed more and larger missiles than we; it has most of the same (though

perhaps somewhat retarded) technologies, MIRV, mobile land-based missiles, and rudimentary high-energy lasers; and still it presses on with new generations of weapons systems. Just as suddenly its navy is out on the high seas, sailing oceans where it has never been before, assuming missions it has never had before, and building ships it has never needed before. But even more disturbing, in Europe, where it already had the advantage, the Soviet Union has not only improved the quality of its arms and the number of its forces on the Central European front, it has radically altered the balance in the Mediterranean and on the northern flank.

Add to this the place that we have long assumed war occupies in Soviet theory, and inevitably our perspective shrinks to a rather traditional set of apprehensions. For the assumption that the Soviet Union accepts the utility of war is deeply ingrained. Because the Soviet leaders have never repudiated Clausewitz's dictum of "war as the extension of policy," we have taken this to mean that they still regard the resort to arms as a legitimate instrument of policy. Hence their apparent conviction that war, even nuclear war, is "winnable," and their unwillingness to accept Western notions of strategic nuclear deterrence. Dedicated to the idea of prevailing in a nuclear conflict, they are, we assume, less intimidated by the prospect of its outbreak and therefore less concerned with doctrines designed to avoid it or, in the event, to limit it. Even granted that they want war no more than we, the way they conceive war and the way they prepare for it prove to us that the Soviet leaders believe in the practical effect of both the threat and the arsenal of war.

For many, the next step in the analysis is obvious: if intellectually the Soviet leaders acknowledge the utility of force and if practically they are dependent on it, then not surprisingly they appear bent on achieving the largest possible margins of military advantage. This is the culminating premise. The Soviet Union is driven - to the limits

of its resources and our complacency - to seek superiority over us: to amass still greater forces in Central Europe, that the West Europeans may be properly cowed; to fashion a navy more powerful than ours, that we and our friends may be held hostage to our economic dependencies; to build the capacity for projecting power to the far corners of the globe, that new and volatile nations may be opened to Soviet influence; and, ultimately, to overshadow the American strategic nuclear deterrent, that all these other enterprises may be safely pursued.

Viewed like this, it is no wonder that the Soviet-American relationship is soon largely reduced to its military dimension, our attention fixed on the contingencies and circumstances in which the Soviet Union could exploit its military power, and the solution found in our own military strength. Those who think we find the solution in too much military strength simply reinforce the narrowness of our analysis. Because their arguments usually turn on a more optimistic assessment of the military balance - rather than on any disbelief in our original assumptions about the place of force in Soviet theory, something they are more likely to regard as irrelevant than as wrong - they confine the issue still further to a great debate over comparative military capabilities. Thus, they reduce the Soviet threat but not our preoccupation with it.

### III

How ironic that we should be so easily seduced by our traditional apprehensions and so content to build our analysis around the military-political dimension. Interdependence, the other great theme these days, is supposed to depreciate the value of military power. Theoretically the rules are different in an interdependent world, requiring different means. (Theoretically - goes the response - the Soviet Union is not sufficiently a part of this world.)

Though old habits and a lack of imagination prevent us from adjusting, there is also a growing suspicion that conventional means of influence are not what we once thought. The notion that foreign aid, military assistance, cultural diplomacy or any of the other elements of a nation's presence actually translate into leverage over another nation's decisions convinces us less and less, even when it is our adversary's aid, arms, and propaganda effort. Except in rare instances, power is not something usefully approached as a matter of devising, accumulating, and deftly applying mechanisms of influence. Not primarily at least.

For power, we sense, is increasingly unrefinable; increasingly indistinguishable from the setting in which it exists. Power is the capacity to reshape parts of the international order and for the powerful that is a capacity to compromise - to make concessions. Power is allowing monetary regimes or the law of the sea to take another form, allowing the International Monetary Fund, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), or the Common Market to be changed or supplanted, and allowing other global economic goals, such as income redistribution, to have their day. In this case, there is nothing tangible or portable about it, and by its "application" little chance of imposing change.

Power, however, is also increasingly a matter of managing interdependence and, therefore, increasingly a matter of the structure and range of one's dependencies. To be positioned at the intersection of numerous and different forms of interdependence is power - unless too many of them are seriously unequal. So is opting out of interdependent relationships to the extent that minimizing vulnerabilities enhances power; but by sidelining itself a nation also reduces its power to the extent that the rewards of participation are passed up. That is only the start, however, for power in an interdependent world also depends on how fungible others' dependencies are (that is, how easily their dependencies in

one realm can be converted to offset yours in another) and how serviceable your vulnerabilities are (that is, when interdependence is asymmetrical, how much others hurt themselves by hurting you).

#### IV

If power is to be measured in terms of a country's ability to ferry material support great distances to friends fighting in settings like Angola in 1975, the Soviet Union is immeasurably stronger than it was 15 years earlier when Patrice Lumumba needed help. But if it is to be measured in terms of a country's ability to intervene over the same distances with its own military forces when it does not have friends or when we move to prevent it, the Soviet Union is not strong enough. If it is to be assessed in terms of a country's ability to obtain the material resources that it needs without fear of outside interference, the Soviet Union is less well-off than it was ten years ago but a good deal better off than we. But if it is to be assessed in terms of a country's ability to influence the economic decisions of others impinging on its interests, the Soviet Union is better off now, but not nearly so well off as we.

The trouble is we do not know how to evaluate the power of the Soviet Union. We do not have a sufficiently comprehensive and systematic set of criteria by which to judge. We do not even have sufficient criteria by which to disagree among ourselves. Of course, if we reduce the task to evaluating Soviet military power, we have the grounds for disagreeing, but not for weighing its share of the many other resources by which nations try to shape world politics. To supplement the calculation of Soviet military power with other traditional indices - such as the strength of its economy, the stability of its alliance(s), or the character of its adversaries - accomplishes little. What is more important, that Khrushchev's precise timetable for exceeding our per capita

GNP has been long abandoned along with his accompanying fanfare? Or, that the Soviet economy continues to grow more rapidly than those of the vast majority of the world, including our own? Or is the sharp decline in the growth of Soviet total factor productivity more important than either? What is more striking about the large percentage of Soviet resources devoted to national defense, the dedication that it implies or the burden that it represents? And what is more significant about our discovery that this percentage has been even larger than we originally thought, the still greater dedication that it implies or the inefficiency that it betrays? Were we sure of the answers to these questions, we would still have to decide how they balance off against, say, the evolving character of the Chinese threat or the strengths and weaknesses of the Soviet Union's East European alliance.

Neither are we much helped by the tendency to substitute for an analysis of the resources serving Soviet foreign policy a summary of the trends favoring Soviet foreign policy, particularly when the summary is only that. In part, the problem is the same as with undifferentiated and unintegrated categories of power. Not only is it difficult to tell which trends matter most: the American failures in Indochina or the Soviet exclusion from the Middle East; the triumph of the MPLA in Angola or the destruction of Allende in Chile; the disruption on NATO's southern flank or the failed rapprochement after Mao's death. But it is still more treacherous discerning grand patterns among these trends, especially when many trends are quickly reversed. Moreover, the implications of any single trend often defy easy categorization. Take, for example, the case of Eurocommunism. Would the Soviet Union be strengthened by having the Italian Communist Party in government? Who knows? How does a leader in Moscow or one in Washington weigh the damage done to Soviet peace of mind in Eastern Europe by the PCI's heterodoxy, against the reinforcement of

the U.S.S.R's foreign policy in Western Europe by the Party's lingering orthodoxy? How, when the Soviet leader wants a strong Left to constrain the Italian government but momentarily fears the effect on détente of a government that actually includes the Left?

In part, however, the problem with focusing on trends is in distinguishing their effects. After all, our concern with Soviet power is in what it can accomplish, and this cannot be automatically or easily inferred from what happens.

Given these pitfalls, it makes more sense to put a certain distance between ourselves and the problem of the Soviet Union's evolving (military) power. We need to stand back and contemplate the more basic question of the Soviet Union's ability to shape or alter different parts of its environment. Ultimately this is what determines the importance of the Soviet ability to affect events.

If one starts with interdependence, that complex network of involvements dominating so many of the stakes in international politics, including the structure of the international economic order, the Soviet Union's influence remains marginal. It will not do to dismiss this state of affairs as the Soviet Union's choice, as a game it prefers not to play, and may be the better off thereby. For clearly the Soviet Union has chosen to play and would like to play more, were the rules more within its control. Increasingly it has a stake in interdependence but little leverage over the governing institutions and rules. The Soviet Union, as the economist says, is a price-taker.

A third of the animal protein in Soviet diets comes from fish mostly caught off other nations' coasts. To fish there, the Soviet Union is increasingly obliged to enter into joint ventures aiding the development of the poorer countries' fishing industries. Since the early 1960s, the annual increase

in Soviet food imports has exceeded that of Japan, the world's largest food importer, and the Soviet Union is now contractually bound to buy at least six million metric tons of American wheat and corn every year. The Soviet Union counts, and has for some years, on buying substantial quantities of foreign technology to reverse productivity lags in Soviet industry and agriculture; to pay for it, it exports a growing portion of its petroleum production - but if it is to maintain these levels of export, it must tap its more inaccessible reserves, and for that it needs more Western technology. Together with its friends in Eastern Europe, it now owes \$46 billion to outsiders, including \$28 billion to foreign commercial banks.<sup>1</sup>

For all that, however, the Soviet Union has precious little voice in shaping the larger system in which it buys, sells, and borrows. It is a member of none of the major international economic institutions, unless the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) be one, and there it is generally disregarded. It has not been much consulted by anyone, including the South, when monetary schemes, balance-of-payment adjustment arrangements, commodity agreements, and regulations of direct foreign investments are discussed. And its own particular pet concerns - such as most-favored-nation agreements, bilateral trade agreements, and a larger role for gold - wait on the goodwill of the capitalist powers and often on their diminished apathy.

Our standard explanation misses the point: the point is not that the organization of the Soviet economy makes the Soviet Union an unsuitable participant, but that the international economic order need not accommodate the national organization the U.S.S.R. prefers. Our notion that this is no comment on Soviet power is plainly wrong; in an interdependent world, self-sufficiency is inefficiency, increasingly so in the Soviet Union, and the Soviet leadership knows it. How much of a world power is a nation without

much power in the world economy?

On the other hand, not all crucial transactions take place in the economic sphere and not all crucial stakes are material. There is also, for want of a more revealing term, the political order. In theory, the maximum concern is with the Soviet capacity for making the world over in its own image, but few believe any longer in putting the issue so simplistically. Rather, we respond to an incoherent muddle of concerns, beginning with the pace at which the Soviet Union is acquiring footholds or facilities around the world, which jeopardize our power, and finishing with the pace at which change is occurring, which jeopardizes our values. In a place like southern Africa the two become confused - but that is more a matter of our weakness than Soviet strength. Not that we fear for racism, but violent change may give rise to radical regimes and many think there are too many of them already. More immediately, radical regimes may well accord the Soviet Union new facilities for its expanding global military power, which, according to the more pessimistic among us, could be used to shut off the flow of indispensable resources to Western economies. Worried about the fate of our own power and values, we tend to be sloppy about distinguishing between the aggrandizement of Soviet power and the advancement of Soviet values.

Our carelessness arises out of the mistaken apprehension that the growth of Soviet (military) power, and change, like that in Angola, necessarily aid Soviet foreign policy in dealing with its various tasks: that they interact to make it easier for the Soviet Union to sell its Asian collective security scheme or mobilize opposition to Diego Garcia. It also blinds us to the possibility that change may work against the Soviet Union, even in its own camp, quite apart from the growth of Soviet (military) power.

In the military realm, the Soviet Union is unquestionably

stronger than it was, but the nature and sweep of its strength is worth exploring. Where arms are an uncontested entree, the Soviet Union has a growing capacity to influence and, in some rare instances like Angola, to decide events. But sometimes, as in the Horn of Africa, even where order is breaking down and the Soviet access considerable, confusion and crosscutting interests foil effective Soviet influence. In general, the Soviet Union has a conspicuously greater capacity than it did to constrain our use of military force and, to that extent, to influence events. But where it is the shadow of Soviet power that worries us, as in Europe, if Soviet influence grows, it will largely be influence that we have created; when the actual resort to force is so implausible, then dangers like that of "Finlandization" are far more a matter of our state of mind than of actual Soviet capabilities.

Moreover, the capacity to influence, even to control, events guarantees neither control after the event nor control over the larger patterns of change. By and large the Soviet Union is, as we are, the beneficiary or victim of the processes of change, not their source. Nothing in the evolution of Soviet power is altering that. Some have used the images of gardener and architect to identify the nature and limits of our power: the Soviet Union, like us, remains a gardener.

## V

None of what has been said so far addresses the constraints a changing international order does or does not impose on Soviet behavior.<sup>2</sup> This, it seems to me, has a great deal to do with the way the Soviet Union judges these issues. For while in some respects it judges these issues as we do, in other important respects, it does not. Thus, Soviet writers and leaders are as sensitive as our own to the rapid transformation of world politics. Like our own, they recognize the fragmentation of power ("the multiplicity of forces each standing up for its own interests"), the transformation of

capitalist and proletarian internationalism, the emergence of other axes, North-South and West-West, to compete with the East-West axis, and the growth of interdependence (in its praiseworthy form, the "international division of labor"). But they superimpose on these common perceptions a fundamentally different conception of the underlying forces at work.

For them, the key to the current transformation resides in the shifting "correlation of forces," the balance between history's progressive and retrograde forces - their sense of linear history, predicated on the eternal advance of the Soviet Union and those with whom it identifies and the equally certain retreat of those with whom it does not. At the moment, they contend, the correlation of forces has been radically altered by the dramatic increase in Soviet military power, the continued success of the socialist economies, the growth of the national liberation struggle, an unprecedented convergence of crises in the industrialized capitalist countries, and the strengthening of "democratic" and "peace-loving" forces within the other camp.

Whether they really believe the balance of trends has shifted so swiftly and so unambiguously is difficult to tell. But, in a sense, that is not crucial: first, because the Soviets do not underestimate the residual strength of capitalist societies, least of all the United States, nor overestimate their own military strength. On the contrary, they have the deepest regard for the powers of recovery in Western societies, for their economic dynamism even when decelerated, and for the United States' preeminence among and continued dominance over them; they also seem to understand the limitations of their own military power - in fact, in contrast to many in the West, they still tend to see themselves as militarily inferior to the United States in most respects.

Second, the precise level of Soviet optimism is less important

than the conceptual framework sustaining it. It is more important that the Soviet Union, however sensitive to specific trends, still ultimately reduces the evolution of international relations to a single contest. It still imposes (a Soviet speaker would say, understands) the juxtaposition between two historic forces, between two social systems and in these terms judges the ultimate significance of global change.

We make a mistake, therefore, to doubt the force of this idea, to consign it to that category of devices by which the Soviet regime finds self-justification, or to repress it in our haste to transform the Soviet Union into a historically recognizable problem. The mistake has three consequences: it obscures a basic asymmetry in our two conceptions of international change; it conceals the trouble a Soviet observer has with our conception of international change; and it makes it more difficult to understand the role that the Soviet Union assigns itself in promoting international change.

In the first instance, Americans have gradually learned to divide their preoccupations. One of the consequences of a changing environment, we think, is the increasingly diffuse quality of the challenges that it raises. Our problems and the solutions, to the extent that our problems have solutions, exist on different planes and in separate contexts. However much these are interwoven, they cannot any longer be forced into one dimension. On the other hand, the Soviet view of this increasingly intricate environment is still refracted through a single dimension.

Thus, for example, we take the contestation over the new international economic order (NIEO) to be a serious new focus of American foreign policy, and, because the challenge comes from the South, distinct from our competition with the Soviet Union. (Indeed, as an acknowledgement of interdependence and a moderated East-West contest, we now invite the Soviet Union to join us in aiding the developing

nations.) But for the Soviet Union the North-South emphasis is misconceived, not merely because this tends to feature a "rich-poor" dichotomy, and the Soviet Union does not like its own ranking, but because a rich-poor dichotomy makes the issue income redistribution, and income redistribution has to do with buying off the oppressed, not revolutionizing the system. Properly conceived, the struggle over a new international economic order is between the two social systems, with the socialist countries in the forefront. As a symptom of imperialism's vulnerabilities, the Soviet Union supports the struggle for a more equitable international economic order; but, recognizing how powerful the industrialized capitalist states remain in this sphere, it prefers to emphasize other areas of change, ones better served by the "shifting correlation of forces," ones that have more to do with restructuring East-West relations, or, as Soviet writers put it, ones more directly concerned with reducing the risks of war, strengthening peaceful coexistence, and advancing "extensive and constructive cooperation."

In the second instance, our insensitivity to Soviet conceptions prevents us from seeing how much we remain the Soviet Union's preoccupation. (Too many people who do take Soviet formulas seriously are no exception, because they confound the "struggle between two social systems" with a struggle between two states or two sets of states.) If there is one great impediment to progressive change, one great benefactor of a reactionary order, in Soviet eyes, it is the United States. China may be a more immediate and noxious threat to the Soviet Union, but its larger meaning is as an objective ally of the anti-progressive forces led by us. Thus, when our theorists and leaders speak of adjusting to systemic change, creating new equilibriums, fashioning a sounder balance of power, and building on interdependence, these are not treated by the Soviets as concepts for a safer, more stable, and more humane international order, but as a design for saving as

much as possible of the old one.

Because of Vietnam and the growing strength of the Soviet Union, Soviet writers say, the American leaders have a more realistic appreciation of the limits of their power and a more constructive approach to relations with the Soviet Union (until the human rights initiatives of the current Administration). No leader more symbolized that change than Henry Kissinger, but Kissinger the theorist, it has often been noted in Soviet analyses, believes in the "balance of power system" and, "however praised or embellished" that concept may be, it is designed to preserve the status quo not only in the international-political but, above all, in the social sphere - "to maintain and strengthen reactionary regimes," to stifle "revolutionary changes in the life of the people."

According to Soviet observers, it is not the imperatives of interdependence, particularly those of reciprocity and mutual restraint, that move American leaders, but rather the opportunities they see in the fragmentation of power. (The concept of interdependence, they say, becomes in our hands a rationalization for Western exploitation of the Third World and an artifice for salvaging imperialist collaboration under American leadership.) By capitalizing on the conflicts among various "power centers," Soviet analysts maintain, the United States hopes to make itself the arbiter of the system, the regulator of the "equilibrium," and the equilibrium that most bothers them is the so-called "pentagonal world" (the U.S.S.R., the United States, China, Western Europe and Japan). It is not restraint that we are attempting to build into the system, according to them, but flexibility for ourselves, the kind that preserves others' dependencies and frees our hands to control adverse change, to "export counter-revolution."

In turn, Soviet commentators make no bones about their own country's large and active role in the evolution of the

international order. As they say, the restructuring of international relations "can never be spontaneous or automatic." Marxist-Leninists cannot rely on "spontaneous development" in international affairs. "Any fundamental restructuring of international relations must be duly planned, controlled, and corrected." Since international politics, in contrast to the imperialists' view, are not a social system, subject to endless, directionless mutations - a "system" whose structure cannot be rectified, only manipulated and exploited - but a process, the progressive forces of the world can and must act to protect and foster this process. The process, of course, is the shifting "correlation of forces," and the Soviet Union, according to its spokesmen, has a growing responsibility for its advance.

Ambitious, militarily strengthened, buoyed by the course of events, persuaded that we are the key obstacle to a more preferable international order, this seemingly is not the kind of Soviet Union that we want to live with. Nor is it one much in step with an encumbered international environment dominated by mutual dependencies. How much worse that it also, according to many of us, invests military power with a high instrumental value.

This, however, misconceives the problem, and no part of it more than the military dimension. For the instrumentalism we see in the Soviet approach to military power is, in the first instance, the instrumentalism they attribute to us. The interplay is not easy to sort out, but it starts with our misrepresentation of their theory. Thus, the Soviet concepts that we consult to prove their instrumentalism are in fact those analyzing ours. Their loyalty to Clausewitz, for example, has nothing to do with rationalizing war as an instrument of Soviet foreign policy; it is a way of explaining the phenomenon of war and imperialism's proclivity to war as a means. In twisting their meaning, Soviet commentators complain, we "deliberately lump together the theoretical

proposition characterizing the essence of war and the proposition concerning the expediency, or otherwise, of war as a means of achieving political objectives." (This disclaimer we may believe or not, but we have no business using Clausewitz to prove their commitment to war as an instrument of foreign policy).

Seeing military power as an instrument of foreign policy, of course, is much different from proposing war as an instrument of foreign policy. We, they say, have made military power not only an instrument, but the instrument, of our postwar foreign policy. And we have not only made it the instrument of our foreign policy - that is, our frequent and ultimate recourse in controlling international change - but we have turned the threat of (nuclear) war into a prop for our frequent military interventions. That is why, according to them, we seek strategic superiority, why we reject parity, why we resort to the subterfuge of "strategic sufficiency" (the formula of the early Nixon years), why we concoct concepts like the "doctrine of limited nuclear options" (deterrence in the late Nixon and Ford years) - why, in short, we struggle to make nuclear war safe, and why we chase so frantically after technological advantage. Our particular approach to deterrence theory, they think, represents our never-ending struggle to salvage political utility for nuclear arms, to make them a shield for the exploitation of other forms of military power. (Our equivalent is the notion that the Soviet commitment to "winning" a nuclear war represents a commitment to an arms buildup that will permit winning without fighting - not, as Soviet theorists claim, a way of fighting a war that others start and hope to win.)

There is no way of knowing whether some or all within the Soviet leadership would be willing to try where we "have failed," whether they can imagine a plausible structure to the strategic balance that would profit Soviet foreign policy. But three lesser conclusions are within our reach: first, to the

extent that the Soviet leaders are wrestling with the problem of integrating military power and foreign policy - and they are - it is at the lower end of the spectrum, where we have regularly applied military force to foreign policy ends. To judge from their building programs, they have not yet decided how far they want to go in developing an ability to project force, how far they want to go in preventing or duplicating our practices. Second, the areas where foreign policy and military power are the most likely to mingle are those geographically and naturally isolated from the central balances. And, third, we pay an unnecessary price for our original invidious image of the Soviet Union: in truth, the Soviet Union feels better about itself and the course of events than we assume; trusting events, it is more likely to assign its military power the task - beyond defense - of preventing others from interfering with change than of imposing change.

For in fact the Soviet Union does not see itself as only militarily potent and otherwise as economically disadvantaged, technologically deficient, bureaucratically sclerosed and so on. Its leaders admit to a broad range of problems and limitations but, where we constantly view these in terms of fundamental systemic weaknesses, they regard them as normal and corrigible defects. And where we focus on these defects, treating them as a basic disparagement of the Soviet experience, they tend to downplay them, instead emphasizing their accomplishments, and thus retain a genuine faith in the transcendent significance of that experience. (One could exchange "they" and "we" in these two sentences; that is, the same contrast exists in reverse.)

On the other hand, we tend to analyze the effect of Soviet ideology in narrow, utilitarian terms, that is, by the impact that it has on others, by its power to attract, and by this standard we see the Soviet Union still more weakened. While a Soviet leader is also concerned with the force of ideology, as a practical matter he is more likely to focus on trends that

correspond with his values than on the precise number of orthodox disciples that his country inspires (outside the critical sphere of Eastern Europe). Rather than judge the issue only by the number of socialist states in the world or genuine Marxist-Leninists, he will take heart from the number that merely reject the other way; even more will his optimism depend on the basic rhythm of change, say, in Indochina or southern Africa.

There is another side to the story. For the Soviet Union is not only, or even first, the servant of history; it is also a state with mundane interests, like adding Western computers to its economy, securing recognition for the territorial status quo in Eastern Europe, and discouraging the United States from deploying cruise missiles. Its recourse has been the process of détente, which the Soviet leaders say is not only compatible with the process of an evolving correlation of forces, but an essential part of it. Détente is the refinement and restraint that the Soviet Union brings to the basic contest between two social systems. Theoretically, it is the framework within which the Soviet Union bridges the gap between its private needs and the historic vision, but the recriminations of the French Communist Party (against those who would sacrifice social change to détente) and of "some representatives" of national liberation movements indicate that it has not been fully successful.

Were the Soviet participation in détente but a tactical expedient, a kind of winter quartering of the troops, a policy choice to be discarded at the first sign of inconvenience, we might have a right to a more primitive view of the Soviet approach to international change. But it is not. It is a profound and long-term commitment dictated by the Soviet leaders' inability to conceive a better way to pursue their three elemental objectives: (1) nurturing both the processes that restrain the change the Soviet Union fears and those that ease the way to the change it desires; (2) sanctifying the

Soviet Union's status as a global power coequal with the United States (that there may be, in Andrei Gromyko's words, "no question of any significance which can be decided without the Soviet Union or in opposition to it"); and (3) securing the economic and technological benefits of the "international division of labor." By the last, the Soviet Union engages itself in the interdependent world. This interdependent world, which includes collaboration between socialist and capitalist states, now has the status of a phenomenon determined by "objective realities and laws." And Soviet leaders admit that "no single state is able for long to achieve full development if it cuts itself off from the rest of the world."

## VI

I remember those maps from early television programs on the Soviet Union - or on the communist world as it was then. How the color spread like spilled paint across the areas of Soviet control and ambition. Whatever else it may be, 20 years later, the Soviet global thrust is not that. Indeed it is not even a proper "global thrust," much less an "imperial thrust," if by that we mean the extension of power and control, or the attempt to control. The Soviet empire still ends at the Elbe River. And, as far as power is concerned, while the Soviet Union's is clearly enlarged, at least that part of it that is military, we should remember that the portion of military power that is abroad is largely redeployed, not additional, power and remains vastly inferior to our own. That is, while the Soviet Navy is modernizing, it is less its transfiguration that should catch our eye, for this has been slow and ambiguous, than the simple decision to send the old navy out to sea. Moreover, of all the naval-related areas, the one in which the Soviet Union lags farthest behind us is in its ability to project force.

It is entirely possible that the Soviet Union intends to improve its capacity for projecting power, that it is ready to try to

influence events more actively in various parts of the world and that it believes the timely application of military power may be a primary means. But, if so, the effort will be made with relatively few illusions about the permanence of change or about the limits of influence or about the permanence of influence yielded by change. The closer to home (and to the central military balances), the less utility military power has for Soviet foreign policy, and the more the Soviet Union must rely primarily on processes like *détente* to influence the trends of concern to it. In the grey area in between, like Yugoslavia, there is no evidence that the Soviet Union regards its military power as an important part of policy, but neither is there any evidence that it disregards the fear that it may be.

In general, the notion of a Soviet global thrust has less to do with the application of power (toward control) than it does with status and access (derived from power). That is, the key proposition is Gromyko's: namely, the Soviet Union as a participant in decisions of concern to it. This indisputably depends, in the Soviet mind and, in part, in reality, on the growing mass of Soviet military power, strategic nuclear power in particular. But it also depends, in larger part, on the nature of local circumstances and, as events in the Middle East have proved since the 1973 war, these are often more powerful.

Phrasing the problem so basically, of course, does not help much in dealing with specific aspects or applications of Soviet power, but this kind of framework (not necessarily this particular one) is essential if we are to have a perspective in which to fit our specific judgments. Too often these days, we focus on particular dimensions of Soviet power without the broader perspective - and end by inventing implications.

Looked at from a distance, what ultimately is the significance of a changing setting in assessing Soviet power? And where do these considerations intersect with the problem of competing Soviet and American perspectives? The answer to the first question, it seems to me, comes out of the fundamental evolution in our perception of the constraints on Soviet power. At the outset, that is 30 years ago when George Kennan wrote his famous essay on the subject, we viewed these constraints as too frail and so we substituted ourselves. Faced with what we deemed to be a messianic expansionist state, which for whatever reasons - the one Kennan stressed was the regime's failure to consolidate its absolute power at home - was struggling to fill "every nook and cranny available to it in the basin of world power," our response was fateful and straightforward: we must, Kennan argued and we agreed, "confront the Russians with unalterable counterforce at every point where they show signs of encroaching upon the interests of a peaceful and stable world."

Since then, however, the international setting has grown constantly more complex, adding powerful new constraints and rendering our own role less obvious. The filled power vacuums in Europe and Asia, the fractured monolith of socialism and most of all the shadow of nuclear war have transformed the context in which we contemplate Soviet ambition. To these commonplaces, we might add the Soviet Union's growing stake in what for it has long been a repugnant international order. The paradox stems not only from the Soviet Union's commitment to economic cooperation with the West and the utility it sees in, say, a stable law of the seas, but also from the disruptions it cannot afford to sponsor if it counts on Western forbearance in the face of its growing global role.<sup>3</sup>

Within this sturdier environment - sturdier because of the obstacles it raises to crude expansionism, not because we have been able to maintain our own mission of checking

Soviet power at every point - the Soviet-American rivalry has now evolved into something less intensive and something more extensive. The elusiveness of opportunity and the distractions of multiple international challenges account for the loss of intensity. The broadening of the rivalry reflects the U.S.S.R.'s developing global vocation, or, to extend Kennan's original notion, it reflects the shift in Soviet preoccupation from the struggle to secure Soviet power against the external world to a quest for a larger place in it.

Détente has been the process by which we come to terms with both circumstances-with both the changing constraints on Soviet power and the changing nature of the threat it poses. It is also the nearest we have to a replacement for the policy (or process) of containment, now that the extension of Soviet dominion has been essentially contained. The new task is to temper the use of its extended power. (A Soviet speaker would say that détente is the process by which his country capitalizes on its growing power to curb American excesses, or the process by which the United States is led to embrace the principle of peaceful coexistence.)

The contest between us continues - that is the essence of peaceful coexistence - but for us, and presumably for the U.S.S.R., détente introduces the new prospect of managing, not merely maintaining, our rivalry. It is an historic opportunity but one with almost insuperable internal tensions. For, on the one hand, we in our rivalry are challenged to collaborate consciously and explicitly in order to moderate the contest; on the other hand, we in our collaboration must cope with the permanent reality of the contest, a reality constantly underscored by global instabilities and constantly heightened by the evolution of the Soviet Union's military power. The delicate task of designing and perhaps even codifying the "rules of the game," if that is what we set out to do in the Moscow agreements of 1972, is continually interrupted by moments of chaos when in Chile,

Angola, Indochina or perhaps Yugoslavia our conflicting interests are reemphasized.

The unhappy consequences of this problem are essentially three, each of which carries its own implicit resolution, though none is within easy reach. The first is the preeminence reserved for the military dimension. It is inevitable and, frankly, desirable that both sides maintain their defenses. Regrettable as it may be, the probable truth is that nuclear weapons, in some rough equilibrium, have kept the peace between us in the past and will be needed to keep it in the future. And the other parts of our military establishment are equally essential, not because the U.S.S.R. is demonstrably eager to sweep across the North German plain at the first opportunity, but because, as the last war in the Middle East demonstrated, events in which the U.S.S.R. has a heavy stake, but over which it has little control, may tempt it to invoke the threat of military intervention.

Still, we both have - or believe we have - an interest in holding these forces to a minimum. Because neither side trusts the other's conviction, however, because the "rules of the game" remain so rudimentary and suspect, and, in these circumstances, because those responsible for national security in both countries demand large margins for error, we move constantly the other way. And the motion becomes our preoccupation: those who see the Soviet side in the arms race in sinister terms judge détente accordingly; those who worry about the dangerous or destabilizing aspects of the arms race base the viability of détente primarily on success in controlling arms. In the process, neither group is coming to grips with the instrumentalism the United States and the Soviet Union each sees in the other's approach to military power.

The first group doubts that the Soviet Union could misunderstand the character and purpose of our military

forces, and is thus led to a heightened mistrust of Soviet motives; as a consequence, it places its faith instead in further arming - even as the soundest avenue to arms control. The second group, preoccupied with the enormous specific problems of negotiating SALT, MBFR, and now the proposed demilitarization of the Indian Ocean, tends to repress the dilemma of mutual U.S. and Soviet misperceptions about the role of force in each other's foreign policy. For ultimately the dilemma can only be dealt with by relating our defense preparations to our arms control efforts; it can only be addressed by weighing the secondary costs in the other side's distorted perceptions of the significance of the way we choose to defend ourselves, the arms we build and the doctrines we formulate. Until both countries make that effort, arms control - whether SALT, MBFR, or other negotiations to follow - will remain a fragmented and unsystematic enterprise that may produce agreements but only marginal and ambiguous progress toward a moderated contest.

The second consequence flows from the first. Because of the central place accorded the military dimension, key aspects of the U.S.S.R.-U.S. relationship are broken down and split from their context. I have just commented on how much the processes of arming and of negotiating arms control become divorced from the basic problem of military power in both sides' perceptions. Similarly, because of the prominence granted traditional security concerns, the natural effects of processes like interdependence are distorted and in their place we substitute a preoccupation with their manipulation - by us for gain, against us we fear to our disadvantage. Finally, and in the long run, the process of restructuring U.S.S.R.-U.S. relations tends to lose its coherence and we end, as in Kissinger's last days, by focusing on specific tension areas that threaten to accentuate East-West conflict or be accentuated by it or, as in the current instance, by concentrating on disembodied elements of the relationship

such as human rights and arms control.

The third consequence - that is, the interruption in the search for more explicit "rules of the game" - follows from the other two. Though we tend to forget it now, relatively concrete patterns of restraint were discussed at the outset of détente. At the time, the two sides consciously set out to reduce the dangerous, extraneous, or unproductive burdens of competition, actually writing some of these restraints into the Basic Principles of United States-Soviet Relations (the document signed at the May 1972 summit). They included the crucial principle of parity - as stated in the Basic Principles neither side would "either directly or indirectly seek unilateral advantage over the other" - an idea most relevant to the strategic arms race, but in the Soviet mind one sanctioning equality in all forms of power. There were others such as the notion of substituting economic interdependence for (our) earlier economic warfare against the Soviet Union and (their) economic autarky, which was again, in implication, written into the Basic Principles. There was also the important concession, on each side's part, that the other's claimed dedication to peaceful coexistence, that is, to restraint in its foreign policy, might now have real meaning. Indeed, the idea of peaceful coexistence was written into the Basic Principles.

Others might be added, derived more from the observer's imagination, but the point is that the search in general was long ago disrupted: parity as a principle fell victim to the widespread suspicion on both sides' part that it was for the other only a momentary indulgence for want of a choice. Interdependence as a principle has been eroded and partially discredited by the politics of linkages; and peaceful coexistence as a principle suffers from the effects of Angola and the 1973 Middle East war.

The dialectical quality of détente, with its

competitive/cooperative essence, makes it hard to revive the search for "rules," for a more explicit *modus vivendi*, for a moderation of means in lieu of agreement over ends. But the search is ultimately the only hope we have of restoring coherence to the quest for a restructured Soviet-American relationship. It includes new and untried standards of behavior like those suggested by Marshall Shulman some years ago - one, the principle of "noninterference by force in processes of internal change," the other, the "right of free access," permitting nations to "compete, not for the control of territory, but for the establishment of mutually beneficial and nonexploitative relations, and thereby for political influence." These are the decisive "rules of the game," for it is they that will tell us how much either side really trusts a moderated contest and wants its advantages.

#### Footnotes

2 In urging that we cast our evaluation of Soviet power more broadly, I am aware that I have slighted considerations that many others feature. I have made no effort to appraise the impact of change within the socialist world on Soviet power; no effort to judge whether Soviet power is diminished by the continued erosion of "proletarian internationalism" beyond Eastern Europe but enhanced by its preservation within Eastern Europe; or whether it is enhanced by the rising influence of communists and their allies beyond the Soviet sphere but diminished by the cost of maintaining its own influence within this sphere. Or, whether the combinations are the opposite (because I do not know and because the judgment is history's). I have not attempted to explore the impact on Soviet power of the conflict with China and of our China diplomacy (because the impact is obvious). Nor have I commented on the power that the Soviet Union derives from our growing bilateral economic cooperation - from the so-called "hostage capital" it possesses or the ready-made lobbies that it inherits (because the leverage flows both ways

and because this is a marginal consideration in the larger scheme of things).

3 If after Angola and the 1973 Middle East War this sounds doubtful, we should not lose sight of the relatively narrow limits within which the Soviet Union acted in both instances, neither case ever being the reckless incursion that many in the West imagined.

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ROBERT LEGVOLD is Associate Professor of Political Science at Tufts University, and during 1977-78 Visiting Associate Professor of Political Science and Acting Associate Director of the Russian Institute at Columbia University.

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# The Rise, Fall and Future of Détente

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*John Lewis Gaddis*



*Nixon meets Brezhnev on June 19, 1973 during the latter's U.S. visit.*

One of the occupational hazards of being a historian is that one tends to take on, with age, a certain air of resigned pessimism. This comes, I think, from our professional posture of constantly facing backwards: it is not cheering to have to focus one's attention on the disasters, defalcations, and miscalculations that make up human history. We are given, as a result, to such plaintive statements as: "Ah, yes, I knew it wouldn't work out," or "I saw it coming all along," or, most often, "Too bad they didn't listen to me."

Such, I am afraid, is the tone we historians have taken in

looking at the last decade or so of Soviet-American relations. Détente, we now tell each other, was not an end to cold war tensions but rather a temporary relaxation that depended upon the unlikely intersection of unconnected phenomena. There had to be, we argue, approximate parity in the strategic arms race, a downplaying of ideological differences, a mutual willingness to refrain from challenging the interests of rivals, an ability to reward restraint when it occurred and to provide inducements to its further development, and the existence of strong, decisive and intelligent leadership at the top in both Washington and Moscow, capable of overriding all of the obstacles likely to be thrown in the path of détente by garbled communications, sullen bureaucracies, or outraged constituencies. To have found all of these things in place at the same time, we maintain, was about as likely as some rare astronomical conjunction of the stars and planets, or perhaps a balanced budget.

As a result, we have tended to see the revival of the cold war as an entirely predictable development rooted in deep and immutable historical forces. Those of us who hedged our bets about the durability of détente can now comfortably pat each other on the back, exchanging statements like: "We were right all along," or "Too bad they don't listen to historians," or "Isn't pessimism fun?"

But if historians are ever going to provide much in the way of usable guidance to policymakers-which is to say, if we are not going to leave the field wide open to the political scientists-then we are going to have to address not only questions of what went wrong, but of what might have been done differently. Were there things that could have been done to avoid the collapse of détente? Might these provide a basis for reconstituting it-perhaps in a more durable form-at some point in the future?

What follows is an attempt to account for the decline of

détente not in terms of historical inevitability-because, beyond death, and perhaps unbalanced budgets, nothing really is inevitable in history-but rather as a failure of strategy from which there are certain things we might learn. The emphasis is on deficiencies in American strategy, not because the United States was solely, or even primarily, responsible for the collapse of détente, but because it is the only strategy we are in a position to do anything about. The Russians will have to learn from their own mistakes, which, as recent events once again confirm, have not been inconsiderable.

First, though, a word about strategy itself. I see it quite simply as the calculated relationship of ends and means, whether in the realm of military, political, economic, ideological or psychological competition. It is a multi-dimensional process that cannot be reduced to, or entirely divorced from, any one of those components. Our own contributions to the failure of détente arose, I will suggest, to a considerable degree from just that failure to view strategy in all of its dimensions-from our tendency, instead, to place its various elements in separate and discrete compartments. If this analysis is correct, then the future of détente-if there is to be one-may well depend in large part upon our ability to recapture some sense of just what strategy is all about in the first place.

## II

As the concept of détente has fallen into disrepute in recent years, it has become fashionable to call for a return to, or a revival of, containment. The implied message of such groups as the Committee on the Present Danger, and of such members of that organization as have been, since 1981, in positions of official responsibility, has been that we should never have abandoned a strategy that recognized so clearly the nature of the Soviet threat, that provided such decisive programs for action, and that thus served to keep the peace

throughout most of the cold war. From the perspective of these observers, the decision to seek détente in the early 1970s was an unwise exercise in wishful thinking, the effect of which was only to shift the signals, in the eyes of Moscow's watchful and ambitious ideologues, from red to yellow to green.<sup>1</sup>

But this assessment reflects a misunderstanding both of containment and of the détente that followed it, for containment never was a consistently applied or universally understood strategy. Like most strategies, it evolved over time and under the pressure of circumstance, to such an extent that its original founder, George F. Kennan, came ultimately to deny paternity when confronted with some of its more exotic manifestations.<sup>2</sup> If one is to understand where the idea of détente came from and what functions it was intended to serve, one must first be aware of how the idea of containment has evolved over the years.

A good place to begin in tracing this evolution is with a proposition that is, or should be, unexceptionable: that strategy can never be divorced from the costs of implementing it. There is an unassailable link between the objectives one seeks and the resources one has with which to seek-between one's ends and one's means. No successful strategy can ignore this relationship; unsuccessful strategies often fail precisely for want of attention to it.

For the policymaker, this linkage normally boils down to one of two options: shall interests be restricted to keep them in line with available resources; or shall resources be expanded to bring them into line with proclaimed interests? Does one allow the perception of limited means to force differentiations between vital and peripheral interests, on the ground that one cannot afford to defend every point against every adversary? Or does one allow the perception of undifferentiated interests to force the expansion of means, on the ground that one

cannot afford, anywhere, to leave flanks exposed?

The history of containment can be written largely in terms of oscillations between these concepts: between the belief that limited means require differentiated interests, on the one hand, and the belief that undifferentiated interests require unlimited means, on the other.<sup>3</sup>

The original strategy of containment, as articulated largely by Kennan and as implemented by the Truman Administration between 1947 and 1949, operated from the presumption that the American capacity to shape events in the world at large was severely limited, both by the fragility of the domestic economy, which could easily slip into an inflationary spiral if spending was not kept under tight control, and by postwar pressures for demobilization, which had resulted in the abrupt dismantling of the wartime military establishment. As a consequence, the Kennan concept of containment was selective regarding interests to be defended—primarily Western Europe, the Eastern Mediterranean and Near East, and the Pacific offshore island chain—regarding the means of defense—primarily the economic rehabilitation of war-devastated economies, with military capabilities effectively restricted to the cautious use of air and naval power—and regarding the nature of the threat itself, which was seen quite precisely as the expansion of Soviet influence, with communism elsewhere in the world a danger only where it was directly and irrefutably under Moscow's control. The idea was to confront our principal adversary in arenas of competition chosen by us, employing means most consistent with the kinds of power we could most feasibly bring to bear.<sup>4</sup>

By early 1950, though, a succession of events—the victory of communism in China, the Soviet development of an atomic bomb, increasing concern about the dangers of piecemeal aggression in peripheral areas—all had contributed to the perception of vulnerable flanks having been left exposed. The

result, in the form of NSC-68, was an expansion of means to fit more broadly defined interests: in the view of Paul Nitze, the principal author of that document, there was no real distinction between what was vital and what was not. Nor was there any reason to think that, through the adoption of Keynesian economic techniques-the use of deficit spending to stimulate the economy-the nation could not afford the means to sustain a strategy of global containment, in which we would be prepared to respond wherever and in whatever way our adversaries acted, without escalation or capitulation.

Korea, of course, provided a quick test of that strategy, and although that conflict did not result in a military defeat, its duration and costs-and particularly the fact that the strategy that governed it seemed to involve relinquishing the initiative, allowing adversaries to determine arenas and instruments of competition-forced yet another reconsideration of containment in Washington. For the incoming Eisenhower Administration, the global threat appeared no less dangerous than it had to the authors of NSC-68; the great difference was that the new President and his colleagues emphatically rejected Keynesian economics. Worried about the prospects of both perpetual deficits and confiscatory taxation, the Eisenhower Administration concentrated on finding ways to make containment work more effectively at less cost.

The result was a contraction of means in the form of a scaling down of conventional forces, together with a proportionately greater reliance on the deterrent effect of nuclear weapons, which, whatever else one might say about them, had the advantage of being relatively cheap. Once again, as with the Kennan strategy, concern about costs had produced selectivity in means, although in this case no contraction of interests. Nuclear weapons seemed to provide a way to defend global commitments at reasonable expense-a way, as John Foster Dulles liked to put it, to choose the time and the nature of our own response, thus denying adversaries the

luxury of determining how and where we would expend our resources.

The problem here, of course, was credibility: could one really expect the United States to initiate the use of nuclear weapons in order to defend such unpromising pieces of real estate as Quemoy and Matsu? Did one not run the risk, by limiting one's means so narrowly, of encouraging once again piecemeal attacks on peripheral flanks, of having one's position gradually eroded by low-level challenges, none of them of sufficient size or gravity to merit nuclear retaliation? Such was the argument John F. Kennedy and his advisers made against the Eisenhower strategy, and, upon coming into office, they reverted to the concept of NSC-68: that means had to be expanded to meet interests. Keynesian economics again came into fashion; budgetary deficits became less of a concern; and the United States embarked upon the strategy of "flexible response," aimed at giving us the capacity to respond to aggression wherever it occurred, at whatever level it occurred.

But just as Korea had exposed the liabilities of NSC-68, so too Vietnam, in ways far more painful and traumatic, revealed the limitations of "flexible response": if one resolved to restrict one's response to nothing more or less than the other side's provocation, did one not then again relinquish the initiative to the other side, leaving it with the ability to make the real decisions as to the commitment and disposition of one's forces? How could one indefinitely sustain such a strategy without wrecking not only the domestic economy, but also the domestic political consensus any government must have in order to function successfully?

It was with this dilemma in mind that the architects of détente began to frame their strategy. Confronted by the necessity of cutting costs without abandoning containment, the Nixon Administration could have done several things:

(1) It could have returned to the early postwar concept of using economic development as a bulwark against communism-but attempts to transfer Marshall Plan solutions to the Third World areas that now seemed at risk had already proved to be unfeasible;

(2) It could have returned to the Eisenhower-Dulles concept of nuclear deterrence-but the Soviet Union had now attained approximate strategic parity with the United States, in part as a result of the distractions of Vietnam, and such an approach could hardly have carried much credibility;

(3) It could have done nothing at all, in the belief that the Russians and their allies would sooner or later overextend and exhaust themselves-but the new Administration was much too sensitive to the fragility of existing power balances to embrace such a passively optimistic course of action.

As it happened, Nixon and Kissinger did none of these things; instead they embraced "détente" as a means of updating and reinvigorating containment. The term had been in use since the early 1960s to connote a relaxation of tensions with the Soviet Union, and although such a relaxation was one part of the new Administration's approach, it would be a considerable oversimplification to say that this was its chief priority.

Rather, détente was a means of maintaining the balance of power in a way that would be consistent with available resources. It was a redefinition of interests to accommodate capabilities. It was, like the Eisenhower strategy, a way to make containment function more efficiently, but through a method at once more ingenious and less risky than the old "massive retaliation" concept.

This method, on the face of it, was breathtakingly simple: containment would be made to work better at less cost by reducing the number of threats to be contained. The Nixon Administration tried to do this in three ways:

First, it sought to contract American interests, thereby lowering the danger of overcommitment. Because limited resources would not permit the defense of all vulnerable points, distinctions would have to be made, once again, between what was vital and what was not. Both Nixon and Kissinger conceived of American interests in classical balance-of-power terms (much as Kennan had): for them, the preferred situation would have been a pentagonal world order, with independent power centers in the United States, the Soviet Union, Western Europe, Japan, and China all balancing one another. Admittedly, the kind of the power these nations could bring to bear was not the same: only two of the five were nuclear superpowers; others, like Western Europe and Japan, were economic giants; China's strength lay in neither the military nor the economic sphere, but in its sheer size and unique ideological position. The point though, Kissinger argued, was that the balance of power did not depend solely on an equilibrium of military strengths: what was required instead was an overall balance among all of the various components of power—a balance that would maintain itself without disproportionately large, and therefore disproportionately exhausting, American efforts.<sup>5</sup>

Second, the new Administration revised its criteria for identifying adversaries. Ideology alone, Nixon and Kissinger insisted, would no longer ensure hostility, because even ideologically antagonistic states could share common objectives in certain situations. By this logic, it might actually be possible to work with some communists to contain others. It was this reasoning that produced, of course, the dramatic reversal of policy toward China, and, as a consequence, an almost overnight contraction in the number of potential enemies to be contained.

Third, the Nixon Administration sought to engage the Soviet Union, for the first time on a sustained basis in the postwar period, in a direct effort to reduce tensions through

diplomacy. These negotiations proceeded, not on the basis that all differences with the Russians could be resolved, but rather on the expectation that they could be managed: that despite competition between the two countries, there remained areas of congruent interest which, if identified, could provide the basis for a more efficient approach to containment by lowering still further the number of threats to be contained. Discussions were to be carried on with a keen sense of the relation between power and diplomacy: it could not be expected that the Russians would make concessions for nothing. Instead, both deterrents and inducements-sticks and carrots-would have to be used, and it was here that the idea of "linkage" came into play. Trade, credits, and technology transfers, it was thought, could be exchanged for Moscow's agreement to put a lid on the strategic arms race, to cooperate in managing crises in the Third World, and most immediately, to help the United States extricate itself gracefully from Vietnam. There was, thus, nothing idealistic about this approach to negotiation with the Russians; rather, it reflected what one would have to say was a remarkably cynical and manipulative view of human nature.

Détente, then, was hardly an abandonment of containment, as its critics have charged. It was, rather, an imaginative effort to accommodate that strategy to existing realities, to maintain that calculated relationship of ends and means that any strategy must have in order to succeed. "We did not consider a relaxation of tensions a concession to the Soviets," Kissinger has recalled. "We had our own reasons for it. We were not abandoning the ideological struggle, but simply trying-tall order as it was-to discipline it by precepts of the national interest." And, again: "Détente defined not friendship but a strategy for a relationship among adversaries."<sup>6</sup>

In a curious way, in fact, the Nixon-Kissinger strategy resembled the original idea of containment as articulated by Kennan during the first years of the cold war. For that

strategy too had sought, by means short of war, to maintain the global balance of power against Soviet expansionism. It had involved as well the association of American interests with a pentagonal world order, the idea of working with some communists to contain others, and the use of negotiations to seek to modify Soviet behavior.<sup>7</sup> In this sense, then, the architects of détente were not only functioning within the spirit of containment in shaping their strategy: they actually brought that strategy back, whether they realized it or not, to much the same point from which it had begun a quarter century before.

### III

In some respects, this strategy of seeking containment by way of détente succeeded remarkably well. The SALT I agreements did limit significant aspects of the strategic arms race. Chronic issues perpetuating cold war tensions in Europe, notably Berlin, were now defused. Détente reversed, with deceptive ease, long-standing patterns of hostility by building a cooperative relationship with the Chinese at the expense of the Russians. Soviet power in the Middle East declined dramatically at a time when the dependence of Western economies on that part of the world was growing. Détente brought the Russians themselves into a position of economic dependence on the West that had not been present before. And, above all, détente ended Washington's myopic fixation with what Kissinger called "a small peninsula on a major continent"<sup>8</sup>-Vietnam-and focused its attention back on more important global concerns. It is no small tribute to the architects of détente-though one should not deny credit as well to the clumsiness of the Russians-that by any index of power other than military, the influence and prestige of the United States compared to that of the Soviet Union was significantly greater at the beginning of the 1980s than it had been a decade earlier.<sup>9</sup>

Despite these achievements, though, détente by 1980 was almost universally regarded as having failed. The Russians had surged ahead of the United States in both strategic and conventional military power, it was argued. They had tightened rather than loosened controls on their own people. They had continued efforts to destabilize Third World areas; they had violated solemn agreements and, of course, most conspicuously, in 1979, they had brutally invaded Afghanistan. If this was containment, critics asked, could appeasement be far behind?

To some extent, these charges reflect a misunderstanding of what détente was all about in the first place. As we have seen, it was never intended entirely to end the arms race, or to eliminate competitions for influence in the Third World, or to serve as an instrument of reform within the Soviet Union, although official hyperbole at times gave that impression in the early 1970s. Rather, it sought to provide mechanisms for managing conflicts among adversaries, thereby lowering the dangers of escalation and overcommitment without at the same time compromising vital interests. Still, the fact that détente had come under such widespread criticism by 1980 suggests that its problems lay deeper than simple misunderstandings over objectives.

I would argue that the failure of détente grew in large part out of its never having been fully implemented: that significant components of that strategy—components critical to its success—were never really put into effect. Let me illustrate this point by discussing three areas: linkage, the military balance, and human rights.

(1) Linkage. The objective here was to try to change Soviet behavior through a process of positive and negative reinforcement: Russian actions consistent with our interests would be rewarded; those of which we disapproved would in some way be punished. But this implied a clear and consistent

view of what American interests were, and of the extent to which Soviet behavior either enhanced or undercut them. That clear vision, in turn, implied central control over the linkage process: one could not divide authority and still expect coherent strategy.

But division of authority is precisely what occurred. The late Senator Henry Jackson and his congressional colleagues torpedoed the 1972 Soviet-American trade agreement by requiring increased rates of Jewish emigration before credits and most-favored nation treatment would be provided—this despite the fact that the agreement itself had been intended as a reward for Soviet cooperation on Berlin, SALT, the Middle East and Vietnam. Later on, others outside the Administration took it upon themselves to decide where in the Third World the Russians should have shown restraint in return for the favors we had provided them, or to what extent they should have cut back on military expenditures, or what internal changes they would have to make in order for the negotiating process to continue.

Now it is probable that the Administration overestimated from the beginning what linkage could accomplish. The Russians made it quite clear that they would feel free to continue competition in Third World areas; moreover, as Kissinger later acknowledged at least with respect to Vietnam,<sup>10</sup> the Administration may have exaggerated its degree of control in such areas in the first place. Still, a final assessment on the principle of linkage cannot be made because the Administration was never allowed to define precisely what was to be linked to what, or to deliver the rewards it had promised in return for cooperative behavior.

(2) The military balance. Détente was, as we have seen, an approach to containment based on the perception of diminishing military means, these having declined as a result of the Vietnam War. The idea had been to attempt to

constrain the Russians without further constraining ourselves. In the field of strategic weapons, Nixon and Kissinger accomplished their objectives with remarkable success: they managed to convince the Russians that they needed a SALT agreement more than we did, despite the fact that the agreement actually negotiated limited weapons programs only Moscow was likely to pursue. What is not often recognized about SALT I is that Nixon and Kissinger had intended to couple it with a military buildup of their own in areas not restricted by the agreement-notably, the B-1 bomber, the Trident submarine, and the MX and cruise missiles.<sup>11</sup>

But again, this could not be done without congressional approval, and once more the problem of divided authority came into play. Senator Jackson again imposed his priorities on the negotiating process, this time with a demand for across-the-board numerical equivalence in strategic weapons systems, despite the fact that the military had never sought, and Congress would never have authorized, building programs to reach those equivalencies. Vietnam had brought anti-military sentiment on Capitol Hill to an unprecedented intensity; there grew out of this a corrosive skepticism toward all government pronouncements on defense needs-including its warnings, now known to have been conservative, on the extent of the post-SALT Soviet military buildup. As a result, strategic modernization programs that Nixon, Kissinger, and Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird had intended to accompany the SALT I agreement were seriously delayed; more seriously, in order to get even these scaled-back appropriations through Congress, the Administration had to make significant cutbacks in conventional forces as well.

The consequence of this is something still not fully appreciated to this day: that the Nixon and Ford Administrations presided over the most dramatic reallocation of resources from defense to domestic purposes in modern

American history. Defense spending as a percentage of total national budget had dropped from 44 percent at the time Richard Nixon took office in 1969 to 24 percent by the time Gerald Ford left it in 1977. Defense spending as a percentage of gross national product went from 8.7 percent in 1969 to 5.2 percent in 1977.<sup>12</sup> To be sure, some reduction in military spending would have occurred in any event as the Vietnam War came to an end. But reductions on this scale clearly exceeded what the two Administrations wanted, or what, in retrospect, can be considered to have been wise, in view of what we now know of Soviet military spending during the same period. If, in the case of linkage, the carrots Washington had intended to use to make *détente* work had been held back, now, in the military field, so too had been the sticks.

(3) Human rights. One of the grounds upon which the strategy of *détente* was most criticized was that it ignored the moral dimension of foreign policy. The United States could not expect to have its views prevail in the world, the argument ran, if those views were at variance with the deepest and most fundamental principles for which the nation was supposed to stand. Only by abandoning strategies based solely on considerations of power could the United States achieve the respect it needed both at home and abroad if its policies were to succeed.

Once again, though, this charge that *détente* proceeded without reference to moral questions reflected a poor understanding of what that strategy actually involved. For despite the seemingly cold-blooded geopolitical orientation of the Nixon-Kissinger foreign policy, and despite some obvious moral lapses on the part of that doctrine's chief practitioner, the strategy of *détente* did not ignore moral issues. It did, however, insist upon the priority of order over justice. Without some framework of order, Kissinger repeatedly maintained, echoing the theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, there could be no justice: that quality tends not to flourish in

conditions of war, anarchy or revolution. Accordingly, the priority for détente was to build a stable international order within which the security interests of great states could be satisfied; that having been achieved, then the claims of justice might, for once, have some chance of being honored.

The only problem, as Kissinger recognized, was that "stability" was not the kind of concept to which passions would rally.<sup>13</sup> When it became clear that, from the viewpoint of the Administration, "stability" required prolonging the American involvement in Vietnam, or attempting to overthrow a constitutionally elected government in Chile, or consorting with repressive dictators on both the right and the left, then cries of outrage began to be heard, from both right and left at home. It is an indication of the potency of this appeal that both Ronald Reagan and Jimmy Carter could invoke the human rights issue during the 1976 campaign-albeit from different perspectives and with different targets in mind-and that this could become, once Carter took office in 1977, the major area in which he sought to distinguish his Administration from the one that had gone before. The opportunity to approach justice by way of order, like the attempts to approach containment by way of linkage and by way of increasing American military power, never really got off the ground.

Clearly, Nixon and Kissinger must bear some of the responsibility for all of this. Despite earnest and, on the whole, candid efforts to explain what was in fact a sophisticated and far-sighted strategy, they never really succeeded in putting it across, whether to their own bureaucracies, the Congress, or the public as a whole. To a considerable extent, their method undercut itself: they relied on secrecy and tight control to achieve major breakthroughs on China, Vietnam and arms control, yet that same shielding of the policy process from public scrutiny was seen by many as having got the nation into Vietnam in the first place and,

for that matter, into Watergate as well. Secrecy, in itself, is not necessarily a bad thing. But unwise things done in secret can later come back to haunt those who would seek to do wise things in the same way.

Similarly, Nixon, Ford and Kissinger led the public to expect too much from their initiatives. Although they never claimed that détente would end all difficulties with the Russians, they did participate in the conclusion of two sweeping but meaningless agreements that seemed to imply something very much like that. I have in mind here the statement on "Basic Principles" to govern Soviet-American relations, signed at the Moscow Summit in 1972, and the Helsinki Accords of 1975. No one who knew anything about the Soviet Union should have expected that these agreements to refrain from seeking unilateral advantages or to observe human rights would actually be kept. But the White House incautiously agreed to them, thereby laying the foundation for future arguments that one could not expect the Russians to keep any agreements under any circumstances.

It must be said as well, though, that détente also ran into an unusual amount of plain bad luck. It was unfortunate that the strategy had to be put across in the atmosphere of mistrust and cynicism that followed the Vietnam War, that Nixon's own lack of scruple should have brought the Watergate crisis down upon his Administration just as détente was getting under way, that the Russians should have chosen the succeeding years to test the limits of détente in a series of provocative maneuvers ranging from Angola to Afghanistan, and that it should have fallen to the Carter Administration, which, although it favored détente, at no point clearly understood the strategy that lay behind it, to deal with them. Life is unfair.

Any strategy conducted on the basis of diminishing resources, whether at the level of geopolitics or below, will involve

making distinctions between vital and peripheral interests, between mortal and simply bothersome threats. One cannot defend all points against all challenges. But this principle of concentrating one's resources and using them economically does have the disadvantage of leaving flanks exposed. If one misjudges the interests at stake or the threats that confront them, then one risks having one's position undermined in sudden and dangerous ways. A great premium is placed, therefore, upon the accurate assessment of defensive requirements, and of the risks posed to them. Discriminating judgments have to substitute for indiscriminate deployments, and that, given the American constitutional system, is a lot to expect of any Administration, whether Democratic or Republican, liberal or conservative, moral or amoral.

#### IV

Since 1981 we have reverted to the idea of making containment work through deployment rather than discrimination. The Reagan Administration has rejected détente, with its emphasis on distinctions between interests, on gradations of threat, and on multidimensional responses. Instead we have returned to an earlier form of containment: one that assumes virtually unlimited resources for defense and little real prospect of settling differences through negotiation until what Dean Acheson used to like to call "situations of strength" have been created.

Few serious observers of the international scene would have questioned the need, in 1981, for substantial increases in defense appropriations-indeed, it is worth recalling that the Pentagon budget actually bottomed out during the last years of the Carter Administration, and was already on its way up at the time Reagan took office. Still, the current leadership has stressed defense over diplomacy in its dealings with the Soviet Union to a greater extent than would have been the case had Carter won reelection; one would, in fact, have to go

back to the late Truman Administration to find a comparable emphasis upon the accumulation of military hardware and a corresponding degree of skepticism regarding negotiations.

To be sure, Kremlin leaders have done little to allay this skepticism. Their own military buildup, until very recently, has proceeded at an alarming rate, even allowing for the characteristic Russian tendency to "overcompensate" in such matters. They have maintained an opportunistic policy of attempting to exploit Western weaknesses wherever possible, often without regard to what concrete gains this might bring them. The recent Korean airliner incident demonstrates once again their chronic inability to anticipate the effects their own actions have on the rest of the world: to the extent that cohesion exists among the Soviet Union's adversaries, it is due, one suspects, more to Moscow's belligerent and at the same time querulous behavior than to Washington's diplomatic skill.

Still, the ineptitude of one's adversary provides little greater long-term protection against the defects in one's own strategy than does a related phenomenon that has benefited the Reagan Administration until quite recently: the fact that, compared to its immediate predecessors, it has been unusually fortunate in not having to face hard choices, either at home or abroad. It is worth examining these shortcomings, because they could become significant if that good luck-or the Kremlin leadership's habit of periodically shooting itself in the foot-should at some point run out.

(1) First, and most important, the Reagan Administration has embraced a defense strategy based on unlimited resources without providing reliable mechanisms for generating those resources. Financing a defense buildup through the economic stimulus of deficit spending-"military Keynesianism," one might call it-was a plausible enough approach during the Truman and Kennedy Administrations, when inflation was

negligible and there was still some foreseeable prospect of balancing the budget. But the current economic climate is very different. For even though the Reagan Administration has brought inflation under control-with a considerable assist from Chairman Paul Volcker of the Federal Reserve Board, one might add-it has done so by tolerating the highest levels of unemployment we have had since the Great Depression, a policy that may prove difficult to sustain over time. And even if unemployment does decline, as it slowly seems to be doing, there remains the problem of massive budget deficits which seem likely to keep interest rates high, and thus to endanger recovery, for years to come.

To be sure, the Administration has attempted to apply to this problem its own backhanded version of Keynesianism-supply-side economics. But where previous flirtations with Keynesianism had involved expanding the budgetary pie for everyone, supply-side economics seemed to imply vast increases in the military's share and vast cutbacks in everything else, including curiously enough taxes, with the balance not to be made right until some distant day when the presumed benefits of this procedure would, as Mr. David Stockman inaptly put it, "trickle down."<sup>14</sup> Whatever its effect on the domestic economy, this was not an approach well calculated to build the public support that will be necessary if high levels of defense spending are to continue for very long.

And yet, there seems to prevail in the higher circles of this Administration the belief that if only we "stay the course" on defense spending, we can ultimately force the Russians to bankrupt their economy in the effort to keep up. If the historical record is any guide, we should be wary of this vulture-like argument: predictions of a Soviet economic collapse have been circulating since 1917 and it has not happened yet, any more than Moscow's own persistent predictions of our impending economic demise have come true.<sup>15</sup> A government's ability to tolerate discomfort in the

name of defense depends, in large part, upon the extent of its authority over its own citizens, and there is no reason to expect, soon, a concentration of power in Washington that would rival Moscow's in that respect.

We are stuck, then, with the fact that there is a direct relationship between the national security and the national economy. If one appears aimed at the moon while the other seems headed in the opposite direction, a certain imbalance results that is not likely to produce a stable domestic consensus. Of all the postwar Presidents, the one who would have been most appalled by the Reagan Administration's emphasis on military spending would have been the most military of all of them-Dwight Eisenhower. For it was Eisenhower's fundamental conviction, held with rock-like tenacity, that one could not have a healthy defense without a healthy economy: the two went hand in hand, and if seeking one meant sacrificing the other, then the whole game was lost. "We must not destroy," he said more than once, "what it is we are seeking to defend."<sup>16</sup>

(2) Second, the Reagan Administration, in its zeal to accumulate new weapons, has been slow to seek opportunities to make containment work through negotiation. Defense spending does not take place in a vacuum: in calculating its costs, one should take into account not only the immediate expenses involved in research, development, production and deployment, but also the probable response of the other side, which may make further expenditures necessary at a later date. One thinks of our decision, more than a decade ago, to place multiple warheads on our land-based missiles: the Russians' determination to follow our lead, and the fears we then developed about the vulnerability of those very missiles, led first to plans for deploying the cumbersome and costly MX, and more recently to a new conceptual breakthrough-the "Midgetman" single-warhead missile.<sup>17</sup> Might it not have been to our advantage to have

sought a negotiated ban on multiple-warhead land-based missiles in the first place? Diplomacy, it is too often forgotten, can also be a means of achieving security-often at less cost and with fewer unfortunate side effects than a crash defense buildup.

But what is there to negotiate about? How can we trust the Russians to abide by agreements reached, given their dismal record in the past? In fact, if one looks at agreements which were in the Russians' own best interests to keep, such as the Limited Test Ban Treaty or SALT I, their record is much better than it has been on such things as the 1972 "Basic Principles" statement, or the Helsinki Accords. Agreements among great nations are only as good as the interests that lie behind them. No one should expect treaties permanently to constrain sovereign states against their will; the trick, rather, is to base such agreements upon specific areas of overlapping interest.

Such areas do exist, most obviously in the field of arms control. Both sides have found it to their advantage to observe the provisions of the unratified SALT II treaty: one wonders what possible disadvantage there could now be to going ahead and ratifying it? Why not proceed with the negotiation of a comprehensive Test Ban Treaty? Why not investigate opportunities to reduce both theater and tactical nuclear forces in Europe, perhaps in connection with the "no-early-use" strategy that progress in conventional weaponry has now made "thinkable"?<sup>18</sup> And yet, the Reagan Administration confines its efforts to a series of separately pursued and so far unproductive negotiations on strategic and theater nuclear forces. Despite recent indications of greater flexibility in these talks, it still does not appear to have worked out a consistent position-how does one reconcile the "build-down" concept with deploying the MX in existing silos, for example, since the "build-down" would appear to require destroying two older warheads for each new but highly vulnerable one?

Nor does the Administration seem to have grasped the possibility that broadly conceived and reliably verifiable arms control agreements, even those requiring substantial concessions on the part of ourselves and our allies, might well purchase greater security at less cost than the current tendency to deploy first, and then hope for negotiations afterwards.

Where it reflects the interests of both sides, and where it is verifiable, arms control works. It is not disarmament. It may not even involve arms reduction. But a framework of agreement between the superpowers can slow down and even stabilize the arms race; if nothing else, it can enhance each side's ability to monitor what the other has. That in itself is sufficient reason to pursue the opportunities, with greater vigor and on a broader scale than has been done up to now.

(3) Third, the Reagan Administration has allowed support for containment to erode both at home and abroad by taking too casual an attitude toward the dangers of nuclear war. One of the arguments frequently cited against arms control-and against the whole détente strategy, for that matter-is that it induces complacency among one's own citizens and among allies overseas. But if the past three years have demonstrated anything at all, it is that the reverse is also true: overzealousness in the pursuit of defense can induce fears, not so much of the enemy himself, but of the very means by which one is trying to deter him. The purpose of a deterrent, Michael Howard has wisely commented, is both to discourage and to reassure: to discourage one's adversary from aggression, and to reassure one's own population and allies about their safety.<sup>19</sup>

The Reagan Administration's limited interest in arms control, together with its early pronouncements on fighting limited nuclear wars, firing nuclear warning shots, and do-it-yourself backyard civil defense-the "three feet of earth" theory-all of

this has succeeded in undermining reassurance to a dangerous degree. It has also validated, once again, what historians will recognize as the Law of Unintended Consequence: the tendency of governments to bring about, through their own lack of foresight, precisely what it is they most seek to avoid.

For there now exists, both in this country and abroad, an anti-nuclear movement of unprecedented proportions. The strength of this campaign goes far deeper than the few conspicuous protesters who chain themselves to the gates of nuclear weapons plants; nor does it depend upon the immediate fortunes of the freeze movement. A revulsion against the very idea of nuclear deterrence is well underway, and if the Administration does not make progress soon on arms control, it is likely to see the initiative taken away from it both here and in Europe in ways it may regret, and which may not always be in the national interest. For it is the very weapons that are now the object of so much concern that have played a major role in keeping the peace for almost four decades; it would be tragic to see their deterrent role curtailed in the name of peace because a national administration did not know how to make use of them in that capacity without appearing to relish war.

These lapses on the part of the Reagan Administration reflect, it seems to me, a mono-dimensional approach to national security policy: they reveal a tendency to define interests and threats in chiefly military terms, with little or no awareness of the political, economic, or psychological components of strategy. As a result, this Administration runs the risk of generating something of the same antimilitary backlash that made the conduct of our affairs so difficult in the early 1970s. Containment, if it is to be accomplished successfully and sustained over the long term, is going to have to involve a keener awareness of these nonmilitary dimensions of strategy than the current Administration, to this date, has shown.

Containment will no doubt remain the central focus of our strategy in world affairs for some years to come. The Soviet Union shows no signs of contenting itself with the existing distribution of power in the world; experience certainly should have taught us by now that our capacity to moderate Moscow's ambitions by any means other than some fairly crude combination of sticks and carrots is severely limited. Still, there are a few things we might learn from our experience with containment to this point; things any future administration might do well to keep in mind as it seeks to devise strategies for dealing with the Russians.

(1) One is precisely how little we have learned from the past. We have shifted back and forth between the polarities of limited means and unlimited interests-between the risks of discrimination and the excesses that flow from its absence-having to learn each time the problems with each approach, oblivious, for the most part, to the possibility that we might do better with less dramatic swings of the geopolitical pendulum. Has the time not come to attempt to build into our policy-formulation process some sense of what has gone before, and at least of what elementary conclusions might be derived from it? There are various ways in which this might be accomplished: one might establish a permanent nonpartisan staff for the National Security Council, the only key policymaking body in this field that does not now have one; one might draw in a more formal and systematic capacity than is now done upon the expertise of retired presidents, national security advisors, secretaries of state and other experienced "elder" statesmen; one might even take the drastic step of encouraging high officials actually to read history themselves from time to time. The point would be to get away from our amnesiac habit of periodically re-inventing the wheel; after all, the general shape of that device is reasonably well understood and may not need to be re-

thought with each revolution.

(2) A second and related priority should be to insulate our long-term external concerns from our short-term internal preoccupations: no single deficiency in our approach to strategy and diplomacy causes us more grief than its subordination to the volatile and irresponsible whims of domestic politics. As a historian, and therefore something of a skeptic about the possibilities of human perfection, I cannot be very optimistic about achieving this. Indeed, the trend, in recent years, has been in just the other direction, toward the more frequent and more flagrant intrusion of politics into national security issues, and toward longer and longer periods of time required to repair the damage. No other great nation in the history of the world has fallen into the curious habit of re-thinking its foreign policy at quadrennial intervals to meet the anticipated desires of a particular small and snowy northern province, or one chiefly noted for the production of corn and pigs. A compression and rationalization of our presidential selection procedures would help remove these temptations; so too would a return to the tradition of bipartisan consultation on controversial foreign policy questions, a direction in which the Reagan Administration quite wisely is moving. What is really needed, though, is a change in our standards of political decorum: if we could get to the stage at which it would be as unacceptable to play politics with critical issues of foreign and national security policy as it has now become to joke about women and minorities from public platforms, then we would be well along the way toward solving this problem. But not until then.

(3) At the same time, there should be a greater and more deliberate effort made to relate national security policy to the national economy. We should never again succumb to the illusion that means are infinite, and that therefore the ends of strategy can be formulated quite independently of them.

Means in fact will always be limited in some way; the art of strategy consists largely of adjusting desirable ends to fit available means. The Vietnam experience ought to have taught us that no nation can sustain a defense policy that wrecks its economy or deranges its polity; we need to recapture Eisenhower's insight that there is no more critical foundation for national strength than the national consensus that underlies it.

(4) We could also learn to be more precise about just what it is we are out to contain. Is the adversary the Soviet Union? Is it the world communist movement? Is it the great variety of non-communist Marxist movements that exist throughout the world? Surely in an era in which we rely upon the world's most populous communist state to help contain the world's most powerful communist state, in an era when some of our best friends are socialists, there can be little doubt about the answer to this question. And yet, as our current policy in Central America and the Caribbean shows, we persist in lumping together the Soviet Union, international communism, and non-communist Marxism in the most careless and imprecise manner-to what end? It is a fundamental principle of strategy that one should never take on any more enemies than necessary at any given point. But we seem to do it all the time.

(5) It follows from this that we could also make greater use than we do of our friends. Most other nations heartily endorse our goal of a world safe for diversity; few, given the choice, would align themselves with the quite different goals of the Russians. Nationalism, in short, works for us rather than against us. And yet, we seem to go out of our way, at times, to alienate those who would cooperate in the task of containment. The blank check we have extended to the Israelis over the years-however useful in producing occasional grudging concessions on their part-has nonetheless impaired our ability to make common cause with the other nations of

the Middle East whose interests we largely share: that the Russians have been able to take so little advantage of this situation is more a testimony to their ineptitude than to our wisdom. Our support for Taiwan for years prevented any exploitation of the Sino-Soviet split, and to this day retains the potential for weakening our very important relationship with mainland China. Our attitude toward white minority regimes in southern Africa has not always been best calculated to win us influence in the rest of that continent, most of whose leaders emphatically share our desire to keep the Russians out. Recently we even went out of our way to alienate some of our closest European allies by imposing a set of sanctions on the Soviet Union that no one thought would work, while at the same time, and for the sake of a domestic constituency, withholding another more potent set of sanctions (on grain) that might have. Containment would function more efficiently if others shared some of the burden of containing. And yet, we sometimes seem to make that difficult.

(6) Another trick that would make containment work better would be to take advantage, to a greater extent than we have, of the Russians' chronic tendency to generate resistance to themselves. This is one reason why Moscow has not been able to exploit the opportunities we have handed them in the Middle East and Africa; it is why they have such difficulty consolidating opportunities they have taken advantage of themselves, as in Afghanistan. It is a cliché, by now, to describe the Soviet Union as the last great imperial power; what is not a cliché, but rather one of the more reliable "lessons" to be drawn from the admittedly imprecise discipline of history, is that imperial powers ultimately wind up containing themselves through the resistance they themselves provoke. Nothing could be clearer than that this is happening to the Russians today, and yet we seem not to take it much into account in framing our policies. We should.

(7) It would also help if we would cool the rhetoric. The current Administration is hardly the first to engage in verbal overkill, but the frequency and vividness of its excesses in this regard surely set some kind of record. The President has informed us that Jesus-not Kennan-was the original architect of containment.<sup>20</sup> The Vice President has recently criticized not only Soviet but Tsarist Russia for arrested cultural development, pointing out (with some historic license) that that country took no part in the Renaissance, the Reformation or the Enlightenment;<sup>21</sup> this would appear to be the diplomatic equivalent of saying: "Yeah, and so's your old man!" These are childish, but not innocent, pleasures. They demean those who engage in them, and therefore dignify the intended target. They obscure the message: how many people will recall Ambassador Charles Lichenstein's eloquent and amply deserved condemnation of the Korean airliner atrocity once he had coupled it with his offer to stand on the docks, waving goodbye to the United Nations? That the Russians themselves have long been masters of the art of invective is no reason to try to emulate them; this is one competition in which we can safely allow their preeminence.

(8) Finally, and in this connection, we should keep in mind the ultimate objectives of containment. That strategy was and still should be the means to a larger end, not an end in itself. It should lead to something; otherwise, like any strategy formulated without reference to policy, it is meaningless. There is a tendency in this country to let means become ends, to become so preoccupied with processes that one loses sight of the goal those processes were supposed to produce. We have been guilty of that to some extent with containment; we have missed in the past and are probably today still missing opportunities to manage, control, and possibly resolve many of our disagreements with the Russians, apparently out of fear that such contacts might weaken the public's resolve to support containment. But that is getting things backward. The

original idea of containment was ultimately to facilitate, not impede, the attainment of a less dangerous international order. It would not be a bad idea-from the point of view of everybody's interests-to get back to that concept.

## VI

It would not be inappropriate, in thinking about these problems, to recall the story of Dr. Samuel Johnson and the dog that walked on its hind legs. What was remarkable, the great man pointed out, was not that the dog walked badly that way, but that it was able to do it at all.

Given all the impediments that exist in our society to the rational formulation of strategy, what is remarkable is not that we have done less well than we might have these past three and a half decades, but that we have done it at all. Containment has, on the whole, been a successful strategy, despite all its imprecisions, inefficiencies, and inconsistencies. One reason for this is that we have been fortunate in our antagonists-the Russians have been even more inept than we in seeking to promote their interests in the world.

Still, that is no excuse not to do better. We really ought not to go on framing long-term national security policy in response to short-term domestic political expedients, crossing our fingers each time in the hope that the result will relate, in some way, to the external realities we confront, and to our own long-term interests. We ought not to neglect, to the extent that we do, the relationship between national security and the national economy. We ought not to make unnecessary difficulties for ourselves through imprecision about what it is we are containing, through the impediments we place in the way of those who would join with us in that enterprise, and through our absent-mindedness about the ultimate objective that strategy is supposed to produce.

All of these things fall under the category of what Clausewitz, a century and a half ago, called "friction"-the problems an army, or a nation, inadvertently creates for itself by implementing what may be a perfectly good strategy in a short-sighted, haphazard, or poorly thought-out way. They make the difference between doing something well and just doing it, like Dr. Johnson's dog.

Détente, as conceived by Nixon and Kissinger in the early 1970s, was a well-intentioned effort to minimize this kind of friction: to make containment work more efficiently by taking a more precise view of what it was we were trying to contain, and by enlisting the aid of others in doing the containing. The fact that it failed says less about the flaws in that strategy than about the imperfect way in which it was executed-and that, in turn, raises an interesting dilemma. For if the evidence of Korea and Vietnam tells us anything at all, it is that this country will not support a foreign policy based on containment that disregards. But if we are to minimize costs, we will need to have a strategy, and that implies the need for discrimination, consistency, and central direction: qualities not easily incorporated into the American political system.

The task, then, will be to reconcile the division of authority our constitutional structure demands with the concentration of authority our position in world affairs requires. It will not be an easy task, to be sure, but it is not an entirely unfamiliar one either. We have managed it in the past, though at about the level of competency of Dr. Johnson's dog. One would hope, with experience, that we could learn to do it more gracefully, with less upsetting of furniture and shattering of crockery along the way. But better to do it awkwardly than not to do it at all.

1 See, for example, Norman Podhoretz, *The Present Danger*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1980.

2 See George F. Kennan, *Memoirs: 1925-1950*, Boston: Little, Brown, 1967, p. 367.

3 An expanded version of this argument can be found in John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar National Security Policy*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1982.

8 Henry Kissinger, *The White House Years*, Boston: Little, Brown, 1979, p. 1049.

13 Henry A. Kissinger, "Central Issues of American Foreign Policy," in Kissinger, *American Foreign Policy*, p. 94.

14 William Greidner, "The Education of David Stockman," *Atlantic*, December, 1981, p. 47.

15 See, on this point, Seweryn Bialer and Joan Afferica, "Reagan and Russia," *Foreign Affairs*, Winter 1982/83, p. 263.

16 Eisenhower press conference, November 11, 1953, *Public Papers of the Presidents: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1953*, Washington: G.P.O., 1960, p. 760.

21 Bush speech to the Austrian Foreign Policy Association, Vienna, September 21, 1983, as quoted in *The Washington Post*, September 22, 1983.

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JOHN LEWIS GADDIS is Distinguished Professor of History at Ohio University. This article is adapted from his recent book, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy*, and from a paper prepared for the Aspen Institute Preparatory Group on East-West Relations.

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# What Went Wrong With Arms Control?

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*Thomas C. Schelling*



[Carter](#) and [Brezhnev](#) signing SALT II treaty, 18 June 1979, in Vienna.

Arms control has certainly gone off the tracks. For several years what are called arms negotiations have been mostly a public exchange of accusations; and it often looks as if it is the arms negotiations that are driving the arms race. It is hard to escape the impression that the planned procurement of 50 MX missiles (at latest count) has been an obligation imposed by a doctrine that the end justifies the means—the end something called arms control, and the means a demonstration that the United States does not lack the determination to match or exceed the Soviets in every category of weapons.

Despite the inflamed rhetoric on strategic weapons, there has not been much substance behind the ill will that followed détente. Nobody seriously believes that either side's capacity to retaliate after receiving a nuclear attack is, or is going to be, in sufficient doubt to make preemption a preferred choice in any imaginable crisis. Détente survived a U.S. war against an ally of the Soviet Union in Southeast Asia; it did not survive the Soviet war against Afghanistan. But the reprisals were mostly attempts to deny athletes, bread grains and pipeline equipment to the Soviet Union; one attempt failed and a second was reversed for the benefit of American farmers.

Poland became an issue, but of all the possible Soviet responses to an unacceptable condition in Poland the one that ensued was the gentlest that anyone could have seriously contemplated.

Furthermore, we have what ought to be an important source of reassurance, a "confidence-building" experience: 40 years of nuclear weapons without nuclear war. That certainly challenges any notion that nuclear war is inevitable. This is a reassurance that some advocates of disarmament do not like to have voiced, fearful that it might lead to complacency. But I want national leaders in a crisis to be complacent in the knowledge that nuclear war is so unlikely that initiating it is never prudent.

I see no reason to believe, as the Palme Commission concluded two years ago, that the threat of nuclear war is more ominous today than it has been for many years. I know of no way to reassure people who disagree, but there is no prudential wisdom in exaggerating the danger of nuclear war by an order of magnitude, as both sides of the political spectrum in this country have been doing for half a dozen years.

With those remarks as prelude, what follows is my interpretation of what has happened to strategic arms control over the past 30 years. I shall argue that the thinking on arms control was on the right track, and was effective, from the late 1950s to the early 1970s, culminating in the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty of 1972, but that things have derailed since. Maybe that loss of direction was natural and expectable, even inevitable. Even so, it is worth examining what went wrong.

## II

The modern era of strategic arms control dates from the late 1950s. In 1957 the Gaither Committee examined the adequacy of U.S. strategic weapons and their deployment, and became alarmed at the vulnerability of the retaliatory force to surprise attack. Bombers were clustered, unprotected, on a few bases. Studies showed that Soviet bombers, too few to be identified by the Distant Early Warning Line, might be sufficient to destroy or disable our fragile aircraft, eliminating the prospect of the reprisal that was supposed to deter the attack in the first place. Announcement in 1957 of a Soviet flight test of an ICBM precursor further dramatized the vulnerability of a retaliatory force that offered only a small number of soft targets. The seriousness of bomber vulnerability was evidenced by the limited airborne alert during the last years of the Eisenhower Administration maintained to keep at least a small force safely in the air at all times.

It was agreed by President Eisenhower and Secretary Khrushchev that East-West talks on "measures to safeguard against surprise attack" should take place in the fall of 1958. It was not clear what they had in mind, but with a commitment to negotiations, the U.S. government had to collect its thoughts. A high-level group of officials met regularly and ultimately educated itself that a surprise attack was the central problem of strategic-force vulnerability.

The Geneva negotiations were to involve five participants from the West and five from the East; representatives of Canada, Great Britain, France and the Federal Republic of Germany gathered in Washington in the fall of 1958. By the time the team went to Geneva, after a few weeks of discussion in Washington, strategic-retaliatory-force vulnerability had been identified as the surprise-attack problem, and indeed as the problem of nuclear war.

Nothing came of the negotiations on surprise attack (November-December 1958). But the occasion was crucial in identifying what was to become pivotal in arms negotiations for the next decade and, more important, in the design of strategic forces.

The large, above-ground, soft, slow-to-fuel Atlas missile was abandoned in favor of a new ICBM (intercontinental ballistic missile), dubbed Minuteman for its ability to fly instantly on warning. The navy's strategic future was assured with the development of the untargetable Polaris submarine. Secure, survivable forces were identified with what came to be called "strategic stability." Thus, in the event, the vulnerability problem was temporarily solved by unilateral action without any boost from arms control.

The idea that both sides could favor each other's strategic-force security was dramatized by Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara's testimony to Congress that he would prefer the Soviet Union to invest in secure, hardened underground missile silos, rather than soft sites above ground, because the latter both invited and threatened preemptive attack while the former would encourage patience in a crisis.

Two technological developments of the 1960s came to endanger this strategic-force stability: one was ABM, the other MIRV. Antiballistic missiles at that time were thought of primarily as for area defense of populations, not for point

defense of military targets, and were seen as potentially destabilizing. What was worrisome was that ABMs might offer a strong advantage to a first strike. The idea was that ABMs might work better when alert than when taken by surprise, might work poorly against a prepared attack but well against a damaged retaliatory force.

There was also the prospect that burgeoning defenses would require indefinite enlargement of the retaliatory force. Thus ABM systems deployed in both countries would make preemptive war more likely and the arms race more expensive. It was this conviction that led the Johnson Administration in 1966 to propose negotiations to forestall deployment of ballistic missile defenses.

The ABM treaty signed in 1972 had one characteristic that was incompatible with its philosophy but was probably a political necessity. The treaty was intended to preserve the efficacy of retaliatory forces by keeping them from being degraded by enemy defenses. Human and economic resources were hostages to be left unprotected. But ballistic missile defenses could also be used to protect military hard targets, indeed were generally thought superior in that mode of deployment. Land-based, fixed-site missiles were difficult and expensive to protect passively, by hardening or dispersing silos, while active defenses might have been cost-effective and compatible with the philosophy of the treaty, as long as there was a clear distinction between the technology of defending military targets and that of the forbidden defense of human resources. (This was acknowledged in the treaty provision allowing a very limited local active defense, a provision that in the end the United States chose not to take advantage of.)

I have always supposed that the disallowance of local hard-point defense was partly due to the difficulty of guarding against upgrading, either surreptitiously or upon abrogation

of the treaty, but also partly for political simplicity. It might have been hard to convince the American public, which had its own reasons for disliking an ABM system, that exceptions should be made for air force assets but not for people.

The other development of the 1960s that threatened stability was the multiple independently targetable reentry vehicle (MIRV). A missile with ten independently targetable warheads is a replica of an air base with ten aircraft. If it takes one weapon to destroy ten weapons (or two or three to destroy them with confidence), MIRVed but targetable forces equal in size are reciprocally vulnerable to an attack by only a fraction of an enemy's force. (For retaliatory forces that cannot be targeted, things that are hidden or mobile and cannot be found on short notice, the MIRV is merely an economical way of packaging warheads.)

There was no serious effort to constrain MIRVs until many years after a ban on ABMs became an objective in the Johnson Administration. The SALT II treaty signed in 1979 attempted to limit not only numbers of missiles but numbers allowed to be MIRVed.

That 15-year period from 1957 to 1972 is a remarkable story of intellectual achievement transformed into policy. Three books appeared in 1961 that epitomized an emerging consensus on what strategic arms control should be about. Each was a group effort, and each stimulated discussion even while being written. During the summer of 1960, Hedley Bull's manuscript, *The Control of the Arms Race*, was circulated by the Institute for Strategic Studies in preparation for that institute's second annual conference. That same summer a study group met on the outskirts of Boston, and Morton H. Halperin and I produced a little book, discussed at numerous meetings of the Harvard-MIT Faculty Seminar on Arms Control during the fall of 1960, reflecting what we took to be a consensus, one that was wholly consistent with the

ideas that developed around Hedley Bull's manuscript at the ISS. And in the spring of 1960, Donald G. Brennan organized a conference that generated Arms Control, Disarmament, and National Security.

Together those efforts were an intellectual achievement; a number of participants in the Harvard-MIT seminar took positions in the Kennedy White House, Department of State and Department of Defense; others from RAND and elsewhere, who had been part of this intellectual movement, moved into the government as well. So it is not completely surprising that those ideas became the basis for U.S. policy and were ultimately implemented in the ABM treaty. I consider that culmination of 15 years of progress not merely the high point but the end point of successful arms control.

### III

Since 1972, the control of strategic weapons has made little or no progress, and the effort on our side has not seemed to be informed by any coherent theory of what arms control is supposed to accomplish. Maybe right now there is nothing it can accomplish. But there has been retrogression in the doctrine.

A qualification needs to be added to this judgment that nothing constructive has happened. The five-year interim agreement governing offensive weapons that was part of the 1972 SALT I package was succeeded by the SALT II treaty of 1979, which was still unratified at the invasion of Afghanistan and never had a chance after that. Both sides have so far avoided going expressly beyond the limits contained in that treaty even though it has no formal standing. This is a powerful demonstration that restraints can be reciprocated without formal obligation.

One development since 1972 has been a hardening of the

belief among diplomats and the public that arms control has to be embedded in treaties. In the 1960s, I used to believe that a tacit understanding might be arrived at regarding ballistic missile defenses: namely, that the United States would have to proceed at full speed unless the Soviets stopped in their tracks, but the United States would happily forego the cost of building an ABM system if the Russians put a stop to theirs. I saw no advantage in a treaty. I later came to believe that the advantage of the treaty was to put the quietus on ABM in this country, especially in the Congress. But reciprocated restraint may often be as good as formal negotiations and treaties, sometimes better. This idea was better understood up until a dozen years ago than it has been since.

Let me illustrate how something that deserves to be identified as arms control can come about informally and even without being recognized as arms control by the participants. This is the apparent understanding that a war in Europe should be kept non-nuclear if possible, and that reciprocated efforts should be made to ensure this. Secretary McNamara began an aggressive campaign for building up conventional defenses in Europe on the grounds that nuclear weapons certainly should not be used and possibly would not be used. (The no-first-use idea emerged later as a reflection of this same principle.) Throughout the 1960s, however, the official Soviet line was to deny the possibility of a non-nuclear engagement in Europe, even to deny that any nuclear war could be kept limited.

Yet the Soviets have spent enormous amounts of money developing non-nuclear capabilities in Europe, especially aircraft capable of delivering conventional weapons. This capability is not only expensive but utterly useless in the event of any war that is nuclear from the outset. It can only reflect a tacit Soviet acknowledgment that both sides are capable of non-nuclear war and interested in keeping war

non-nuclear.

If "arms control" includes expensive restraints on the potential use of weapons as well as on their deployment, this reciprocated investment in non-nuclear capability has to be considered a remarkable instance of unacknowledged but reciprocated arms restraint. And it reminds us that the inhibitions on "first use" may be just as strong without declarations as with them.

#### IV

Until the emergence of a Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) in 1983, for the last 13 years the focus of arms control has been on offensive weapons. I judge the proposals and negotiations on offensive weapons to have been mostly mindless, without a guiding philosophy. What guiding philosophy there used to be has got lost along the way.

The main difference between pre-1971 and post-1972 arms negotiations has been the shift of interest from the character of weapons to their numbers. In the United States this is the common interest that has joined left and right, leaving almost no room in between. The proposals of the Carter and Reagan Administrations have been for reduced numbers of offensive weapons. Simultaneously, the programs of the Carter and Reagan Administrations have been to match numbers. (This is matching in each category of weapons, not merely in some aggregate index of firepower.) Sophisticates in the freeze movement might talk privately about first-strike or second-strike weapons, about vulnerability and survivability, but the simple public goal has been freezing numbers and looking toward reduction. The last two administrations have been intent on matching hard-target capabilities, number for number, almost without regard to whether denying strategic-weapon targets to the enemy—such as deploying untargetable weapons—was a superior alternative to matching hard-target

capability.

Thus there are two points to discuss: the interest that everybody claims in ultimately reducing numbers through arms control, and the interest in matching enemy capabilities whether we like them or not.

On the "arms control" interest in reducing numbers, nobody ever offers a convincing reason for preferring smaller numbers. (I may exaggerate: saving money is a legitimate reason, and whether or not smaller numbers would cost less, people may be excused for thinking so.) And some people think that with fewer weapons there is less likelihood that one will fall into mischievous hands or be launched by mechanical error; this I think is incorrect, but may not be worth refuting because it is no one's main motivation. For the most part, people simply think that smaller numbers are better than bigger ones. Those who believe we already have ten times what we need never explain why having merely five times as many should look better. If people really believe that zero is the ultimate goal it is easy to see that downward is the direction they should go. But hardly anyone who takes arms control seriously believes that zero is the goal.

Furthermore, political and even professional discussion, to say nothing of editorial and popular discussion, has great difficulty in deciding which numbers matter. It is surprising how few people who concern themselves seriously with arms control are aware that the sheer explosive energy in American strategic weapons, the megatonnage of alert warheads, was several times greater 20 years ago than it is now. Not that gross megatonnage is the important measure; my point is merely that this is not an uninteresting fact, and people who are unacquainted with it may be people who really do not know (or do not care) what numbers they ought to be interested in.

In 1963 Lieutenant-General (then Colonel) Glenn Kent, of the United States Air Force, published an Occasional Paper of the Harvard Center for International Affairs in which he looked at the following question: if we were to have a limit of some kind on strategic missiles, what would be the most sensible limit? He argued that we should want both sides to be free to proliferate weapons in whatever dimension would reduce their own vulnerability, but without increasing the other side's vulnerability. In those days missile accuracies were poor and megatonnage mattered more than today; big explosives, however, were less efficient than small ones because the lethal area was less than proportionate to the yield of the individual bomb or warhead. Kent concluded that the correct magnitude to limit was the sum of the lethal areas covered by all the warheads in the inventory; this would be calculated by using the two-thirds power of the yield of each weapon. In this formula, each party would then be free to proliferate smaller and smaller warheads on more and more missiles, thus becoming less and less vulnerable without acquiring any more preemptive attack capability. He further calculated that the weight-to-yield ratio went up as warheads got smaller, that the weight of the warheads would be roughly proportionate to the two-thirds power of the yields, and that no matter how many warheads were on a given missile, the physical volume of the missile would be approximately proportionate to that calculated index of lethality. And you could calculate the volume by looking at a missile from a distance, so monitoring would be easy.

Kent's specific formula may be somewhat obsolete technologically, but its virtue remains relevant; it attempts to answer the question, if you were to limit something, what would you want to limit?

The point of recalling Kent's investigation is that his question does not get the attention it deserves. In a very crude way, drawing a distinction between multiple- and single-warhead

weapons moves in that direction; the Scowcroft Commission's advertisement for a single-warhead missile (Midgetman) to substitute ultimately for the MIRVed MX reflects a tardy and halting return to some inexplicit criterion in the spirit of Kent's proposal.

The SALT process tends to deal not only with numbers but with numbers in fixed categories. And the categories relate to things like land, sea and air, not strategic characteristics like susceptibility to preemption or capability for preemption, nor even relevant ingredients like warheads per target point, readiness, speed of delivery, accuracy or recallability after launch. The result has been that as fixed-site ground-based missiles have become more and more susceptible to successful attack (unless fired on warning), and as the SALT limits on MIRVed missiles invite building up to those limits, the process has moved exactly opposite to the direction that Kent pointed to.

What has been lost is the earlier emphasis on the character of weapons, and what has taken its place is emphasis on numbers, and specifically numbers within fixed categories, categories having nothing to do with the weapon characteristics that most deserve attention.

The rigidity of the emphasis on categories is illustrated by the MX controversy. The Scowcroft Commission was in a quandary: it apparently found little or no military virtue in the MX but felt it necessary to demonstrate, to the Soviet government and to allied governments, that the United States was determined to spend money to overcome any strategic-weapon deficiency vis-à-vis the Soviet Union, and specifically an apparent deficiency in large land-based missiles. The MX was alleged to be the only missile ready for procurement; and since quick procurement was essential, the commission recommended 100 MX, with a longing glance at an economical single-warhead missile (Midgetman) that was not

even under development. Bemused by the SALT tradition, their horizon in searching for appropriate weapons was short of the oceans; they appear not to have considered as an alternative the scheduling of some equivalent number of Trident submarines. Perhaps Tridents were not considered quite equivalent militarily to the MX; but since the object was a demonstration of resolve to procure, and not the particular characteristics of the MX, and because the Trident solved the basing problem that had vexed the Carter and Reagan Administrations for most of eight years, the Trident solution at least ought to have been considered. (If it was, it does not show in the commission report.)

What a strange product of an arms-control mentality—to constrain the United States to purchase one of the least attractive weapons (in terms of what arms control is intended to bring about) and to preclude the procurement of a secure, non-targetable undersea system instead. What a lost opportunity to announce that the United States would compete by procuring weapons of its own choosing, not by matching, category by category, whatever the Soviets chose to deploy. Instead, we have "arms control" for its own sake, not for the sake of peace and confidence.

Arms control for its own sake is similarly implicated in the widespread abhorrence of submarine-based cruise missiles. The cruise missile, as advertised, is an economical retaliatory weapon, too slow for preemptive attack, yet difficult to defend against as it penetrates Soviet air space, impossible to locate on station because it can be based on submarines. It ought to seem a splendid answer to the problem of vulnerability in the retaliatory force. The widely voiced objection is a simple one. It is easy to hide; it can be got surreptitiously on board submarines. Because it can be fired from a torpedo tube and each submarine can have a reload capability, and because there are more attack submarines capable of carrying cruise missiles than any treaty limitation on the missiles would

allow, there is no way to monitor a limitation on numbers of cruise missiles. The logic is that if you cannot find them you cannot count them; if you cannot count them you cannot have verifiable limits; if limits cannot be verified you cannot have arms control.

But who needs arms control if economical and reliable retaliatory weapons are available that are neither susceptible to preemption nor capable of preemption? There may be an answer to this question, but it has not been given. Again, arms control appears to get in the way of pursuing its own objective. Possibly there is some imperative in arms control to do something about offensive weapons, even when there is nothing constructive to be done; so something was done that could not be constructive and the result is confusion or worse. Possibly the first SALT agreement became a compelling model: Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird, after the signing of the SALT agreement, referred to it immediately as "SALT I," and looked forward to SALT II, freezing a procedural pattern with roman numerals. Perhaps the arms control bureaucracy nurtures itself on formal negotiations and ratified treaties, and has lost any subtlety it might have had. (Adelman's Foreign Affairs article is at least a hint at a less heavy-handed approach.) Perhaps an administration with no genuine interest in arms limitation finds in arms control the best pulpit from which to preach arms competition.

## V

There is a separate development to weave into this story. Ten years ago, late in the Nixon Administration, secretaries of defense began to pronounce a new doctrine for the selection of strategic weapons. This doctrine entailed a more comprehensive target system than anything compatible with the McNamara doctrine. Its philosophical basis was that, if a war occurred, the president should have some alternative to mutual destruction, and the alternative proposed was a

counterforce capability that could be operated purposively in a wartime environment, susceptible to control.

And there was a new strategic element: the threat of destroying a large part of the Soviet population and industrial capacity might no longer deter Soviet leaders, whose affection was for their own leadership and not for the people they served. The only effective deterrent threat might be the destruction of their entire military power base, including ground and naval forces. This required, of course, much larger and more versatile weapon capabilities for our forces.

The philosophy underlying the ABM agreement came under attack because it represented the mad notion that the only alternative to peace was mutual obliteration. The name of the strategy was abbreviated, and the acronym, MAD—Mutual Assured Destruction—has been brandished as a derisive slogan. Since 1964 the correct name of the strategy is not "assured mutual destruction," but "assured capability for mutual destruction," the difference being that the capability does not have to be ineluctably exercised at the outbreak of even an intercontinental nuclear war. The three crucial elements are an assured capability, restrained targeting and some capacity for war termination.

What has happened is that a capacity to maintain control over the course of war has come to be identified with a vigorous and extended counterforce campaign, while retaliatory targeting has been identified with what Herman Kahn used to call "spasm." The choice is presented as one between a counterforce campaign that is subject to control and a purely retaliatory campaign that is a total spasmodic response. I find it more plausible that the actual choice is between the two opposite alternatives. A controlled retaliatory capability seems to me supremely important, as these things go, and probably achievable, at least if somewhat reciprocated on the other side. But it is unlikely that "controlled" counterforce

warfare on the scale typically envisioned could be sustained all the way to a termination that left populations and their economic assets substantially intact; indeed uncontrolled counterforce is probably what you would get.

But as long as the counterforce doctrine is governing, it will be hard to impose a reciprocal denial of substantial preemptive capabilities, since the capability to destroy hard targets, publicly eschewed by McNamara, has now become central to the doctrine. How this doctrine might be squared with arms control has never been clear to me, but it probably explains why the current arms control framework has become the one within which the numerical arms race is driven.

I should note briefly that the bargaining chip idea has again become transparent. The Administration, the Scowcroft Commission, and even Congressman Les Aspin have all publicly averred that an initial MX program was essential to drive the Soviets to the bargaining table. No one has given an estimate of the likelihoods of successful disarmament negotiations with and without MX: if the prospect were ten percent without MX and 30 percent with it—a differential I find implausibly large—it could still be a bad bargain if it is not the weapon we want. The Administration has never been altogether clear whether the MX itself is a definitive program whose completion will lead to arms control, or is a contingent program whose abandonment is up for discussion. Publicly acknowledging that Soviet intransigence can oblige the United States to procure an expensive weapon of admittedly little or negative military utility is embarrassing.

Another debating strategy that attempts to make things better by first making them worse is publicizing the argument that any perceived inadequacy of U.S. strategic weaponry vis-à-vis the Soviet Union, or even a perceived lack of competitive determination on the part of the United States, would invite the Soviets to press hard in the next confrontation in the

confident belief that the United States must back down, much as Khrushchev did in 1962. In the face of Soviet hubris over strategic superiority, the United States will have no choice but to back down—a situation that invites confrontation. This may be a good argument for more armament if Americans believe it and Russians do not. It is a dangerous one if Russians believe it and believe that Americans do too. I find no logic in the argument, but it is one of those that could be self-fulfilling in a dangerous way. The argument could easily have been neutered by an administration that saw the danger in it and did not itself rely on such arguments to bolster support for its programs. One hopes that the Russians know better.

## VI

Finally we come to the Strategic Defense Initiative—President Reagan's dream of harnessing technology to provide impregnable defenses against ballistic missiles sometime in the future, making nuclear weapons obsolete and permitting nuclear disarmament. How it can be thought that space-based defenses against ballistic missiles can completely deny the delivery of nuclear explosives to the proximity of U.S. population centers by land, sea and air, I do not know; but excusing the idea as an extravagance, let us try to see how the concept fits into arms control.

There is an easy way to fit it, even into the philosophy of the ABM treaty, but it is an interpretation that denigrates the President's dream and is nowhere near commensurate with the attention SDI gets. That is to argue that defending targetable U.S. missiles, like the MX, against preemptive attack through high-technology ABM is attractive and unobjectionable. It was a flaw in the ABM treaty that "good" ABM (protecting missiles) was disallowed along with "bad" (protecting cities). In consequence there is no way to protect the MX. A partial reversal of the ABM ban to permit defense

of retaliatory weapons would bring us back to the McNamara spirit. This is a line taken by many defenders of SDI, although it is not clear to me whether it is an opportunistic rescue of ground-based missiles under the SDI umbrella, a minimally defensible foot in the door for SDI, a fillip to advanced research, or merely an attempt to rescue the President's image by showing that the concept of SDI, though overblown and oversold, is not quite empty.

There is, of course, the technical question of whether defenses good at protecting ground-based missiles are sufficiently distinguishable from defenses for population centers, so that rather than repairing the ABM treaty by inserting an exception we should be deciding whether or not to abandon it. There are so many interested parties with different interests that it is hard to find common ground even among those who share the same enthusiasm.

Let us leave aside the fact that cities are soft, unconcealable, and almost certainly unprotectable no matter how successfully ballistic missiles may be fended off, there being such a multitude of alternative means of wartime delivery or prewar positioning. There remains the question whether the President's dream is a good one.

He speaks of no longer depending on deterrence but of being unilaterally able to nullify any Soviet nuclear attack. Would we prefer to rely on defense, which is unilateral, or on deterrence, which is contingent and reciprocal? My question is whether we should wish away deterrence as the foundation of peace.

Those 40 years of living with nuclear weapons without warfare are not only evidence that war can be avoided but are themselves part of the reason why it can be; namely, increasing experience in living with the weapons without precipitating a war, increasing confidence on both sides that

neither wishes to risk nuclear war, diminishing necessity to react to every untoward event as though it were a mortal challenge. I go further than that: a prudent restraint from aggressive violence that is based on acknowledgment that the world is too small to support a nuclear war is a healthier basis for peace than unilateral efforts to build defenses. I like the notion that East and West have exchanged hostages on a massive scale and that as long as they are unprotected, civilization depends on the avoidance of military aggression that could escalate to nuclear war.

Most of what we call civilization depends on reciprocal vulnerability. I am defenseless against almost everybody that I know, and while most of them would have no interest in harming me there must be some that would. I feel safer in an environment of deterrence than I would in an environment of defense. It is often said that terror is a poor basis for civilization, and the balance of terror is not a permanently viable foundation for the avoidance of war. Fear can promote hostility, and fear can lead to impetuosity in a crisis. I agree, but I do not equate a balance of deterrence with a balance of terror, even though the roots of "deterrence" and "terror" are the same. Twenty years ago I wrote and still believe:

The extent of the "fear" involved in any arrangement—total disarmament, negotiated mutual deterrence, or stable weaponry achieved unilaterally by conscious design—is a function of confidence. If the consequences of transgression are plainly bad—bad for all parties, little dependent on who transgresses first, and not helped by rapid mobilization—we can take the consequences for granted and call it a "balance of prudence."

People regularly stand at the curb watching trucks, buses and cars hurtle past at speeds that guarantee injury and threaten death if they so much as attempt to cross against the traffic. They are absolutely deterred. But there is no fear. They just

know better.

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THOMAS C. SCHELLING is Lucius N. Littauer Professor of Political Economy at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. This article is adapted from a presentation at the Nobel Symposium 1985, The Study of War and Peace—Perspectives on Present Knowledge and Research.

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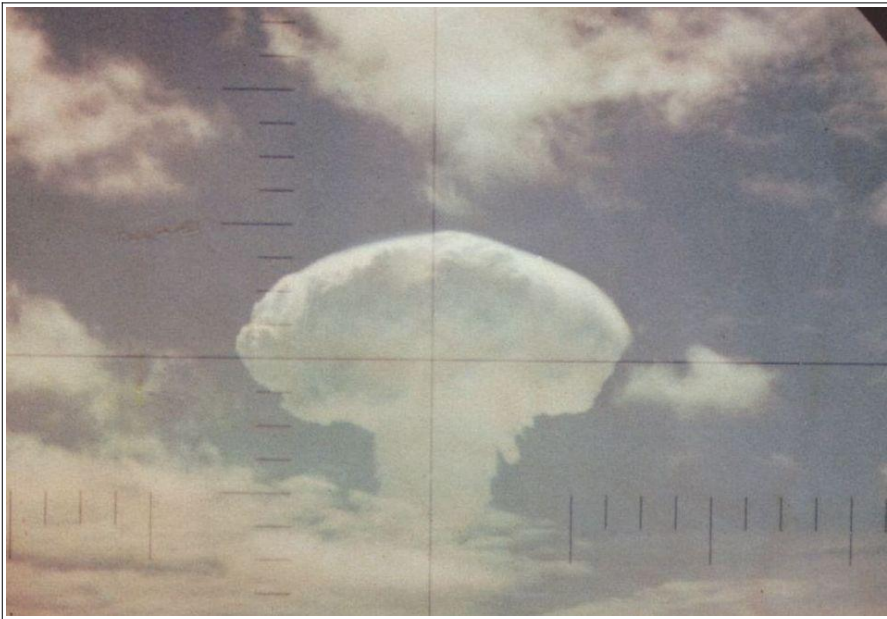
# Containment: 40 Years Later

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Containment Then and Now

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*George F. Kennan*



*Operation Dominic: Frigate Bird nuclear explosion*

The word "containment," of course, was not new in the year 1946. What was new, perhaps, was its use with relation to the Soviet Union and Soviet-American relations. What brought the word to public attention in this connection was its use in an article that appeared in 1947, in this magazine, under the title of "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," and was signed with what was supposed to have been an anonymous X. This piece was not originally written for publication; it was written

privately for our first secretary of defense, James Forrestal, who had sent me a paper on communism and asked me to comment on it. It was written, as I recall, in December 1946, in the northwest corner room on the ground floor of the National War College building. At the time I was serving as deputy commandant for foreign affairs at the college. I suppose it is fitting that I, for my sins, should try to explain something about how the word "containment" came to be used in that document, and what it was meant to signify.

One must try to picture the situation that existed in that month of December 1946. The Second World War was only a year and some months in the past. U.S. armed forces were still in the process of demobilization; so, too, though to a smaller extent (because the Russians proposed to retain a much larger peacetime establishment than we did), were those of the Soviet Union.

In no way did the Soviet Union appear to me, at that moment, as a military threat to this country. Russia was at that time utterly exhausted by the exertions and sacrifices of the recent war. Something like 25 million of its people had been killed. The physical destruction had been appalling. In a large portion of the territory of European Russia, the devastation had to be seen to be believed. Reconstruction alone was obviously going to take several years. The need for peace, and the thirst for peace, among the Russian people was overwhelming. To have remobilized the Soviet armed forces at that time for another war effort, and particularly an aggressive one, would have been unthinkable. Russia then had no navy to speak of and virtually no strategic air force. It had never tested a nuclear weapon. There was uncertainty over when Russia would test one, and there was even more uncertainty over when, or whether, it would ever develop the means of long-range delivery of nuclear warheads. The United States itself had not yet developed such delivery systems.

In these circumstances, there was no way that Russia could appear to me as a military threat. It is true that even then the Soviet Union was credited -- and credited by some of my colleagues at the War College -- with the capability of overrunning Western Europe with its remaining forces, if it wanted to do so. But I myself regarded those calculations as exaggerated (I still do); and I was convinced that there was very little danger of anything of that sort. So when I used the word "containment" with respect to that country in 1946, what I had in mind was not at all the averting of the sort of military threat people talk about today.

What I did think I saw -- and what explained the use of that term -- was what I might call an ideological-political threat. Great parts of the northern hemisphere -- notably Western Europe and Japan -- had just then been seriously destabilized, socially, spiritually and politically, by the experiences of the recent war. Their populations were dazed, shell-shocked, uncertain of themselves, fearful of the future, highly vulnerable to the pressures and enticements of communist minorities in their midst. The world communist movement was at that time a unified, disciplined movement, under the total control of the Stalin regime in Moscow. Not only that, but the Soviet Union had emerged from the war with great prestige for its immense and successful war effort. The Kremlin was, for this and for other reasons, in a position to manipulate these foreign communist parties very effectively in its own interests.

As for the intentions of the Stalin regime toward the United States, I had no illusions. I had already served three tours of duty in Stalin's Russia -- had in fact just come home from the last of these tours when I came to the War College; and I had nothing but suspicion for the attitude of the Stalin regime toward us or toward the other recent Western Allies. Stalin and the men around him were far worse -- more sinister, more cruel, more devious, more cynically contemptuous of us --

than anything we face today. I felt that if Moscow should be successful in taking over any of those major Western countries, or Japan, by ideological-political intrigue and penetration, this would be a defeat for us, and a blow to our national security, fully as serious as would have been a German victory in the war that had just ended.

One must also remember that during that war, and to some extent into the post-hostilities period as well, the U.S. government had tried to win the confidence and the good disposition of the Soviet government by fairly extensive concessions to Soviet demands with respect to the manner in which the war was fought and to the prospects for the postwar international order. The United States had raised no serious objection to the extension of the Soviet borders to the west. Our government had continued to extend military aid to the Soviet Union even when its troops were overrunning most of the rest of Eastern Europe. We had complacently allowed its forces to take Prague and Berlin and surrounding areas even when there was a possibility that our forces could arrive there just as soon as theirs did. The Russians were refusing to give us even a look in their zone of occupation in Germany but were demanding a voice in the administration and reconstruction of the Ruhr industrial region in western Germany.

Now there seemed to be a danger that communist parties subservient to Moscow might seize power in some of the major Western European countries, notably Italy and France, and possibly in Japan. And what I was trying to say, in the Foreign Affairs article, was simply this: "Don't make any more unnecessary concessions to these people. Make it clear to them that they are not going to be allowed to establish any dominant influence in Western Europe and in Japan if there is anything we can do to prevent it. When we have stabilized the situation in this way, then perhaps we will be able to talk with them about some sort of a general political and military

disengagement in Europe and in the Far East -- not before." This, to my mind, was what was meant by the thought of "containing communism" in 1946.

One may wish to compare that situation with the one the United States faces today, and to take account of the full dimensions of the contrast -- between the situation we then confronted and the one we confront today. I must point out that neither of the two main features of the situation we were confronting in 1946 prevails today; on the contrary, the situation is almost exactly the reverse.

I saw at that time, as just stated, an ideological-political threat emanating from Moscow. I see no comparable ideological-political threat emanating from Moscow at the present time. The Leninist-Stalinist ideology has almost totally lost appeal everywhere outside the Soviet orbit, and partially within that orbit as well. And the situation in Western Europe and Japan has now been stabilized beyond anything we at that time were able even to foresee. Whatever other dangers may today confront those societies, a takeover, politically, by their respective communist parties is simply not in the cards.

One may say, yes, but look at Soviet positions in such places as Ethiopia and Angola. Fair enough. Let us look at them, but not exaggerate them. Aside from the fact that these places are mostly remote from our own defensive interests, what are the Russians doing there? With the exception of Afghanistan, where their involvement goes much further, they are selling arms and sending military advisers -- procedures not too different from many of our own. Can they translate those operations into ideological enthusiasm or political loyalty on the part of the recipient Third World regimes? No more, in my opinion, than we can. These governments will take what they can get from Moscow -- take it cynically and without gratitude, as they do from us. And they will do lip service to a

political affinity with Moscow precisely as long as it suits their interest to do it and not a moment longer. Where the Russians acquire bases or other substantial military facilities, this has, of course, greater military significance. But it is not an ideological threat.

On the other hand, whereas in 1946 the military aspect of our relationship to the Soviet Union hardly seemed to come into question at all, today that aspect is obviously of prime importance. But here, lest the reader be left with a misunderstanding, a caveat must be voiced.

When I say that this military factor is now of prime importance, it is not because I see the Soviet Union as threatening the United States or its allies with armed force. It is entirely clear to me that Soviet leaders do not want a war with us and are not planning to initiate one. In particular, I have never believed that they have seen it as in their interests to overrun Western Europe militarily, or that they would have launched an attack on that region generally even if the so-called nuclear deterrent had not existed. But I recognize that the sheer size of their armed forces establishment is a disquieting factor for many of our allies. And, more important still, I see the weapons race in which we and they are now involved as a serious threat in its own right, not because of aggressive intentions on either side but because of the compulsions, the suspicions, the anxieties such a competition engenders, and because of the very serious dangers it carries with it of unintended complications -- by error, by computer failure, by misread signals, or by mischief deliberately perpetrated by third parties.

For all these reasons, there is now indeed a military aspect to the problem of containment as there was not in 1946; but what most needs to be contained, as I see it, is not so much the Soviet Union as the weapons race itself. And this danger does not even arise primarily from political causes. One must

remember that while there are indeed serious political disagreements between the two countries, there is no political issue outstanding between them which could conceivably be worth a Soviet-American war or which could be solved, for that matter, by any great military conflict of that nature.

The weapons race is not all there is in this imperfect world that needs to be contained. There are many other sources of instability and trouble. There are local danger spots scattered about in the Third World. There is the dreadful situation in southern Africa. There is the grim phenomenon of a rise in several parts of the world of a fanatical and wildly destructive religious fundamentalism, and there is the terrorism to which that sort of fundamentalism so often resorts. There is the worldwide environmental crisis, the rapid depletion of the world's nonrenewable energy resources, the steady pollution of its atmosphere and its waters -- the general deterioration of its environment as a support system for civilized living.

And finally, there is much in our own life, here in this country, that needs early containment. It could, in fact, be said that the first thing we Americans need to learn to contain is, in some ways, ourselves: our own environmental destructiveness, our tendency to live beyond our means and to borrow ourselves into disaster, our apparent inability to reduce a devastating budgetary deficit, our comparable inability to control the immigration into our midst of great masses of people of wholly different cultural and political traditions.

In short, if we are going to talk about containment in the context of today, then I think we can no longer apply that term just to the Soviet Union and particularly not to a view of the Soviet Union drawn too extensively from the image of the Stalin era, or, in some instances, from the even more misleading image of our Nazi opponents in the last great war. If we are going to relate that term to the Soviet Union of

today, we are going to have to learn to take as the basis for our calculations a much more penetrating and sophisticated view of that particular country than the one that has become embedded in much of our public rhetoric. But beyond that, we are going to have to recognize that a large proportion of the sources of our troubles and dangers lies outside the Soviet challenge, such as it is, and some of it even within ourselves. And for these reasons we are going to have to develop a wider concept of what containment means -- a concept more closely linked to the totality of the problems of Western civilization at this juncture in world history -- a concept, in other words, more responsive to the problems of our own time -- than the one I so light-heartedly brought to expression, hacking away at my typewriter there in the northwest corner of the War College building in December of 1946.

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# Testing Gorbachev

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*Graham Allison*



*Gorbachev (L) and Reagan begin their mini-summit talks in Reykjavik October 11, 1986.*

Plato identified necessity as the mother of invention. General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev's recognition of the failures of the Soviet economy has inspired an inventiveness in Soviet policy, foreign and domestic, not seen since the death of Lenin. Gorbachev represents a rare combination of pragmatic realism on the one hand, and creative policymaking and public relations on the other. Just as economic determinants are finally imposing constraints that should make the Soviet Union a less formidable military adversary, Gorbachev has already made the Soviet Union a more daunting diplomatic competitor.

Across the East-West agenda, from nuclear and conventional arms control to Afghanistan and Cambodia, Gorbachev has seized the initiative. In the process he is winning too much of the credit for results achieved. Even when all he did was belatedly answer to long-standing Western proposals on intermediate-range nuclear missiles, his skillful presentation of acquiescence persuaded most Europeans that the Soviet Union, not the West, deserved applause for both authorship and execution of this agreement. Today 63 percent of Americans give Gorbachev a "favorable" rating, ahead of any other foreign leader except Britain's Margaret Thatcher. In the Federal Republic of Germany, Gorbachev's approval rating tops President Reagan's by almost two to one.

The American response to Gorbachev's active diplomacy so far has been to hold fast, persisting in policies and proposals developed to address Leonid Brezhnev's Soviet Union, not Gorbachev's. Persistence can be a virtue, certainly preferable to reckless accommodation. Moreover, because Gorbachev is essentially dealing from internal weakness, his unilateral adjustments of Soviet policy are producing significant gains for the West. The Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, the elimination of all land-based intermediate-range nuclear forces, acceptance of highly intrusive verification procedures (including mandatory on-site inspection), and encouragement of the projected Vietnamese withdrawal from Cambodia—these realize important U.S. objectives.

But by yielding the initiative to Gorbachev, the United States is defaulting on profound opportunities. The failure of American policymakers to develop any concept or strategy for dealing with the "new-thinking" Soviet leadership forfeits what may be a historic chance to push actively for specific and major steps by Moscow that advance Western interests. Equally important, the U.S. and other Western governments are failing an important test of public diplomacy: to fashion effective policies and present them in ways that will sustain

public support.

I will argue that Washington should take the lead in formulating an aggressive Western diplomatic agenda aimed at testing Gorbachev at his word. His new thinking includes many intriguing concepts and suggestions. We should begin with a working hypothesis that Gorbachev really means what he says, and that, as an intelligent leader, he also understands the logical implications of his statements. The challenge is to formulate equally far-reaching proposals for Soviet actions that advance Western interests through propositions that Gorbachev cannot refuse—if he means what he says.

## II

The primary causes of the emerging window of opportunity for the West are two: the harsh facts of life for the Soviet Union and Gorbachev's recognition of those facts. Gorbachev openly acknowledges that the current Soviet system is failing: "The economy is in a mess; we're behind in every area. . . . The closer you look, the worse it is." He also notes: "Society is ripe for a change. If we back off now, society will not agree to a return. We have to make this process irreversible. If we do not do it, who will? If not now, when?"

A system that depends on command and control to direct the economy, the polity and society is not producing the economic products or the technology needed to compete successfully. Not only is the Soviet economy falling further behind the United States, Western Europe and Japan, it is losing ground even to the new industrial countries of Asia. As French President François Mitterrand has observed, Gorbachev is the first Soviet leader to understand the failure of the socialist economic system.

That failure is evident in an economy that achieved five-

percent growth in the 1960s, fell to two-percent growth in the first half of the 1970s, and stagnated at virtually zero growth by the early 1980s. Failure is evident in a military that now consumes at least 15-20 percent of the nation's product but cannot prevent a Cessna 172 from landing in Red Square, and allows Afghan rebels to defeat the mighty Red Army. Failure is evident in a health care system that alone among those of industrial nations has seen reductions in average life expectancy. It is evident in a technological base that still has not produced a personal computer for general consumption, when countries such as Taiwan and South Korea manage to market second-and third-generation personal computers around the world.

Gorbachev states the bottom line bluntly: unless the trend of the last decade is reversed, the Soviet Union will not enter the 21st century as a great power. The core of his response has two elements: common sense and pragmatism.

Nothing is more revolutionary in the Soviet system than common sense. Previously, ideology so distorted common sense and required so many epicycles of rationalization that most Soviet citizens knew more certainly what was not true (namely, the things that were said officially) than what might actually be so. In contrast to the Orwellian quality of official Soviet rhetoric of the past, Gorbachev is clearly committed to a great deal more of "calling things by their real names," as he says.

Gorbachev's pragmatism is also heretical. It means a willingness to experiment with alternative ways of achieving a goal. Past Soviet planning presumed a central monopoly of wisdom in the analysis of problems and design of a plan, and a monopoly of power in assigning players the roles they should perform according to script. In contrast, pragmatism requires that individuals be engaged and active enough to think for themselves and to adapt as they go.

At its core, Gorbachev's new thinking is essentially a radical rejection of the Stalinism that ruled the Soviet Union for more than half a century. As had Luther's denunciation of papal authority, Gorbachev's acknowledgment that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union has no "monopoly of truth" has earthshaking implications. Glasnost is predicated on the incandescently obvious idea that truth emerges from discussion and debate among many people, each of whom lays claim to a piece of reality. Perestroika revises the notion of an economy centrally planned by all-knowing authorities, in favor of greater local autonomy, incentives and, over time, market forces. As the Gorbachev revolution continues, we should expect to see additional repressive features of the Stalinist society subjected to scrutiny, and buried.

The primary implications of these fundamental changes for Soviet national security policies are increased subordination of foreign policy to domestic priorities and the necessity to reduce investments in the defense sector. If the Soviet Union is to address long-term internal problems successfully, an enabling precondition is substantial relaxation of competition with the United States in the international arena. Moreover, substantial restructuring of the Soviet economy will require resources now consumed by the Soviet military. Both Defense Minister Dimitri Yazov and Chief of the General Staff Sergei Akhromeyev acknowledge that even they do not know how much the Soviet Union now spends on its military establishment.

From what Gorbachev and his advisers say with increasing openness, a new Soviet strategy is emerging that calls for arms control agreements to reduce the Western threat and thereby allow Gorbachev to cut Soviet defense expenditures with minimal adverse effect on Soviet military advantages. Gorbachev needs substantial reductions in conventional forces because, as Willie Sutton observed, "that's where the money is." Gorbachev's concepts of "reasonable sufficiency"

and "defensive defense" are in part military doctrines, but more importantly they are justifications for constraining resource demands—not unlike some previous American military doctrines. Other indications of Gorbachev's intent to control defense expenditures include his careful decisions regarding key military appointments, his reassertion of the party's role in formulating broad military doctrine, and the increasingly visible role of civilian experts in discussing a domain previously the exclusive preserve of the Soviet General Staff.

### III

Gorbachev's new thinking holds the promise of fundamental improvement in U.S.-Soviet relations. But it is evolving. To be fully developed in the Soviet Union and appreciated in the West, it must be put to the test. American diplomacy must be imaginative and aggressive in proposing bold actions that constitute operational tests of the logical consequences of Gorbachev statements. Tests can be devised in at least three dimensions of the U.S.-Soviet relationship: arms control, regional conflicts and human rights.

In arms control, start with what Gorbachev has said. Leaving aside his rhetoric about eliminating all nuclear weapons, his more realistic statements essentially reject Clausewitz's proposition that war is an extension of political struggle by other means. Instead Gorbachev says:

The fundamental principle of the new political outlook is very simple: nuclear war cannot be a means of achieving political, economic, ideological or any other goals. . . . Security can no longer be assured by military means. . . . Attempts to achieve military superiority are preposterous. . . . The only way to security is through political decisions and disarmament.

This language embodies a significantly different conception of

the role of military power than the philosophy that has motivated the relentless buildup of Soviet military forces since the early 1960s. If Gorbachev really believes this, what might the Soviet Union be prepared to do?

In the first instance, it might begin to restrain the continuing growth and modernization of the Soviet military establishment. Over time, in concert with reductions in Western forces, a government in Moscow that believes Gorbachev's words should be prepared to reduce sharply and restructure Soviet military forces. But note the gap between word and deed. If one judges by observable changes in Soviet military forces to date—increases in defense spending, modernization of both nuclear and conventional forces, deliveries of new equipment to frontline forces and the character of field exercises—Gorbachev's fine phrases have yet to be translated operationally in the military realm.

Gorbachev, however, has already passed one test that seemed improbable to almost everyone before he came to power. He accepted the U.S. proposal for the elimination of intermediate-range nuclear forces. When that proposition was first put forward by the Reagan Administration in 1981, it was declared a "non-acceptable demand" by the Soviet leadership, and most American experts concurred. (In fact it had been designed within the U.S. government as an offer the Soviets could never accept.)

The concessions that Gorbachev made to achieve this treaty are not insignificant. These include the exclusion from negotiations of equivalent British and French forces, inclusion among the weapons to be destroyed of the shorter-range Soviet SS-23s, and acceptance of Western verification proposals. The most startling of these concessions was the agreement to highly intrusive verification procedures on Soviet territory, a demand that Moscow for decades had maintained was unacceptable. Indeed, many American arms

controllers had given up on this demand and had agreed with the Soviet claim that it was "unreasonable" since it violated natural Soviet conservatism and the character of Soviet society. Note the formula for NATO's success in this case: a reasonable though radical proposal combined with persistence and hard bargaining. This formula should be emulated on other fronts, including strategic arms control.

What do Gorbachev's words imply for the Soviet Union's strategic arsenal? In a recent Pravda article, Vadim Zagladin, a deputy head of the International Department of the Central Committee, admitted that "we proceeded for a long time, for too long, from the possibility of winning a nuclear war." If Gorbachev no longer believes in the winnability of a nuclear war or in the utility of the threat of nuclear war, then he should be prepared not just to reduce but to eliminate strategic nuclear forces acquired for that purpose.

In short, Gorbachev should now be prepared to restructure the Soviet nuclear arsenal in ways that reduce the possibility, or threat, of surprise attack, and thus eliminate the first-strike weapons Americans fear most, namely the Soviet heavy land-based missiles (SS-18s). U.S. proposals in the Strategic Arms Reductions Talks, which call for a 50-percent cut in numbers of warheads, are a step in the right direction, though not bold enough. A serious test of Gorbachev's provocative views would be to propose eliminating all weapons that are best suited for use in a first strike, and thus all heavy land-based MIRVs (multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles) that have hard-target kill capability.

Nowhere does the U.S.S.R. pose as great a military threat to American vital interests as in Europe. Thirty forward-deployed divisions of the Soviet army in Eastern Europe, along with dozens more divisions in the Soviet Union's western military districts, stand equipped, trained and regularly exercised to conduct a surprise attack that moves

rapidly west to defeat and occupy Western Europe. To meet this challenge NATO maintains combined conventional and nuclear forces and a doctrine of "flexible response" that includes the possible use of nuclear weapons to meet even a conventional attack. Nowhere would Gorbachev's rhetoric offer more promise for the West—if words led to equivalent action.

Among Gorbachev's most beguiling and publicly attractive statements is his reference to Europe as a "common security house" in which tenants can legitimately provide for their own security—but not by filling their apartments with explosives that could destroy the building. In 1986 Gorbachev confounded the experts by accepting the Western concept of an "Atlantic-to-the-Urals" arms reduction zone. In 1987 he began making these ideas more operational by calling for the elimination of the capacity for surprise attack or offensive operations.

That would require, he recognizes, asymmetric reductions where there are "imbalances and asymmetries in some kinds of armaments and armed forces on both sides in Europe, caused by historical, geographical and other factors." He continues: "We stand for eliminating the inequality existing in some areas, but not through a buildup by those who lag behind but through a reduction by those who are ahead." To that end, at the Moscow summit in June, Gorbachev proposed to President Reagan an ambitious scheme to transform the conventional force balance in the Atlantic-to-the-Urals area consisting of four steps: an exchange of data on the conventional forces in the zone, to be verified by on-site inspections; the identification of asymmetries in the forces of the two sides and elimination of those asymmetries; reductions in each alliance's manpower in the zone by 500,000 men; and the restructuring of conventional forces in Europe to give them a solely "defensive" orientation.

It is an indictment of U.S. leadership in NATO that such a politically promising series of suggestions has been spelled out over the past three years by Gorbachev alone, essentially talking to himself. Listening to proposals that could significantly reduce the threat Western Europe confronts, is it any wonder that allied publics should conclude that Gorbachev seems more interested in peace than President Reagan? NATO should immediately take up Gorbachev's offer to exchange and verify data about the military forces on both sides. Our positive response should set the terms of reference for an exchange that would include a detailed order of battle, broken down to the level of regiments or battalions and including the location, designation and subordination of units, as well as manning levels and equipment by type and model. This information about NATO forces is publicly available; in the Soviet Union such data has been a top military secret, not only through the 15 years of talks on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions, but since 1917. NATO's acceptance of Gorbachev's proposal would offer a low-cost, high-benefit trial of his readiness to do business here.

NATO's goal should be to craft arms control agreements that reduce the Warsaw Pact's capabilities for surprise attack and large-scale offensive operations. We must recognize that "nothing is as much anathema to traditional Soviet military thinking as is a defense-dominant theater strategy and force posture." Here Western proposals attack Soviet offensive concepts and practices that have motivated the largest buildup of military power in history. Thus, in designing agreements for reductions in Warsaw Pact operational capabilities, we should be sensitive to Soviet bureaucratic interests: the Soviet Union's military system, like the West's, probably would be more ready to sacrifice levels of readiness, ammunition, logistics, some weapons systems and even force modernization programs than force structure or command slots. Among the elements of Soviet forces most essential to a

surprise attack, and thus most important to reduce, are tens of thousands of Soviet tanks and artillery in Eastern Europe and the western Soviet Union.

Beyond reductions, another area that invites Western probes of Gorbachev's intentions are confidence-building measures to increase transparency and constrain military activities. Initially in word, but now in the deed of the INF treaty, Gorbachev has transformed Moscow's policy of secrecy about Soviet territory, military forces and perhaps even military doctrine. If Gorbachev means what he says, he should permit levels of Western access to Soviet territory, military bases and exercises that were previously unthinkable.

NATO should seize the opportunity to propose measures that create tripwires the Soviet Union would have to trigger in preparing to go to war. These should include positioning permanent international inspectors at militarily important arms depots, airfields, fuel dumps, rail heads and perhaps even command and control centers; specific constraints on forward deployment of tanks, artillery, bridging and mine-clearing equipment; and year-in-advance schedules for force mobilizations.

#### IV

Few in the West believed Gorbachev's early indications, at the 27th Party Congress in early 1986, that support for "wars of national liberation" would no longer be a Soviet priority. His rationale had a certain plausibility: the era of decolonization having come to a close, the issue was no longer of prime concern. But according to many Western Sovietologists, external expansion served an essential ideological role in justifying the Soviet regime at home. Thus even less credence was given Gorbachev's assertions that the use of armed force to promote social revolution had declined in value, that the superpowers should not introduce their troops into Third

World conflicts, and that regional conflicts and crises must be resolved by political means.

In 1985 anyone in the West who suggested that these words signaled impending Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan—even after Gorbachev described that land as a "bleeding wound"—would have been rejected summarily by most Western experts. A Soviet withdrawal without victory would blatantly refute the predominant Western geopolitical explanation of Moscow's intentions in Afghanistan—an explanation that shaped the U.S. government's view of the ambitions of the Soviet Union in the 1980s. Afghanistan shares a border with the Soviet Union. Afghanistan represented the only major use of Soviet military power outside Europe since World War II. Afghanistan was a war that a committed Soviet Union was determined to win and could not afford to lose. Afghanistan was a calculated step in Russia's centuries-old quest for warm-water ports. Domination of the world's strategic oil reserves was the unspoken prize. All this quickly became conventional wisdom after 1980.

Yet Gorbachev has accepted defeat, with only the fig leaf of calling it stalemate and without even demanding a decent interval. This realism is the strongest evidence so far that he may genuinely believe some of the more unlikely things he says. The consequences of the withdrawal from Afghanistan are difficult to exaggerate. The effects on the Soviet army and society should prove more profound than the impact of the American defeat in Vietnam on the United States. Perhaps even more significant will be the reverberations in Soviet satellite and client states, since defeat in Afghanistan rolls back for the first time the Brezhnev Doctrine of the irreversibility of communist gains.

Gorbachev's propositions about declining Soviet stakes, influence and interest in the Third World deserve to be more

vigorously tested in other regions. In Angola, movement toward a settlement has begun, and the United States is finally pressing its case with Moscow. But the big disappointment has been American diplomacy in Central America—or more precisely, the lack thereof.

In his book, *Perestroika*, Gorbachev explicitly supports "the peace-making efforts of the Contadora Group, initiatives by the Central American heads of state, and the Guatemala City accord." He goes on: "We are not going to exploit anti-U.S. attitudes, let alone fuel them, nor do we intend to erode the traditional links between Latin America and the United States." At the 1987 Washington summit, according to a Soviet spokesman, Gorbachev proposed to Reagan "to review possibilities for promoting the process of peaceful settlement in Central America. First, our idea is related to the entire Central American region. . . . Second, it provides for reciprocal Soviet and American pledges to refrain from deliveries of weapons." Though Reagan inexplicably failed to pick up the offer, when Gorbachev was asked at the 1988 Moscow summit about the Soviet position, he said: "We [Reagan and Gorbachev] looked back at the history . . . [and] we have different explanations and different views. But I suggested we take as a starting point today's reality. The Contadora process is with us, the Guatemalan accords. . . . There is some movement towards a political settlement, and we must base ourselves on that process and lend our support."

Soviet actions fly in the face of every implication of Gorbachev's words. Specifically, Moscow's shipment of arms and other military equipment to the Sandinista government of Nicaragua and to guerrillas in El Salvador and Guatemala has continued without pause, and indeed increased in the first quarter of 1988. Soviet-bloc economic and military aid to the Sandinistas is estimated at almost \$1 billion annually. Last December, Sandinista Defense Minister Humberto Ortega

confirmed a report by a high-level Nicaraguan defector that the Sandinistas plan to double their armed forces to 600,000 troops, with additional supplies coming from the Soviet Union including, Ortega claimed, MiG-21s.

The United States should move immediately with the Central American presidents to propose cessation of all military aid (Soviet, Soviet bloc, Cuban and American) to the Sandinistas and the contras, together with effective guarantees that the Nicaraguan government will cease all material support for insurgency movements. The Central American presidents should also take the Soviet Union to task for the discrepancy between its verbal support for the Arias plan and its continued supply of arms to guerrillas in El Salvador and Guatemala, and demand that such assistance stop immediately.

## V

Gorbachev's trenchant indictment of the Stalinist totalitarian system and its incompatibility with a successful economy, society and culture exceeds all expectations. Who could have imagined an unstructured debate among participants in a solemn party conference, including denunciations of individuals to their face, on multiple sides of issues—and on television for all to see? Western Sovietologists who in the past offered indictments half as biting as Gorbachev makes today were then regarded, not only by Russians but by Americans interested in better U.S.-Soviet relations, as dogmatically anti-Soviet. The Soviet government's declaration about increased freedom of conscience for religious believers and its commemoration of the Russian Orthodox Church's millennium have been impressive.

Progress on emigration for refuseniks, release of political prisoners and the elimination of psychiatric prisons for enemies of the state has been slower than we would like (and

should insist upon), but more rapid and deeper than in any equivalent period of Soviet history. While Gorbachev bristles at the West's persistent demands regarding human rights for Soviet citizens, President Reagan's firm pursuit of this issue at the Moscow summit did nothing to dampen progress in other areas. The United States should keep pushing Moscow on human rights across the board. Both publicly and privately we should explain why a society that becomes less repressive at home becomes more trustworthy abroad.

Along the economic dimension, if the Soviet Union hopes to engage in international trade and produce goods that are globally competitive, it must reorganize its internal pricing system so that it can join the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, as China has been working to do. It only makes good sense to treat the Soviet Union as we do China and some East European countries, including providing incentives to adopt a price system that would make it possible for the Soviets to have observer status in, and eventually even become a member of, international financial institutions. The benefits to the West of Soviet economic decentralization down to heads of industries, firms, farms and collectives should not be underestimated. The decentralization of economic power weakens the monopoly of political authority. A totalitarian political system is not compatible in the longer run with a decentralized market economic system, because people who have economic power have power per se.

The list of possible Western tests of Gorbachev goes on and on. A realistic U.S. strategy would look at many other issues, including terrorism, where Gorbachev has also offered a number of attractive ideas: rejecting terrorism in all its guises; agreeing on the 99 percent on which we can agree; establishing an international tribunal under the auspices of the United Nations that would be a definitive court of justice on these issues; and imposing sanctions on any nations that violate the dictates of this court. Regarding the United

Nations, Gorbachev's decision to pay Soviet arrears and make greater use of the U.N. system—even suggesting the reactivation of the military committee of the Security Council—in resolving regional issues and peacekeeping remains to be addressed in a serious way by Western policy.

## VI

Do we want Gorbachev to succeed? Where he is taking actions that advance our interests and move toward a more secure, peaceful world, the answer must be yes. Consider the alternatives. Another Soviet leader might pursue similar internal reforms, just more slowly and with a less active foreign policy dimension. An equally plausible historical analogy, however, would be the Austro-Hungarian government of 1914, which sought to exploit its military advantages of the moment in the hope of reversing what otherwise promised to be decades of relative decline.

In fashioning its own policies, the United States cannot assume that Gorbachev will remain in power, or that the Soviet Union's long-term objectives have changed. Gorbachev's main purpose is to guarantee and enhance the Soviet Union's position as a great power. To that end, he seeks breathing space, *peredyshka*. His words and deeds attempt to cope with competing challenges: to secure his position in the struggle for power at home; to provide a framework that will allow him to shift resources from defense to more productive investments; and to maintain a posture plausible enough to allow him to constrain Western arms through arms control. At the same time, he is sorting out what he really thinks about a confusing, changing international environment. It would be a mistake to assume that Gorbachev has a long-term plan that maps the future. Rather, as he and his associates say, they see the world as being "in flux" as they venture into uncharted territory.

To the extent that Gorbachev's analysis is leading him to take steps that serve our interest, good. Restructuring the Soviet economy and society will require a crusade not of years but of decades or even generations. To the extent that the Soviet Union turns inward for a decade or two, and concentrates on rebuilding Soviet economic strength, we should cheer. To the extent that Gorbachev judges a period of international stability, and specifically a reduction of conflict with the United States, to be an essential precondition for Soviet focus on internal affairs (and this leads him to pull back from Afghanistan, Africa and Central America and to moderate Soviet policies in the Middle East), we should wish him Godspeed. To the extent that his reforms provide greater freedom for Soviet citizens, less totalitarian control of the society, and a reduction of ideologically motivated expansionism, this will erode the moral features of the Soviet regime that most offend American values. Where the price of reductions in Soviet threats to us are cuts in Western forces and defense expenditures that threaten them, we should act with a clear view of our net advantage.

A strategy of testing Gorbachev is not without risks, however. As the U.S.S.R. passes such tests, some in the West will proclaim prematurely that peace has broken out. Others may be lulled. We could be tricked. The web of interdependence we spin could entangle the West more deeply than the Soviet Union.

Nonetheless, consider the dangers inherent in simply standing firm with policies designed to meet previous challenges. The attempt to deny that real changes are occurring in the Soviet Union is a losing cause. Moreover, it will miss opportunities to nudge Moscow toward choices that advance our priorities. For example, as the Soviet Union struggled to extricate itself from Afghanistan with minimum embarrassment, an American willingness to be helpful for the price of progress in Central America might have produced a

diplomatic settlement there as well.

Thus without illusion about the Soviet Union being or becoming benign, or exaggerated views of the West's ability to influence internal Soviet developments, the United States and its allies should encourage progress in the West's direction. Gorbachev's reforms could conceivably produce a more competitive Soviet economy some decades hence that would make the U.S.S.R. a potentially more formidable adversary. Perhaps, but if so the character of that Soviet Union is likely to be unrecognizable.

A Western strategy of probing Gorbachev's words for opportunities, pressing for movement in desirable directions, and even consciously seeking to help Gorbachev would stretch well beyond past or current American policy. For four decades the cardinal rule in our policy of containment has been to oppose virtually whatever the Soviet Union was for. But in a period of significant change, such a rule falls into the trap Nietzsche noted when observing that the most common form of human stupidity is forgetting what one is trying to do.

America's basic national security objective has remained unchanged for four decades: to preserve the United States as a free nation with its fundamental institutions and values intact. As George Kennan observed in his original 1947 formulation of the policy of containment, our primary objectives in dealing with the Soviet Union were to contain the U.S.S.R. both ideologically and militarily by building up the strength and self-confidence of the nations threatened by Soviet expansion, exploiting natural tensions between Moscow and the international communist movement, giving internal contradictions within the Soviet Union time to emerge, and thus moderating the Soviet Union's conception of international relations so that we could settle outstanding differences. Kennan specified no timetable, although some of his associates anticipated that changes should have occurred

sooner.

Nonetheless, the similarities between current events in the Soviet Union and the consequences Kennan foresaw are not coincidental. The combination of time, NATO's determination not to yield to the Soviet Union any exploitable military advantage, the performance of Western market-oriented economies, and the Reagan Administration's active opposition to Soviet external adventures has fostered what appears to be an increasingly realistic assessment in Moscow of the fact, and even the causes, of Soviet failure.

The United States and its allies must now reach beyond containment to aggressive engagement of the Soviet Union in ways that encourage Gorbachev's reformist instincts to restructure Soviet external relations and internal institutions. This will mean paying strict attention to how far Gorbachev's Soviet Union has come, and how much further it has to travel.

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GRAHAM T. ALLISON, JR. is Dean of Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. He is coauthor, with William Ury, of the forthcoming volume, *Windows of Opportunity: From Cold War to Peaceful Competition*.

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# Beyond the Cold War

*Jeane J. Kirkpatrick*



*East Germans climb the Berlin Wall*

The postwar era collapsed in 1989. When the year began, relations among countries were essentially what they had been for forty years: a divided Europe, a Soviet Union that maintained an East European empire by force, and an America that assumed "superpower" responsibilities vis-à-vis its allies in NATO and in Asia. By the year's end the countries of Eastern Europe seem to have been liberated from the pressures of the Brezhnev Doctrine (though Soviet troops remained). Communist governments put in place and held there by force had collapsed. The division of Europe had been overcome symbolically with the collapse of the Berlin Wall,

and literally with the progressive opening of borders between Hungary and Austria, Czechoslovakia and Austria, East Germany and West Germany. More than 700,000 Soviet troops were still stationed throughout Eastern Europe, but the will to empire had apparently been replaced by a will to modernization.

Meanwhile the relative decline in U.S. economic power, the rising pressure of budget and trade deficits and the apparently declining Soviet military threat made defense costs and the "superpower" responsibilities of the United States seem less necessary to the defense of Europe and more difficult to justify or to finance. The cold war is over-nearly. The postwar era is finished-absolutely.

The structures through which international affairs have been conducted for the past forty years have been shaken to their foundations. Now comes the time of rebuilding. An American administration with an avowed aversion to "big think" (as one administration official called it) will likely be confronted with the most sweeping reorientation of U.S. foreign policy since 1947.

By 1989 four major processes of change were at work reshaping what had come to be called East-West relations: liberalization and reform inside the Soviet Union; the democratization of Eastern Europe; the determined move toward economic integration in Western Europe; and a new, apparently irresistible drive toward unification of East and West Germany. The conjunction and the cumulative impact of these ongoing changes promised to transform Europe-and the U.S. role in Europe.

All these changes were important, but the most important was change within the Soviet Union. It is, above all, Mikhail Gorbachev who is changing the world.

## II

Mikhail Gorbachev is what Sidney Hook called an "event-making man": a man whose actions transform the historical context in which he acts. He has already loosened the reins that have tightly controlled Soviet society since the Bolshevik Revolution—largely eliminating censorship, largely freeing emigration, permitting religious freedom not enjoyed in the Soviet Union since 1917, overhauling the structures of government, and providing elections with competition, discussion of public issues and a degree of choice. Gorbachev has not brought democracy to the Soviet Union—yet—but he has sponsored a new tolerance of diversity and restraint in the use of force that have had a profoundly liberating effect. Civil society is being liberated from the suffocating embrace of the state. The consequence is an outpouring of ethnic, religious, political and economic demands and analyses, a mushrooming of political groups formed around new causes. So far economic reforms have disrupted the Soviet economy without increasing production. But all this activity and diversity, all this openness and restructuring, are transforming the Soviet Union, Europe and East-West relations.

Obviously Gorbachev is not the only source of change in the world, in the West or in the Soviet Union. Alexander Solzhenitsyn, the late Andrei Sakharov, Anatoly Sharansky, the refuseniks and generations of dissidents have articulated alternatives to the stifling official Soviet prescription and have provided models of courage and honesty. Ronald Reagan and the Reagan Administration dramatized the need for change and made the case for freedom. The democracies of Western Europe provided nearby examples of the benefits of freedom.

The Information Age, the Strategic Defense Initiative, COCOM, the decision to deploy Pershing missiles in Europe and the promise of the European Community (EC) doubtless

also contributed to the Soviet motivation to change. Stagnation and the worsening economic situation were an important spur to change. The fact that the Soviet Union is the only industrial nation in the world with rising infant mortality rates and declining life expectancy statistics as well as worsening living standards contributed to the felt need for change.

But it was Gorbachev who, from the apex of the Soviet system, acted. The laws of history to the contrary, the Soviet Union was founded on the decisions of a single man and is being reshaped by the decisions of another. As Lenin thought he could jump over stages of history, Gorbachev apparently believes he can move the Soviet polity "backward" in Marx's historical trajectory from "socialism" to a stage of "pluralism" that the Bolshevik Revolution "skipped" on its way to the end of history.

Gorbachev's sweeping program of political, cultural and economic reform marks the end of totalitarianism in the Soviet Union. And with the dream of total power inside the country has apparently gone the dream of total power in the world.

Political reforms have already substantially altered the framework within which decisions are made on economic, military and foreign policy. Gorbachev seems to have understood the importance of changing the political method. The new Soviet method is a kind of imperfect parliamentarianism-which moves a giant step from government by force to government at least partly representative and responsible.

The method involves significant restraint in the use of force, internally and externally-whether toward striking Soviet miners, the Baltic republics' demands for autonomy or East European protest demonstrations. Gorbachev's restraint in

the use of force has transformed the situation in Eastern Europe, opened the way for a democratic revolution and altered relations with the United States and Western Europe.

The importance of these events for the world can be understood only when it is also understood that ever since World War II the Soviet Union has shaped relations among major powers in the West-absorbing some countries, provoking others to defend themselves. The opinions of revisionists to the contrary notwithstanding, the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, NATO, containment policy, the Reagan Doctrine and large American defense budgets were elements of the American and West European response to the stimulus of Soviet expansion and force.

The East European empire and the Brezhnev Doctrine symbolized the Soviet Union's will to conquest, its contempt for democratic self-determination and self-government, and its reliance on force as an ordinary instrument of foreign policy. The Soviet threat mobilized the West.

But shortly after becoming general secretary, Gorbachev said that each Warsaw Pact member could choose its own way. He said the Soviet use of force against fellow socialists or fellow Europeans was "unthinkable." Nikita Khrushchev, Leonid Brezhnev and even Joseph Stalin had made such declarations; the difference lay in what they did, not in what they said. Gorbachev accepted and even encouraged dramatic moves toward self-government by Hungary, Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Romania. 1989 was the year during which Gorbachev demonstrated that-at the very least-there were new, much broader parameters around which the people of Eastern Europe were free to act.

The cold war was grounded in the Soviet Union's will to empire and its use of force-symbolized by the tanks that subjugated Budapest in 1956 and Prague in 1968. The

abandonment of the Brezhnev Doctrine and of the effort to control Eastern Europe by force marks the end of the cold war.

We are nearly there, despite the Soviet troops in Eastern Europe, for there is powerful evidence that the will to conquest is gone, at least under this Soviet government.

### III

These momentous, unanticipated changes will not only liberate Eastern Europe. If completed, they will liberate the United States and Western Europe from the constraints of the sustained global military preparedness imposed by the cold war.

The United States confronts these dramatic events with a new president and new administration that are cautious by instinct. The Bush Administration took longer than many wished in "reviewing" East-West relations, leading some observers to worry aloud that the United States by its slowness would "discourage" change in the East bloc. Obviously this was an unnecessary concern.

The most pressing issue confronting the Bush Administration was not how to encourage change but how to react to the changes that developed. The administration reacted carefully; the president not only declined to "dance on the Berlin Wall," as one congressional leader suggested he do, he has deliberately refrained from "gloating" about the manifest failure of communism and has offered repeated assurances that he will not seek to "exploit" the upheavals in the East. President Bush was carefully nonprovocative during his trip to Poland and Hungary in July. He indicated a desire to be helpful in the process of reform and made clear his own strong feelings about the importance of liberalization or democratization of East European dictatorships. But he has

not sought to become a principal actor. He stands ready to help.

The question "Should we help Gorbachev?" should be rephrased as "What can we do to help Gorbachev?" and "What should we help Gorbachev do?":

-Gorbachev has pursued a rather large number of conflicting policies in the years that he has governed the Soviet Union. He is still engaged in a concerted effort to develop some very high-tech weapons. We do not want to help this Soviet effort.

-He is still spending billions supplying governments that deprive their citizens of self-determination and self-government and their societies of pluralism, for example Cuba and Afghanistan. We do not want to help him do this either.

-He is still resisting the introduction into the Soviet economy of private property and profit-making. We do not want to reinforce such reticence, if for no other reason than that it will cripple reform.

We want to help the Soviet people and Gorbachev as he moves his society toward pluralism, democracy and economic progress as we once helped countries of Western Europe.

The idea of a "Marshall Plan" for the Soviet Union, however, is particularly ill-conceived. It overlooks the fact that France, Britain, the Benelux countries and the other West European Marshall Plan recipients were modern industrial societies before they were devastated by war. Their people had the beliefs and habits of modern men and women. The Soviet Union is not a modern industrial society. It is rather, as The Times of London has noted, a Third World country with First World weapons. Its structures and traditions do not encourage development.

In the years since President Truman offered technical

assistance to less-developed countries, aid programs aimed at economic development have been undertaken by most countries in Western Europe and North America. The world has learned a good deal about how one country can and cannot help another to economic modernization.

Whatever one may think of alternative ways of organizing society and economies, it remains a fact that command economies, in which centralized bureaucracies direct things, do not produce economic growth. This strategy of development leads to stagnation. Moreover, the ill effects of this mode of economic organization cannot be overcome by resource transfers. It is like pouring water into the Sahara.

The development of Korea, Taiwan, Chile and a dozen other successes was based on respect for market forces and on individual initiative. Their experience shows that full democratic freedoms are not necessary to make market economies work, but some profit incentives and free movement of labor are. The Soviet system still features public ownership of almost everything, little freedom of movement for workers and few opportunities to profit.

Almost everything in Soviet society discourages and inhibits movement toward a more dynamic, market-oriented economy. To increase production, efficiency and growth, material incentives are needed but still lacking. To produce the goods that will serve as incentives to produce more, enterprise, flexibility and decentralization are needed-yet centralization, rigidity and uncertainty prevail. As economist Padma Desai has emphasized, the Soviets began reform with an inadequate understanding of how a market system works, and with "overwhelming state ownership of the means of production and a one-party state." Both are extremely unhelpful.

Not only that, but as societies develop, it is not just modes of production that change. People must change. Attitudes

toward time, toward achievement, toward authority, toward one's self and one's future are all associated with modernization. People must believe that their situation can get better before they will work to make it better. These human correlates of modernization drive economic development.

It is not clear that modernization can be achieved under conditions of socialism. The economic actor who drives the market system is an individual who makes decisions for himself about what is best for him to do-where to work, what to work at. The explosion of the individual into history created the energy that powered the modernization process. But socialism is proudly, confidently based on opposite conceptions. It focuses on collectives-on classes above all-and subordinates the individual to collectivity. It makes calculations in terms of the impact of policy on a collectivity. The collective rewards it offers are probably less than effective in stimulating individual effort, as intangible rewards are usually less effective than tangible incentives. A society in which rewards are collective but discipline is individual can probably neither achieve nor establish and sustain genuine growth. No socialist system has.

There is another very basic obstacle to Soviet economic growth. Socialism of any kind requires decision-makers who-at least in principle-make decisions that will be good for the whole, not "merely" for the decision-maker himself. More important, the decision-maker does not feel any direct economic consequences of his decision. He does not grow rich if he makes a good decision nor go without if he makes a bad decision. In a socialist system the one responsible for economic decisions does not enjoy economic benefits nor suffer the economic consequences.

In a system of centralized socialist planning, the decision-maker is more remote from his decision, is likely to be less

informed about it and less directly affected by its consequences. A socialist system does not eliminate the self-interest of the decision-maker, but it changes the nature of his interest. The socialist planner's success depends on good interpersonal bureaucratic relations. In a market system success depends on the goods produced and the profit achieved. The socialist system tends, by its very nature, to transform economic decisions into political decisions.

How then is it possible to stimulate production? How can the hierarchical, centralized, one-party state be persuaded to forgo comprehensive control over the economy-especially if those in power do not really want to do so? How can market incentives become an effective stimulus when the centralized planners tax away the lion's share of the resulting profits? How can supply respond to demand in the context of centralized bureaucratic planning? How can workers be expected to work harder if there are no rewards for enterprise? What does it matter if, in any case, there is nothing to buy with money earned?

In this situation it seems clear that resource transfers to the Soviet Union should be avoided. Economic assistance should be tied fairly directly to programs that encourage and reinforce the development of new incentives and new modes of production-not because we want to control Soviet affairs or exploit Soviet difficulties but because we want the economy to succeed.

Moreover, it is essential that in trying to help Gorbachev the United States and other Western governments seek forms of aid that will help create and strengthen structures of freedom and promote trade that ties the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe into the business activities (not the bureaucracies) of the world, through which they can make money and, as Lenin admonished, learn to trade. What is true in the Soviet Union is also true in Eastern Europe-in both places state monopolies

and entrenched bureaucracies work quietly against reform.

#### IV

Mikhail Gorbachev came to the general secretary's office in 1985 with a complex global agenda on which he had already begun to act. Repair of the Soviet relationship with China was a high priority. Overcoming the division of Europe to create a "Common European House" was another. Diminishing Soviet vulnerability to U.S. missiles drove an arms control agenda that also emphasized denuclearization of Europe.

He has made great progress toward all these foreign policy goals. He visited China, charmed Europe and weakened NATO. He secured withdrawal of U.S. intermediate-range missiles from Europe. But his greatest concern has been to construct a new European order from the Atlantic to the Urals.

Gorbachev has written and spoken frankly about his conception of Europe, in which the Soviet Union is to be an integral factor. He has visited Europe's capitals and courted its leaders. What does Gorbachev want for the Soviet Union in Europe? Respect, influence, perhaps hegemony in the "great European family." He has said repeatedly that he wants to put an end to the view that his country is aggressive and threatening. There is no Soviet threat, he has insisted. But what is the Soviet Union if it is not a threat?

Here we come to the Soviet problem. The Soviet Union is a military, not an economic, power. Gorbachev would like to maintain the Soviet status as a great power, as a country whose views are taken into account.

He does not want the Soviet Union to be odd man out in a united Europe. He does not want the Soviet Union to be isolated. If the Warsaw Pact countries lunge Westward-joining the EC or the European Free Trade Association, withdrawing

from the Warsaw Pact, as several clearly long to do, orienting their policies to the West-the Soviet Union stands to lose its status as a major power.

The best way for the Soviet Union to remain a great power is to be the leader of a bloc. But the Soviets can only be the head of the Eastern bloc if the Eastern bloc survives. Its viability is not certain, but one other thing is: Communist governments can only survive if they are protected by Soviet troops. Preserving the bloc requires preserving East Germany, which is the Western bulwark of the Warsaw Pact. Preserving Soviet influence requires preserving the Warsaw Pact itself, because it is the foundation of a Soviet position in Europe.

From the Soviet point of view, the disposition of Germany thus becomes part of the larger question: How can the Soviet Union prevent itself from being isolated in the new Europe? If all or most of the countries of the East opt for a multiparty system, free elections and free market policies, they will orient themselves toward the West. They will depart the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance and the Warsaw Pact.

Germany is a special problem that cannot be deferred. The disposition of "the German question" has enormous importance for the future of NATO and the EC, and for the balance of forces in Europe.

The question of German unification burst onto the European agenda last fall after the dramatic, unanticipated push of Germans west through the hole in the Hungarian border and then through West German embassies in Warsaw and Prague. Protest rallies against the government rapidly turned into demonstrations in favor of unification. "We are one people!" they shouted. West German generosity and hospitality seemed to say the same. The world was suddenly reminded

that the existence of East Germany depended on the division of Europe into communist and democratic blocs, and vice versa. A separate democratic East German state makes no sense. One of the first acts of a Germany that enjoyed self-government and self-determination would be to vote for national unification.

Suddenly other countries remembered that there were two divisions of Germany undertaken for two quite different reasons: the first division, carved out by the Allies, was designed to render Germany less dangerous; the second, carved out by Stalin, was designed to consolidate forever Soviet power in one part of Germany. Now the fear of a powerful, reunited Germany remains-even when the Soviet appetite lessens.

The very question of unification creates problems: To oppose it risks alienating the Germans forever; to support it means opposing Gorbachev and helping make Germany the most powerful state in the EC.

Gorbachev has made no proposal for the elimination of NATO and the Warsaw Pact, or for a unified, neutral Germany, or a unified Germany of any kind-doubtless because East Germany is an important chip in the high-stakes poker game Gorbachev is still playing.

If East Germany joins West Germany in the EC it would enhance the power of the West and contribute to the isolation of the Soviet Union. As long as the East German state exists, it serves as a bridge between East and West over which Gorbachev can walk on his way to play an important role in the "great European family." Both Germanys still remain dependent on the Soviet Union for progress toward the dream of a single Germany. And as long as Germany is divided the Soviets need not worry about re-creation of a major central European power.

The Soviet government faces two alternatives in Europe. It can try to maintain the status quo, preserve Communist parties and governments (under some guise) and keep Soviet troops and the Warsaw Pact in place. This option requires preserving an East German state and accepting the continued presence of American troops and NATO to protect the continent from Soviet hegemony.

Or the U.S.S.R. could sacrifice the East German state for a unified but neutral Germany, with the expectation that a neutral Germany would mean the end of NATO and of the U.S. military presence in Europe. This option would also re-create a major power-Germany-in the center of Europe.

After the Malta summit in December, the Soviets and the East German government (which is still wholly responsive to Soviet policy) came out squarely against unification. "We say no to reunification," read banners at one demonstration attended by the new East German Communist Party chief Gregor Gysi, the new president, Manfred Gerlach, and the Soviet ambassador to East Germany. But, as I write, word has arrived that Gysi has proposed the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Germany, and the reduction of German forces- tantamount to a neutral Germany. Bonn has indicated some interest.

Obviously the United States has a major stake in this. NATO without Germany is not viable, especially since France is not a fully integrated member. An American military presence in Europe outside the NATO framework is not likely to be acceptable either in Europe or the United States. A good many Americans-especially American officials-are as keen to remain in Europe as they are to "help" Gorbachev.

Several moves by U.S. officials have indicated that the Bush Administration has decided to support the Soviet position on reunification, as against the position of West German

Chancellor Helmut Kohl. Indicating this tilt, the United States has:

- undertaken a nearly public rebuke to U.S. Ambassador Vernon Walters for commenting that he expected Germany would be unified within five years.

- attended a four-power meeting on Berlin called by the Soviets, thus taking the position that German reunification requires the consent of the World War II Allies. Bush later made this explicit: "Our policy position is that there are certain responsibilities reserved under the Allied powers that have to be considered when you deal with German reunification." (The French have also described this position as "nearly identical" to their own.)

- given East German Prime Minister Hans Modrow and the state he leads a certain credibility and legitimacy-at a moment when mass emigration and political upheaval had put both in doubt-with Secretary of State James Baker's sudden, unexpected trip to Berlin. "I felt it was important that we have an opportunity to let the premier and the people of East Germany know of our support for the reforms that are taking place in this country," Baker told reporters in Potsdam.

- embraced, through the president's statement at the December NATO summit in Brussels, two conditions for reunification, one difficult, one nearly impossible: that unification come about gradually and that a unified Germany retain ties to the EC and NATO.

Both the United States and the Soviet Union may be said to have a kind of objective vested interest in the continued division of Europe. The United States has in common with the Soviet Union the prospect of a significantly reduced future role in Europe. For four decades, in a divided Europe in which the Soviet Union maintained control of Eastern Europe,

Western Europe needed U.S. help to defend against Soviet forces in a forward position. American military power was viewed as essential to the security of Western Europe, either because West European states were unable to defend themselves or because they (and we) had grown accustomed to the United States shouldering the burden.

If the cold war is over, the United States loses the related economic burdens and also its "superpower" status. It loses a good deal of the influence in Europe and Asia to which many Americans have become attached and accustomed.

NATO is not the only institution that is crucially affected by the question of German unification; so is the EC. Germany outside the Community is unthinkable. But a unified Germany inside the EC would alter the balance of power among the 12, and quite possibly leave Britain and even France more open to adding new members from the East-despite what European Commission President Jacques Delors had said about not admitting new members before 1992. Hungary has already applied for and been granted observer status in the European Parliament. Poland has manifested interest in a close relationship with the EC, and it seems very likely that one or more of the East European countries will apply for formal membership. How that application looks to the 12-when and if it comes-will be influenced by what happens on German unification.

V

The cold war was a direct result of successive Soviet governments' policy of using force to extend and preserve power in Eastern Europe. It will be over when the Soviet Union removes its troops from all East European countries that request it to do so (as the United States once removed forces and abandoned bases in France).

A withdrawal of Soviet forces is prerequisite to the full self-determination and self-government of Eastern Europe. Even though Soviet forces in the region have not been used to preserve entrenched governments, they could be; and there is no guarantee of the policy of Gorbachev's successor. No one can be certain of the Soviet Union's future, and therefore the maximum efforts should be made to make the world safer during the period that the Soviet Union is governed by men ready to reduce force and forces.

Obviously the United States should not agree to treating NATO and Warsaw Pact forces equally. NATO forces are present with the full consent of the host countries. Those countries participate in NATO voluntarily. When the countries of Eastern Europe have chosen their new governments, their decisions about membership in the Warsaw Pact will have a validity comparable to those of NATO members. The withdrawal of Soviet troops from Eastern Europe should be in the first instance a matter between East European governments and the Soviet Union, when the East European peoples have elected governments that can make legitimate decisions in their behalf.

Meanwhile, just as the principal goal in Conventional Forces in Europe talks should be deep reductions, the primary goal of arms talks should be arms reductions and destruction, not arms limitations: START, not SALT. The Bush Administration should seek the greatest mutual verifiable reductions compatible with protecting the United States against attack from the missiles of the dozen other countries with the capacity to produce and deliver nuclear and other unconventional weapons of mass destruction.

If troop withdrawal and the destruction of weapons are to come, it will be because the Soviet Union has lost its will to empire and is focused on international development. It will not be because we have devised a perfect agreement.

Americans have a well-known tendency to attempt to settle international disputes by contract. Hans Morgenthau, George Kennan, Henry Kissinger and others have noted an American tendency to legalism in the conduct of foreign affairs. We have attempted to outlaw war by contract, to guarantee human rights by contract, to eliminate categories of weapons by contract. The Covenant of the League of Nations was one elaborate contract authored by Americans. The Charter of the United Nations is another, of which Americans were the principal architects. Arms control agreements are the most common contemporary example of a contractual approach to international affairs.

But such contracts achieve their goals only when they serve the interests and reflect the power relations of the signatories. There is no supranational referee to enforce international contracts, no supranational police to ensure compliance; if there were one, it would be as politicized by interested parties as the United Nations has become.

Contracts are not needed to prevent nonaggressive nations from engaging in aggression, and they do not bind aggressors. No arms agreement is needed to protect us from the nuclear missiles of France and Britain and no arms agreement alone can be relied upon to protect us from potential adversaries. Arms agreements have never succeeded in containing, or even slowing, an arms race—though they have occasionally diverted weapons development onto another track.

However, the destruction of weapons is helpful, especially when it occurs in conjunction with a refocusing of national attention and resources. It is reasonable to hope that sweeping internal reform will bring such refocusing.

The basic problem between the U.S.S.R. and the United States is Soviet expansion and empire. That is the problem in

Europe and in so-called regional conflicts. The difficulties will only be resolved as the Soviet appetite for expansion ends, as it seems to be doing. When it does end, the Soviet Union will be willing to halt its heavy flow of arms to Afghanistan and permit the Afghan people self-determination. When it ends the Soviet government will stop organizing and channeling huge arms shipments to Cuba, Nicaragua and Syria. It will cease equipping terrorist groups. It will become part of the solution to these problems.

Until then the United States can attempt to negotiate an agreement that may-or may not-expand areas of peace. But like arms agreements, these will prove unreliable and only marginally helpful. (For example, the United States did not negotiate Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. They decided to withdraw and we negotiated an agreement about what would follow-an agreement that did not work well.)

## VI

The end of the cold war-when it comes-will inevitably reduce the importance of the U.S. role in Europe. The Soviet threat made NATO and U.S. military power vitally important to Western Europe. NATO is, and from the viewpoint of Europeans always has been, about the defense of Europe. This is its *raison d'etre*. NATO is the framework through which Americans were integrated into the task of deterring and, if necessary, defending Western Europe against attack. Regular communication and cooperation in this common task strengthened the bonds between the United States and other NATO members. Gorbachev and his colleagues are quite right in believing that removing the Soviet threat removes the reason for large numbers of U.S. forces in Europe.

Is it time to dismantle NATO? The Bush Administration has already begun to scramble to find other functions for the alliance. The central theme-and title-of Secretary Baker's

speech at the Berlin Press Club in December was "America in Europe After the Cold War." At about the same time that President Bush, seeking to reinforce NATO, declared that "the United States is and will remain a European power," Baker in Berlin asserted, "NATO will remain North America's primary link with Europe," and proposed new functions for the organization.

Baker's vision of a "New Europe on the basis of a New Atlanticism," with NATO as its central institution, reflects the familiar American view of NATO as a multipurpose alliance of democracies, a view Europeans have always resisted and are likely to continue to resist.

Baker proposed four new functions for NATO in the "new security structure for Europe." France objected to the first-a NATO arms control verification staff-even before Baker articulated it in Berlin. The second-a larger NATO role in dealing with regional conflicts and unconventional weapons-has been successfully resisted by Europe throughout the cold war because almost all NATO countries pursue their own national interests in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America. This is why it proved impossible to get an effective anti-terrorist policy among NATO countries, why France did not permit overflight of U.S. planes en route to a bombing mission in Libya, why Italy has sometimes limited the right of U.S. planes to land at NATO airbases, and why Germany's foreign office resisted cooperation on sales to the Middle East of the essential elements of a chemical weapon plant. It is why this or that European state has declined to help "resistance movements" in Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia and Nicaragua. It is extremely unlikely that significant joint planning to deal with these matters can be developed, regardless of what happens in Eastern Europe.

The United States' NATO partners are also not likely to be enthusiastic about Baker's third suggestion: that the West

work through the Helsinki Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe to develop measures to promote human rights and democratic institution-building in the East. West European governments have endorsed Gorbachev's proposal for reconvening the 35 members of the CSCE. They see the CSCE as a place for cooperation and bridge-building to the East and will resist East-West polarization-which in any case will not develop if Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and East Germany complete the transition to democracy.

Finally, American leaders need to face the fact that while most NATO members feel friendly and even grateful to the United States for its help through the long period of Europe's vulnerability, they do not regard the United States as a European power. They have not invited the United States to join the EC and are not about to do so. They are not enthusiastic about declarations like Baker's that we will create a new Europe on the basis of a new Atlanticism. Europeans are already engaged in creating a new Europe on the basis of the EC. They do not see the United States as a "partner" in this process. Americans need to understand this.

Willingness to withdraw U.S. troops also entails risks for Europe. It will leave the Soviet Union the strongest power on the continent. In a relationship between neighbors, one of whom is very strong and one much weaker, the independence and security of the weaker depends simply on the restraint of the stronger. Western Europeans know this. It is not likely that they will seek mutual withdrawal of U.S. and Soviet troops as an acceptable security arrangement. It is also not likely that American taxpayers will accept a prolonged U.S. presence in Europe in the absence of a persuasive Soviet threat.

If things develop in Eastern Europe as expected, Europeans will have new burdens to assume. Americans will have old burdens to relinquish. We will need to learn to be a power,

not a superpower. We should prepare psychologically and economically for reversion to the status of a normal nation, still seeking to encourage democratic institutions, strengthen the rule of law and advance American interests.

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JEANE J. KIRKPATRICK is Leavy Professor of Government at Georgetown University and Senior Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute. She is author of a forthcoming book, *The Withering Away of the Totalitarian State*.

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# From Cold War Toward Trusting Peace

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*McGeorge Bundy*



*President Reagan and Vice-President Bush meeting with General Secretary Gorbachev on Governor's Island, New York, in 1988.*

The annus mirabilis 1989 has made it clear that the Soviet Union and the United States now have it in their power to put an end to the cold war-the most important, expensive and dangerous phenomenon of the second half of our tumultuous century. It is too soon for historians to say that the cold war is over. There are still many unresolved tensions where mistakes on one side or the other could revive it. Moreover, excessive optimism could again be a cause of failure as it has been in the past.

Disappointed hopes about Joseph Stalin were one reason for the intensity of American responses in 1946 and 1947, and disappointed hopes for détente more than 25 years later led to the renewal of the cold war in the decade of 1975-85. If these two great nations are to make durably strong the stable peace between them that is so clearly in prospect as we enter the 1990s, the first point for both to keep in mind is that this task will take continued effort by both parties. The December meeting in Malta between Mikhail Gorbachev and George Bush seems to have been a hopeful step toward such a joint effort.

Nonetheless it is right to celebrate the great events that made 1989 the best year for East-West relations since World War II. At the end of the year in Eastern Europe there was one splendid surprise after another. The Poles had a government led by the men and women of Solidarity; the Hungarians were preparing for free elections after their Communist Party changed its name and lost most of its members; the old man who had ruled Bulgaria for 35 years was forced to quit; the massive demonstrations of those who would be free ended neo-Stalinism in Czechoslovakia and overthrew Nicolae Ceausescu in Romania. In the largest surprise of all, the East Germans decisively rejected their own hard-line leaders and an interim regime responded to millions of peaceful demonstrators by opening the Berlin Wall.

Every one of those great events has been accepted, and most have been explicitly encouraged, by the government of the Soviet Union. More astonishing still, those massive changes—except in Romania—have taken place with less violence than we have come to fear from a single soccer game.

## II

If the cold war could be ended as easily as it began, we could readily argue that the changes in Eastern Europe are in

themselves enough to finish it off: It started there, and it is ending there.

The single set of events that was decisive in ending wartime hopes for lasting Soviet-American friendship was the Stalinization of Eastern Europe between the arrival of the Red Army in 1945 and the death of Jan Masaryk in 1948. Franklin Roosevelt had tried to prevent what happened, but the words of the Yalta declaration-clear in their pledge of free elections in all the countries set free from Hitler, and hailed by Americans left, right and center-were overridden by Stalin's army and his local henchmen. The Yalta conference is misunderstood when it is remembered as a meeting in which Roosevelt and Winston Churchill gave away the freedom of East Europeans. That freedom was never theirs to give. Both leaders may have put more trust in words than they should have, but were they wrong to try? At the very least, as I argued 40 years ago in this journal, the words of that declaration set a standard by which Stalin's actions could be judged.<sup>1</sup> The great events of 1989 have precisely this meaning: If the rush to freedom is carried through, "the test of Yalta" will finally be passed, and the principles of the Yalta declaration will be realized.

The revolutions of 1989 have undermined the cold war in another way. They have given a massive and final blow to the appeal of international communism as the political wave of the future. Those of us who are old enough remember how much the cold war owed, in its beginnings, to fear of communists everywhere. Some of that fear was wildly exaggerated, though not all of it, but we need not here review that balance. What matters for the 1990s is that international communism has now plainly lost its missionary appeal. The communists who have been thrown out in Eastern Europe stand exposed as corrupt, tyrannical and incompetent, and their repudiation is plainly the work of the masses for whom they claimed to speak. The unfinished contest for China's

future leaves that country without political appeal beyond its borders. Even Gorbachev, attractive as he is as a politician, has no exportable ideology. Individual communist tyrants can still oppress their own people and trouble those nearby, as in North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba. But communism as a worldwide political movement died in 1989. There will be a parallel decline in the political appeal of anticommunism; not many will persist in endless war against the dead.

The peoples of Eastern Europe are themselves the primary authors of the great events of 1989. Without the clear consent and the general approval of Gorbachev those changes could not have come as they have. It is right that his name should have been cheered in East Berlin, but what is forcing change, amazingly, is the will of the peoples. I know of no one, expert or not, who foresaw these events, but their unexpectedness can only increase our admiration for the people who brought them to pass. In that number we must include those in government who have been willing to bend. If in 1776 there had been such men in power in London, our own revolution might have been fast and peaceful.

Still we must not suppose that the overthrow of tyranny is the same thing as the establishment of stable and peaceful democracies. Within each East European country there are deeply rooted antagonisms, and there is almost none without its memories of land and people now beyond its boundaries. Almost everywhere there is economic distress, and the task of economic turnaround will be harder than it was 45 years ago in Western Europe. External assistance is already in prospect, most generously from Western Europe, and it is probable that local wars can be prevented by the weight of Soviet power on the side of the territorial status quo. Nonetheless there will be a time of testing for all of the self-liberated countries.

The hardest problems of all-and the most important in terms of European peace-are those that lie ahead for East Germany. The apparently durable regime of Walter Ulbricht and Erich Honecker did seem to stand in the way of major change. In its way it was thus a guarantor of a strangely stable central Europe, where two world wars had been let loose in 25 years.

It is distressing, but not really surprising, that some of those who are habituated to the predictabilities of the cold war have displayed withdrawal pangs over the fall of the Iron Curtain. And it is entirely natural, indeed politically essential, that the future choices of both West and East Germans should take account of the interests of all their neighbors and of both superpowers. In terms of international law those interests are justified by the absence, still, of a German peace treaty. In terms of international politics they are more decisively justified by the reality that all the concerned parties must be reliably assured that there will never be a third world war caused by Germany.

My own conviction is that there is no such danger. I believe that the people of West and East Germany, perhaps more than any others, are now immunized from war-making. I also believe that one citizenry has learned from success, and the other from failure, that the real rewards of today and of the future are to be found in the arts of peaceful and productive work. I also believe, on a question that would be decisive by itself, that no German government, West or East or united, will ever develop its own nuclear weapons. I believe that such propositions would be widely accepted both by Germans and by those who know them best.

We cannot limit our interest in that enormous question, however, only to what will in fact happen. We must be concerned also with possibilities that will be feared. And what Germans might do in those matters will indeed be feared, even after forty years of West German statesmanship and

East German obedience. That is the inheritance, unwanted but unavoidable, that we all have from Adolf Hitler.

It follows that the arrangements of the Germans must include safeguards that will adequately take the place of the vanished Iron Curtain as a guarantor of the German commitment to peace. I do not here venture to suggest what those arrangements should be. The variables are many, and since the central concern must be with what does and does not prevent fear, we must allow for the likelihood that what is needed will change over time.

What deserves emphasis right at the start, however, is that the requirement of reassurance against what Germany might do is not a judgment against the Germans. It is not even a requirement placed on Germany only in the interest of others. The Germans, as much as any other people, need the same reassurance; except for the Jews, the people who in the end suffered most from Hitler were the Germans themselves.

One great guarantee of peace remains in place for the present—the armies of NATO and the Warsaw Pact. It is more than likely that there will be some early cutbacks in the forces deployed on both sides; there has already been progress in 1989 toward agreement on large-scale reductions in military forces, and there should be more in 1990. There is good reason, however, for both armies to maintain for some time the military presence that has been customary for so long. It will be appropriate for the two superpowers to reduce to a minimum the inconvenience that their presence imposes on those who live in the two Germanys. Training exercises in particular can be cut back. The professional readiness of those forces simply does not have the urgency now that it was thought to have in earlier years.

The political rearrangement of Germany will take time, and it would be a mistake for any government to pretend to

certainty about what that eventual rearrangement should be. In the first weeks after the Berlin Wall was opened, it was easy and natural for individual commentators to express themselves in sweeping terms-that German reunification was inevitable, or impossible. In truth, no one yet knows the answer. It is understandable that Chancellor Helmut Kohl should have expressed his own long-run hopes in his November 28 speech, which was also notable for its awareness of the distance from the present to the realization of such hopes. What we all need to remember here is what both German governments know very well. They have been actively negotiating the German future with each other for two decades now, and while there will be much more to discuss in the future than in the past, there is a great deal to be learned from their experiences.

The great innovator here was the former West German Chancellor Willy Brandt, who led the way to the set of agreements that opened the way to serious relations between the two Germanys in 1972. Brandt had the courage to reverse the priorities of West Germany-from an insistence on unconditional and therefore unobtainable reunification to an acceptance of the boundaries of the two Germanys as they were, along with a new Soviet guarantee for the security of West Berlin and a new acceptance by each German government of the other's existence. He then set out, and his successors have followed him, along a course using modest economic concessions-relatively easy for the rich West Germans-to increase the human and economic connections across the Iron Curtain. By 1989 those small steps had covered a lot of ground; the annual contribution of the rich West to the straitened East was running about six-to-seven billion deutsche marks, and the overall advantage to East Germany of its preferred trading relation with its larger and richer brother-state was even greater.

In the autumn of 1989, with change the order of the day in

the East, the government of Helmut Kohl made it clear that further steps, and larger ones, could and would be taken in response to the East German abandonment of one-party dictatorship. In effect the West Germans are offering massive reinforcement to their fellow Germans insofar as they commit themselves to free and democratic elections by May 1990. No one can predict with precision the kind of relations that a freely elected government will and will not want with its neighbors. It is a safe assumption that East Germany will want and get large-scale economic help from Bonn, and that there will be large-scale movements of Germans back and forth in both directions, for work and for play.

Over time the free movement of Germans, the free elections of a new East German government, and the offer and acceptance of a new economic partnership are likely to lead on to political relations that will go beyond those that are usual in separate states. If the winners of the East German elections should come in with a mandate for reunification, both the speed and the magnitude of such political change would almost surely increase. Obviously it will remain possible for the Soviet Union to prevent such change, but only at very high cost to its own objectives of lower tension, lower defense bills and greater economic connection. Moreover, there is much that German leaders can do to reduce the likelihood of a Soviet veto. First they can make it wholly clear that their new political arrangements reflect the commitment to democracy and human rights that have so strongly marked both the forty-year tradition of Bonn and the people's revolution of 1989 in the East. The Gorbachev government is not likely to believe that a Germany with that kind of political base is eager for conflict.

The Germans can also draw on the examples of Konrad Adenauer and Brandt to reaffirm and deepen two great commitments already part of their own history: the rejection of German nuclear weapons and the acceptance of the Oder-

Neisse line between East Germany and Poland. Both decisions were not so much a matter of right and wrong as a matter of good sense. The underlying reality is that neither boundary changes nor nuclear weapons would ever be as valuable to Germany as the international reassurance that has come from the decisions by both Adenauer and Brandt to keep those issues off the German agenda. The wisdom of their actions is amply demonstrated by the evident reality of political, economic and societal success in the Federal Republic. The newly connected Germany now on the horizon, whether or not in the end it becomes a single unified or federated state, will greatly reinforce its own peaceful future by unilateral and unconditional reaffirmation of those decisions.

As they address the future of the two Germanys, the leaders of West Germany will be concerned not only with what will give reassurance to all their neighbors, but also with the maintenance of their notable and constructive role in Western Europe. The West Germans will have the enormous asset of their solid record as good citizens of Western Europe, an honored and well-tended inheritance from Adenauer. The ways and means of community in Western Europe have a complexity that defies summary, but it is notable that there is not a single working organization in the region in which the West Germans are not active, effective and trusted. Every postwar German chancellor has been a good European; what Adenauer understood first is now understood almost across the board in Bonn, and it is backed by a profoundly European electorate.

For that reason it is natural, in West Germany, to think about "the German question" as part of "the European question." Even in its first passionate response to the opening of the Berlin Wall the government in Bonn did not lose sight of its interest in Poland's future; it has been responsive also to the reality that Hungary, by a timely opening of borders, played a most important role in the retirement of Honecker. Other

European leaders, like French President François Mitterrand, have been quick to recognize that the right response to new freedoms in the East is self-confident generosity from the emerging Europe of the West. The West Germans, by wealth and location and self-interest, will have a great role in all this—all the more so because their credentials as loyal Europeans have been validated by more than forty years of commitment and performance.

Finally, there is the relation between the Federal Republic and the United States. At the end of the year in which John McCloy died it is natural to remember that in the forty years since he went to Germany as U.S. high commissioner, each country has been the other's most important friend. For us the Japanese are now even more important economically and the British are even closer, but the Germans have been the most important to us and we to them. A breakdown of German-American trust at any time in all those years could have meant the end of freedom in the center of Europe.

Are we to suppose that this great connection no longer matters? The question answers itself. The relationship will evolve—fewer American soldiers on the scene, not so many angels (or devils) dancing on the head of the pin of nuclear policy, a need for cooperation in durable *détente* with Moscow, as against solidarity in standing up to threats. But there is no substitute available to either government for its partnership with the other. There may come a day when the peace of Europe does not need the Americans, or even a day when the peace between the superpowers is so strong that Europe can relax in its shade, but along the way to such distant goals the Americans and the Germans will still need each other.

#### IV

Let us return to the two superpowers and remind ourselves

that just as the Americans will still have a guarantor's role in the West, so the Soviet Union will insist on remaining a guarantor of its own security in the East. We can go clear back to the Yalta conference and remind ourselves that one large element in what Roosevelt and Churchill were attempting there rested on their own awareness and acceptance of the Soviet need for unthreatening neighbors. We can also remember that not every ardent Polish nationalist of that generation would have seemed a good neighbor even to a less black-and-white Soviet judge than Stalin. There will always be watchful Soviet eyes on the new leaders of Eastern Europe, but there are also great differences between 1945 and 1990. So far those new leaders have shown sensitivity to the requirement to avoid threatening the Soviets' power. Moreover, the Soviets appear to have reached a clear decision that they need neighboring governments that make them feel secure, but not governments that hold their own peoples in a neo-Stalinist grip.

We do not know-and quite probably Gorbachev himself does not know-just what is meant by his requirement that those newly awakened societies remain both socialist and loyal to the Warsaw Pact. If, as I think, it is right to expect that both Gorbachev and the new leaders of Eastern Europe will strongly prefer genuinely peaceful coexistence to any renewal of ancient quarrels, then it is also reasonable to expect that Gorbachev will succeed in finding enough socialism and reliability among his neighbors to satisfy his announced standards. There is no more elastic word than socialism, unless it is the word market, and it may well be that in the long run the new socialism of Eastern Europe, and the perestroika of the Soviet Union, will all be definable as cases of market socialism.

As for reliability, if it be defined as a relationship that ensures peace both within the group and with others in Europe, then

it can be found in many arrangements less expensive than that of allied armies fully deployed. Obviously the rearrangement here must be careful and it must take place in both alliances, but there is nothing in the declared purposes of either side that requires the two sets of deployments to remain as they are. No leader understands that reality more plainly than Gorbachev; none has less need for the postural rigidities that hardened in both alliances during the cold war years.

It is not yet clear that there is a parallel subtlety of understanding on the Western side. In December, as he visited NATO after Malta, President Bush appeared to share the general view of NATO leaders that if Germany is to be reunited, it should be reunited inside NATO. It is unlikely that such a formula would be acceptable to Moscow and it does not really make sense for Washington either. Does anyone really suppose that the détente so skillfully nourished at Malta would survive the incorporation of all of Germany in NATO and the arrival of American forces at the Polish border? Even supposing that the Russians would in fact withdraw in our favor from an occupation we have accepted for 45 years, do we really want to generate the fear and mistrust that would result if we took their place?

Those who talk of a united Germany as a member of NATO have not really decided what that would mean or how it could be acceptable to the Soviet Union. It is a shorthand way of asserting that a Germany rooted in Western Europe and linked to the United States is better for all than a Germany not so rooted and linked. That more general assertion is correct, but it is also incomplete if it does not respect the equally correct assertion that the Soviet Union, with its own intense memories of the war against Germany, will insist on safeguards more direct than those offered by the self-restraint of a self-consciously righteous NATO embracing all of Germany.

Fortunately the problem presented here is more apparent than real. Sooner or later it will be clear to all that the liberation of the six former satellite countries totally changes the calculus of danger in Europe. Those countries, in their new freedom, constitute a wide and strong buffer zone protecting both the Soviets and the West Europeans from their historical fears of one another.

In that situation the roles of both American and Soviet forces must change over time because the level of fear is so greatly reduced. It then becomes entirely reasonable to expect that there need be no more Americans in West Germany than the Germans truly want, and no more Soviet forces in liberated Europe than the liberated Europeans are willing to accept. It becomes quite likely that there should be no foreign troops at all in what is now East Germany. Sobered by all that was unexpected in 1989, I do not venture to foretell the eventual result. What does seem predictable, however, is that any result that is satisfactory to the free people on the spot will also be a stable reassurance to all concerned. Already in 1989 we have seen that interconnection, as the lowering of tension in the East decisively reduced the West German interest in modernizing short-range nuclear weapons. Each such demonstration of Western moderation is likely in its turn to help the men and women in Moscow feel at ease with change in Eastern Europe.

The reduction of American and Soviet forces in Europe will also help to increase the confidence of each superpower in the peaceful intentions of the other. In 1989 there was a gradual but significant shift in Washington from wariness to confidence about the reality of Moscow's commitment to major reductions in conventional forces. By the end of the year Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney was planning American reductions on a scale that he would have denounced as dangerous folly when he took office. The Malta meeting reaffirmed the commitment of both governments to

the early conclusion of a broad agreement on conventional arms reductions. Both the negotiations and the design of reduced military budgets will be demanding on the defense leaders of both countries, and it may well turn out that the rate of change is less rapid than optimists hope. But here as elsewhere in the new world of the 1990s it is the general direction of change, and not its magnitude in any one season, that matters most.

There is a busy season ahead, then, as each of the two superpowers rearranges its relations with the part of Germany and Europe to which it has been connected. What is striking about that prospect is if the two countries continue as they have begun, the changes required in the interest of good relations with allies will also be changes that improve the direct relations between the United States and the Soviet Union. We have here the exact converse of what happened in the first years after World War II, when the abrasive impact of oppressive Soviet expansion in Eastern Europe was rapidly countered by the integration of Adenauer's Germany into a recovering West.

Yet it is also right to emphasize the magnitude of the changes of 1989. It is hard to overestimate the value, both to the self-confidence of Europe and to the direct relations between Moscow and Washington, of the reduction in the Soviet threat in Europe that has resulted from the combination of multiple national revolutions and Soviet conventional restraint. By the end of the year there was official acceptance of what was already obvious to public opinion throughout the Atlantic alliance: Warsaw Pact countries, large and small, had neither the intent nor the capability for rapid assault on the West, and there would be ample advance warning of any large-scale move to change that reality.

In strictly bilateral terms there is a special importance to the strategic nuclear arms race. In Soviet memory it is almost surely the American atomic bomb, not the Iron Curtain, that marked the beginning of the cold war, and the first Soviet nuclear test in 1949 sharply increased cold war tension in Washington. It remains true today, as it has been since the 1950s, that each of the two nations lives in constant awareness that its whole society could be smashed in a day by the missiles of the other.

Strategic arms control had a thin decade in the 1980s. The second Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT II) Treaty was signed in 1979 by Jimmy Carter but never ratified by Congress. Ronald Reagan never understood what was and was not possible in the nuclear competition, so he committed himself recklessly to the unattainable goal of a leakproof space shield and then in his summit meeting with Gorbachev flirted briefly with a misconceived "abolition" of strategic missiles, thus making Reykjavik a permanent word of warning to his successor. In the end, when Gorbachev's good sense and the responsive diplomacy of George Shultz and Paul Nitze brought an excellent strategic agreement within plain reach, Reagan stubbornly preferred his dream of effective defense. That decision made a messy legacy for President Bush, and it is not all bad that 1989 has been a year of deliberation.

Yet much more is now possible and there are new forces on the side of large-scale strategic reductions. The most powerful, for both governments, may be the pressure on military budgets. New systems, pressing as they do against the limits of what is technologically feasible, come in at prices hard to defend at a time when the strategic stalemate is sturdy and the charge of dangerous imbalance long since dismissed by Reagan himself. What exactly is it that makes a single Stealth Bomber worth half-a-billion dollars? As the year ended, the Stealth program was being stretched out. Still more significantly, the appropriation for strategic defense

was repeatedly cut from Reagan's last proposals-by President Bush, the Senate and the House. No one now claims that there can be a leakproof shield, and those who proclaim the value of enormously expensive partial protection are each year less persuasive in Washington.

There is some tension between the downward pressure on military budgets and the complex process of agreed reduction by arms control agreements. It is often supposed that the only way to get agreements is to have good systems you can trade away-the most notable examples may be the primitive antiballistic missile deployments that were limited in the SALT I treaty and the Pershing missiles that were traded for Soviet SS-20s in 1987. Such build-and-bargain tactics, however, are not the only way of getting balanced and mutually reassuring reductions. In the new political environment that we all owe primarily to Gorbachev, it becomes entirely possible to make a virtue of moderation and to count it as a part of the process of constructive bilateral reductions.

It is also reasonable to hope that both great governments are beginning to escape from the pressure of the war-fighting doctrines embraced by military leaders on both sides in earlier years. The low point in the U.S. discussion on that issue came in the late 1970s when conservative civilians, with some help from retired military men, argued that Soviet leaders committed to victory in nuclear warfare were in fact acquiring a strategic superiority, which they would be able to use as nuclear blackmail to obtain a decisive cold war advantage.

It was one of Reagan's most valuable contributions as president that he made mincemeat of those false fears with a single sentence, first uttered in 1982 and then repeated regularly and in his last years jointly with Gorbachev: A nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. The

proposition is both deeply correct and highly constructive. Its practical meaning is that most of the new weapons systems developed by both sides in the last twenty years have been unnecessary or even destabilizing. Because nuclear war is unwinnable, only weapons (such as better submarines and single-warhead mobile missiles) that add significantly to overall survivability are worth buying, and even then not too many of them.

Yet not even a president with a gift for phrase-making and an earned immunity to criticism from conservatives can undo a whole strategic mindset by a single sentence. There is much serious work to be done in thinking through what it means, in terms of strategic doctrine, planning and procurement, to start from the proposition that a nuclear war cannot be won. The central tradition of military thought in both countries is that what you must do in war is win. In the particular version adopted as a formal service credo by the U.S. Air Force, you must win by the resolute and decisive application of strategic air power-nuclear since 1945 and including submarine-launched missiles since 1960. Unless Reagan and Gorbachev are all wrong about nuclear war, such pursuit of victory is quite literally nonsensical. You cannot win, and if you try to, you will only commit national suicide.

Senior military men are obviously not blind to that reality. In practical terms what they expect from strategic strength is deterrence, not victory. Nonetheless they have been slow to address the habits of mind that lead planners and service leaders to seek ways and means of attack that might in some numerical sense "win"; this creates, for example, a demand for ever more numerous "prompt hard-target killers." There will never be enough to win-that is the meaning of Reagan's statement-and building more and more only stimulates the new deployments of the opponent. What you need is enough to deter, as Dwight Eisenhower was the first president to say, and both sides have vastly more than enough as the 1990s

begin. I believe that the president who tells his senior commanders to apply common sense to strategic doctrine will find a ready response; many military men understand that there is an unbridgeable gap between inherited doctrine and the reality of strategic stalemate.

The stalemate of today would be a stalemate even if one side were to go on building while the other cut back by half its many survivable warheads. The band of parity, in Robert McNamara's phrase, is very wide. In such a situation there is no need for either government to be greatly troubled by the exact numbers of vehicles and warheads agreed in the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks treaty now so near to completion. What is needed on both sides is political determination, and here the words from Malta are encouraging.

There is also room on both sides for acts of unilateral moderation. Over time of course, such acts must be roughly matched if there is to be a sustained process of two-sided restraint, but it helps a lot not to have to worry about precise balances at every step. Indeed in that situation, once it is clearly understood, the side that takes the lead in moderation is doing itself a favor. It is saving money without risk. Bilateral moderation, with or without formal agreements, will be reinforcing to mutual trust. The two superpowers cannot abolish nuclear danger, but they can greatly strengthen their confidence in each other's rejection of nuclear war and by doing so reinforce each other's acceptance of stable peace.

Each side has much to learn about those realities. Budget pressures, improved doctrines, sensible restraint in procurement and new formal agreements will take time to have their effect on each other and on the overall attitudes of both governments. There will always be voices for caution in both capitals. On the American side there is a particular hazard of rigidity among those who really believe in the

nuclear orthodoxies of NATO planners. Fortunately there is also a much more impressive tradition in NATO, the one represented among American leaders by General Eisenhower and his best student, Andrew Goodpaster. In that tradition the underlying purpose is always the political reassurance of allies, not the deployment of this or that specific weapons system. Precisely because political reassurance will be much easier in the emerging post-Stalinist Europe, it will also be easier to avoid renewed entrapment in "requirements" that have their basis in dated doctrine, not in nuclear or political reality. American nuclear moderation, across the board from battlefield weapons to intercontinental missiles, will be reinforcing to Western self-confidence in the coming decade.

The most uncertain of all the relationships between the two superpowers are those that occur not in their direct encounters over strategic weaponry or over Europe, but in their relations to other countries, most of them in the Third World. Except for the important and welcome Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, we cannot call 1989 a year of great improvement in those relations. It is not surprising that the Malta summit produced no visible progress on the question of large-scale Soviet support for the unrepentantly old-fashioned dictator Fidel Castro and, through him, for communists in Central America. American policy in that region remains narrow, and much of the U.S. concern about turmoil in those small countries is absurdly exaggerated. Central America is not the soft underbelly of American security-Panama is an exception because of U.S. interests in the canal (and because of the viciousness of the fallen Panamanian leader, General Manuel Antonio Noriega).

As the year ends, the large Soviet role that is played in and through Cuba remains a source of mistrust and a serious constraint on other improvements in bilateral relations. Nothing would do more to ease the way for such improvement than a visible and sustained reduction in the Soviet subsidy to

Castro, and it will be entirely understandable if that happens only by independent Soviet choice, not by superpower negotiation.

## VI

Underlying the Soviet-American relationship-whether in Europe, in strategic weaponry, in Third World countries or indeed in matters of economics and human rights-is the question of communication and understanding between the two governments and their societies. In that broad field 1989 was a good year and, as in the case of freedom in Eastern Europe, we must give decisive importance to the role of President Gorbachev. Glasnost is not the same as free speech, because it goes only as far as authority permits, and there are still limits that are not unimportant merely because they are unspecified. Nonetheless the change since 1985 has been large and good, perhaps as great in those four years as in all the decades between the death of Stalin and Gorbachev's succession.

The new openness both in Soviet diplomacy and in political discourse is both a major element in the easing of the cold war and a major reinforcement of the prospect for stable and confidently peaceful relations between the two superpowers. In 1989 we had a striking demonstration of the constructive power of glasnost when Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze made a formal public acknowledgment that the radar at Krasnoyarsk violated the 1972 Antiballistic Missile Treaty, thus ending years in which implausible Soviet denials had interacted destructively with wildly overstated American claims that this one misplaced radar was of decisive strategic importance. Shevardnadze's courageous statement reflected a new level of Soviet understanding that systematic deception is the enemy of trust between nations. Conversely, when great governments deal openly with one another, and when they do what they say they will do, the reinforcement of their

mutual trust can be both quick and strong.

Before the cold war began, the great nuclear physicist Niels Bohr tried to persuade Roosevelt and Churchill that the first requirement of the nuclear age had to be openness-above all between the great powers, and most of all between the United States and the Soviet Union. He was not heeded at the time, and it is far from clear that what he wanted could have happened while Stalin lived. Nonetheless, Bohr was right. As the 1990s begin, the most important single source of new hope is that both governments do now seem to have leaders who expect to be open with each other and with their friends, to the common advantage of all. As a matter of history we cannot yet say that the cold war is over. But looking ahead from where we are now it is not wrong to say that the last decade of the century bids fair to be a time of steadily stronger peace, both in Europe and in the overall relations between the two great protagonists of the years since 1945.

1 McGeorge Bundy, "The Test of Yalta," *Foreign Affairs*, July 1949.

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MCGEORGE BUNDY is Professor Emeritus of History at New York University. His most recent book is *Danger and Survival: Choices About the Bomb in the First Fifty Years*.

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# Toward the Post-Cold War World

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*John Lewis Gaddis*



*East Berlin border guards stand atop the Berlin Wall.*

For the first time in over half a century, no single great power, or coalition of powers, poses a "clear and present danger" to the national security of the United States. The end of the Cold War has left Americans in the fortunate position of being without an obvious major adversary. Given the costs of confronting adversaries who have been all too obvious since the beginning of World War II, that is a condition worthy of greater appreciation than it has so far received.

It would be foolish to claim, though, that the United States after 1991 can return to the role it played in world affairs

before 1941. For as the history of the 1930s suggests, the absence of imminent threat is no guarantee that threats do not exist. Nor will the isolationism of that era be possible in the 1990s. Advances in military technology and the progress of economic integration have long since removed the insulation from the rest of the world that geographical distance used to provide. The passing of the Cold War world by no means implies an end to American involvement in whatever world is to follow; it only means that the nature and the extent of that involvement are not yet clear.

Finding one's way through unfamiliar terrain generally requires a map of some sort. Cartography, like cognition itself, is a necessary simplification that allows us to see where we are, and where we may be going. The assertion that the world was divided between the forces of democracy and those of totalitarianism-to use the precise distinction made in President Harry S. Truman's announcement of the Truman Doctrine-was of course a vast simplification of what was actually happening in 1947. But it was probably a necessary one: it was an exercise in geopolitical cartography that depicted the international landscape in terms everyone could understand, and so doing prepared the way for the more sophisticated strategy of containment that was soon to follow.

The end of the Cold War was too sweeping a defeat for totalitarianism-and too sweeping a victory for democracy-for this old geopolitical map to be of use any longer. But another form of competition has been emerging that could be just as stark and just as pervasive as was the rivalry between democracy and totalitarianism at the height of the Cold War: it is the contest between forces of integration and fragmentation in the contemporary international environment. The search for a new geopolitical cartography might well begin here.

I use the term "integration" in its most general sense, which is the act of bringing things together to constitute something that is whole. It involves breaking down barriers that have historically separated nations and peoples in such diverse areas as politics, economics, religion, technology and culture. It means, quite literally, the approach to what we might call-echoing some of the most visionary language of World War II-one world.

Integration is happening in a variety of ways. Consider, first, the communications revolution, which has made it impossible for any nation to deny its citizens knowledge of what is going on elsewhere. This is a new condition in international politics, the importance of which became clear as revolution swept through eastern Europe in the fall of 1989. A new kind of domino theory has emerged, in which the achievement of liberty in one country causes repressive regimes to topple, or at least to wobble, in others. Integration through communications has largely brought this about.

Consider, next, economics. These days, no nation-not even the Soviet Union, or China, or South Africa or Iraq-can maintain itself apart from the rest of the world for very long. That is because individual nations depend, for their own prosperity, upon the prosperity of others to a far greater extent than in the past. Integration also means that transnational actors like multinational corporations and economic cartels can have a powerful influence on what happens to national states. And in Europe, integration has led to the creation of a potential new superpower in the form of the European Community (EC). Europe as a whole, not just Britain, France or Germany, is already a major player in the world economy, and it may soon become one in world politics as well.

Consider, as a third manifestation of integration, security. It used to be the case that nations relied exclusively upon their own strength to ensure their safety, and that is still primarily

the case. But Woodrow Wilson began the movement toward collective security after World War I with his proposal for a League of Nations, and although that organization proved ineffective, it did give rise to a United Nations that in recent years has become a major force in international diplomacy. It is significant that the United States waited to gain U.N. approval before using force in the Persian Gulf. Washington has not always been so solicitous in the past, and the fact that the Bush administration proceeded in this way suggests that it has come to see important advantages in the collective approach, which is to say the integrative approach, to security.

Then consider the integration of ideas. The combination of easy communications, unprecedented prosperity and freedom from war-which is, after all, the combination the Cold War gave us-made possible yet another integrationist phenomenon: ideas now flow more freely throughout the world than ever before. This trend has had a revolutionary effect in certain authoritarian countries, where governments found they had to educate their populations in order to continue to compete in a global economy, only to discover that the act of educating them exposed their minds to the realm of ideas and ultimately worked to undermine the legitimacy of authoritarianism itself.<sup>1</sup> The consequences can be seen in Chinese students who prefer statues of liberty to statues of Mao, in Soviet parliamentarians who routinely harangue their own leaders on national television and in the remarkable sight of the current president of Czechoslovakia-himself a living symbol of the power of ideas-lecturing the Congress of the United States on the virtues of Jeffersonian democracy.

Finally, consider peace. It has long been a central assumption of liberal political philosophers that if only one could maximize the flow of ideas, commodities, capital and people across international boundaries, then the causes of war would

drop away. It was for a long time an idea based more on faith than on reality. But there is some reason to think that a by-product of integration since 1945 has indeed been peace, at least among the great powers. The prosperity associated with market economics tends to encourage the growth of liberal democracies; and one of the few patterns that holds up throughout modern history is that liberal democracies do not go to war with one another.<sup>2</sup> From this perspective, then, the old nineteenth-century liberal vision of a peaceful, integrated, interdependent and capitalist world may at last be coming true.

### III

Would that it were so. Unfortunately, the forces of integration are not the only ones active in the world today. There are also forces of fragmentation at work that are resurrecting old barriers between nations and peoples-and creating new ones-even as others are tumbling. Some of these forces have begun to manifest themselves with unexpected strength, just when it looked as though integration was about to prevail. The most important of them is nationalism.

There is, to be sure, nothing new about nationalism. Given that the past half century has seen the number of sovereign states more than triple, it can hardly be said that nationalism was in a state of suspended animation during the Cold War. Still, many observers did have the sense that, among the great powers at least, nationalism after World War II had been on the wane.

The very existence of two rival superpowers, which is really to say, two supranational powers, created this impression. We rarely thought of the Cold War as a conflict between competing Soviet and American nationalism: we saw it, rather, as a contest between two great international ideologies, or between two antagonistic military blocs, or

between two geographical regions we imprecisely labeled "East" and "West." One could even argue that the Cold War discouraged nationalism, particularly in western Europe and the Mediterranean, where the mutual need to contain the Soviet Union moderated old animosities like those between the French and the Germans, or the Greeks and the Turks, or the British and everybody else. Much the same thing happened, although by different and more brutal means, in eastern Europe, where Moscow used the Warsaw Pact to suppress long-simmering feuds between the Hungarians and the Romanians, or the Czechs and the Poles, or the (East) Germans and everybody else. Nationalism might still exist in other parts of the world, we used to tell each other, but it had become a historical curiosity in Europe. There were even those who argued, until quite recently, that the Germans had become such good Europeans that they were now virtually immune to nationalist appeals and so had lost whatever interest they might once have had in reunification.

Today the situation looks very different. Germany has reunified, and no one-particularly no one living alongside that new state-is quite sure of the consequences. Romanians and Hungarians threaten each other regularly now that the Warsaw Pact is defunct, and nationalist sentiments are manifesting themselves elsewhere in eastern and southeastern Europe, particularly in Yugoslavia, which appears to be on the verge of breaking up.

The same thing could even happen to the Soviet Union itself: nationalist pressures the regime thought it had smothered as far back as seven decades ago are coming to the forefront once again, to such an extent that we can no longer take for granted the continued existence of that country in the form that we have known it.

Nor should we assume that the West is immune from the fragmenting effects of nationalism. The Irish question ought

to be a perpetual reminder of their durability; there is also the Basque problem in Spain, and the rivalry between the Flemings and the Walloons in Belgium. The American presence in the Philippines is becoming increasingly tenuous in the face of growing nationalism, and similar pressures are building in South Korea. Nationalism is even becoming an issue in Japan, what with recent controversies over the treatment of World War II in Japanese history textbooks and the Shinto ceremonies that officially began the reign of the Emperor Akihito. It is worth recalling as well how close the Canadian confederation came in 1990 to breaking up-as it yet may-over the separatist aspirations of Quebec. There was even a point last year when the Mohawk Indians were demanding, from Quebec no less, recognition of their own rights as a sovereign state.

But the forces of fragmentation do not just take the form of pressures for self-determination, formidable though those may be. They also show up in the field of economics, where they manifest themselves as protectionism: the effort, by various means, to insulate individual economies from the workings of world market forces. They show up in the racial tension that can develop, both among states and within them: the recent killings of blacks by blacks in South Africa, after the release of Nelson Mandela, illustrates the problem clearly.

They certainly show up in the area of religion. The resurgence of Islam might be seen by some as an integrationist force in the Middle East. But it is surely fragmentationist to the extent that it seeks to set that particular region off from the rest of the world by reviving ancient and not-so-ancient grievances against the West, both real and imagined. Forces of fragmentation can even show up as a simple drive for power, which is the only way I can make sense out of the fiendishly complex events that have torn Lebanon apart since the civil war began there in 1975. One can look at Beirut as it has

been for the past decade and a half and get a good sense of what the world would look like if the forces of fragmentation should ultimately have their way.

Fragmenting tendencies are also on the rise-they have never been wholly absent-within American society itself. It would be difficult to underestimate the disintegrative effects of the drug crisis in this country, or of the breakdown of our system for elementary and secondary education, or of the emergence of what appears to be a permanent social and economic "underclass." Well-intentioned efforts to decrease racial and sexual discrimination have increased racial and sexual-as well as constitutional-tensions.<sup>3</sup> Linguistic anxieties lurk just beneath the surface, as the movement to make English the official language of the United States suggests. Immigration may well be increasing at a faster rate than cultural assimilation, which in itself has been a less than perfect process. Regional rivalries are developing over such issues as energy costs, pollution control and the bailout of the savings and loan industry. And the rise of special interest groups, together with their ability to apply instant pressure through instant communications, has thrown American politics into such disarray that elections are reduced to the unleashing of attack videos, and the preparation of the budget has come to resemble the endless haggling of rug merchants in some Oriental bazaar. When the leading light of American conservatism has to call for a return to a sense of collective interest, then the forces of fragmentation have proceeded very far indeed.<sup>4</sup>

All of this suggests that the problems we will confront in the post-Cold War world are more likely to arise from competing processes-integration versus fragmentation-than from the kinds of competing ideological visions that dominated the Cold War. Unlike the old rivalry between democracy and totalitarianism, though, the new geopolitical cartography provides no immediately obvious answer to the question of

which of these processes might most threaten the future security interests of the United States.

#### IV

It would appear, at first glance, that the forces of integration ought to be the more benign. Those forces brought the Cold War to an end. They provided the basis for the relative prosperity that most of the developed world enjoyed during that conflict, and they offer the most plausible method of extending that prosperity into the post-Cold War era. They combine materialism and idealism in a way that seems natural to Americans, who tend to combine these traits in their own national character. And they hold out the promise of an international order in which collective, not unilateral, security becomes the norm.

But is the trend toward integration consistent with the traditional American interest, dating back to the Founding Fathers, in the balancing of power? Has that interest become obsolete in the new world that we now confront? The longstanding American commitment to the balance of power was based on the assumption that the nation would survive most comfortably in a world of diversity, not uniformity: in a homogeneous world, presumably, one would not need to balance power at all. No one would claim that the progress of integration has brought us anywhere close to such a world. Still, the contradiction that exists between the acts of balancing and integrating power ought to make us look carefully at the post-Cold War geopolitical map. Jumping to conclusions-in favor of either integrationist or fragmentationist alternatives-could be a mistake.

Consider the long-term ecological problems we are likely to face. The prospect of global warming looms as a constraint upon future economic development conducted in traditional-which is to say, polluting-ways. Integration here, in the form

of expanding industrialization and enhanced agricultural productivity, has created a new kind of danger. The worldwide AIDS epidemic illustrates how one integrative force, the increasing flow of people across international boundaries, can undermine the effects of another, which is the progress made toward the conquest of disease. Population pressure, itself the result of progress in agricultural productivity and in conquering disease, is in turn magnifying disparities in living standards that already exist in certain parts of the world, with potentially disintegrative results. The forces of integration, therefore, provide no automatic protection against ecological threats: indeed, they are part of the problem. Despite classical liberal assumptions, we would be unwise in assuming that an ever-increasing flow of people, commodities and technology across international borders will necessarily, at least from the ecological standpoint, make the world a safer place.

Consider, next, the future of Europe. The reunification of Germany, together with the enfeeblement and possible breakup of the Soviet Union, is one of the most abrupt realignments of political, military and economic power in modern history. It has come about largely as a result of those integrative forces that ended the Cold War: the much-celebrated triumph of democratic politics and market economics.<sup>5</sup> And yet, this victory for liberalism in Europe is producing both integrative and disintegrative consequences. In Germany, demands for self-determination have brought political integration, to be sure, but the economic effects could be disintegrative. There are concerns now over whether the progress the EC has made toward removing trade and immigration barriers will be sufficient to tie the newly unified Germany firmly to the West; or whether the new Germany will build its own center of power further to the east, with the risk that this might undo the anticipated benefits of 1992.

In the Soviet Union, the triumph of liberalism has had

profoundly disintegrative consequences. The central government faces the possibility of becoming irrelevant as power diffuses down to the level of the republics, and even below. No one knows what the future political configuration, to say nothing of ideological orientation, of the potential successor states might be. Civil war, and even international war growing out of civil war, are by no means unrealistic prospects; such disruptions would be all the more dangerous because the Soviet Union's massive arsenal of nuclear and conventional weapons will not disappear, even if the Soviet Union itself does.<sup>6</sup> The future of Europe, in short, is not at all clear, and it is the increasing tension between processes of integration and fragmentation that has suddenly made the picture there so cloudy.

Then consider the Middle East and Africa. The combination of German reunification with Soviet collapse, if it occurs, will involve the most dramatic changes in international boundaries since the end of World War II. And yet no one seems to be thinking about what precedents this might set for other parts of the world where boundaries inherited from the colonial era do not even come close to coinciding with patterns of ethnicity, nationality or religion. If the Lithuanians are to get their own state, it will not be easy to explain to the Palestinians or the Kurds or the Eritreans why they should not have theirs also. If the boundaries of the dying Soviet empire are to be revised, then why should boundaries established by empires long since dead be preserved?

Finally, consider the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. It was Iraq's integration into the international market in sophisticated military technology that made it possible for Saddam Hussein to perform this act of aggression. His arsenal of chemical and biological weapons, to say nothing of his surface-to-air-missiles, Scuds, Mirages, the nuclear weapons he probably would have had if the Israelis had not bombed his reactor in 1981 and the long-range artillery he certainly would have had

if the British had not become suspicious of his orders for very thick "oil pipes" early in 1990-all of this hardware was not forged by ingenious and self-reliant Iraqi craftsmen, working tirelessly along the banks of the Euphrates. Saddam obtained it, rather, by exploiting an important consequence of integration, which is the inability or unwillingness of highly industrialized states to control what their own entrepreneurs, even those involved in the sale of lethal commodities, do to turn a profit.

The global energy market-another integrationist phenomenon-created the riches that made Kuwait such a tempting target in the first place; it also brought about the dependence on Middle Eastern oil that caused so rapid a military response on the part of the United States, its allies and even some of their former adversaries. The eagerness of this improbable coalition to defend the principle of collective security would hardly have been as great if Benin had attacked Burkina Faso, or vice versa.

There is, of course, no assurance that Saddam Hussein would have refrained from invading Kuwait if the Cold War had been at its height. But there is a fair chance that either the United States or the Soviet Union-depending upon which superpower Iraq was aligned with at the time-would have sought to exert a restraining influence, if only to keep its principal rival from exploiting the situation to its own advantage. Certainly distractions associated with the end of the Cold War in Europe during the first half of 1990 prevented both Washington and Moscow from giving the attention they should have to Persian Gulf affairs.

It is also worth remembering that the first post-Cold War year saw, in addition to the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, the near-outbreak of war between India and Pakistan, an intensification of tension between Israel and its Arab neighbors, a renewed Syrian drive to impose control over

Lebanon and a violent civil war in Liberia. Conflict in the Third World, it appears, is not going to go away just because the Cold War has; indeed it may well intensify.

Finally, consider one other form of regional conflict that is likely to affect the post-Cold War era: it is what we might call the "post-Marxist revolution" crisis. The most potent revolutionary force in the Third World these days may well be democracy. But it is no clearer there than it is in Europe that this supposedly integrative "triumph of liberalism" will necessarily promote peace. For just as the United States used to justify its intervention in Third World countries as a means of "inoculating" them against the "bacillus" of communism, so the post-Cold War era could see military interventions by the old democracies for the purpose of confirming in power-or restoring to power-new democracies. The violent, but overwhelmingly popular, American military operation to apprehend General Manuel Antonio Noriega in Panama could well portend things to come.

Threats can arise, though, not only from external sources; for the way in which a nation chooses to respond to threats can, under certain circumstances, pose as much of a danger to its long-term interests as do developments beyond its borders. The United States did not have to involve itself, to the extent that it did, in the Vietnam War. It did not have to become as dependent as it has on foreign oil. It did not have to accumulate such massive budget deficits that the government will have no choice but to allocate a significant percentage of its revenues, well into the 21st century, to paying off the accumulated debt. All of these were decisions Americans made, not their adversaries; yet their consequences have constrained, and in the case of energy dependency and the national debt, will continue to constrain, American freedom of action in the world for years to come.

These problems evolved from a curious unevenness that

exists within the United States these days in the willingness to bear pain. Americans have readily accepted pain in connection with their integrative role as a global peacekeeper. They have repeatedly sent troops and resources overseas for the purpose of resisting aggression, even in situations where the probability of an attack was remote and where the states they were defending did not always see fit to contribute proportionately to their own defense. The United States has been unwilling to accept even moderate pain, though, when it comes either to raising the taxes necessary to support the government expenditures its citizens demand, or to cutting back on those expenditures to bring them into line with the taxes its citizens are willing to pay. The United States is generous, even profligate, with its military manpower and hardware, but it is selfish to the point of irresponsibility when it comes to issues of lifestyle and pocketbook.<sup>7</sup> As a result, a kind of division of labor has developed within the international community, in which the United States contributes the troops and the weaponry needed to sustain the balance of power, while its allies finance the budgetary, energy and trade deficits Americans incur through their unwillingness to make even minimal sacrifices in living standards.

Whatever the causes of this situation, the long-term effects cannot be healthy ones. Americans will not indefinitely serve as "mercenaries" overseas, especially when the troops recruited in that capacity come, as they disproportionately do, from the less fortunate social, economic and educational classes. Resentment over this pattern-when it develops-is likely to undermine whatever foreign policy consensus may yet remain. Pressures will eventually build for all Americans to bear their fair share of all the burdens that are involved in being a world power, and that may considerably diminish the attractions of continuing to be one.

The end of the Cold War, therefore, brings not an end to

threats, but rather a diffusion of them: one can no longer plausibly point to a single source of danger, as one could throughout most of that conflict, but dangers there still will be. The architects of containment, when they confronted the struggle between democracy and totalitarianism in 1947, knew which side they were on; the post-Cold War geopolitical cartography, however, provides no comparable clarity. In one sense, this represents progress. The very absence of clear and present danger testifies to American success in so balancing power during the past four and a half decades that totalitarianism, at least in the forms we have considered threatening throughout most of this century, is now defunct. But, in another sense, the new competition between the forces of integration and fragmentation presents us with difficult choices, precisely because it is by no means as clear as it was during the Cold War which tendency we should want to see prevail.

## V

Examine, first, the most extreme alternatives. A fully integrated world would be one in which individual countries would lose control of their borders and would be dependent on others for critical resources, capital and markets. It would mean, therefore, a progressive loss of national sovereignty, and ultimately the loss of whatever remained of national identity. A fully fragmented world would approximate the Hobbesian state of anarchy that theorists of international relations assume exists but that, in practice, never has: the world would be reduced to a gaggle of quarreling principalities, with war or the threat of war as the only means of settling disputes among them. Both of these extremes-for these are obviously caricatures-would undermine the international state system as we now know it: the first by submerging the autonomy of states within a supranational economic order; the second by so shattering state authority as to render it impotent.

No one seriously claims that, with the end of the Cold War, we can abandon the international state system or relinquish national sovereignty: not even our most visionary visionaries are prepared to go that far. This suggests, therefore, that the United States and its allies retain the interest they have always had in the balancing of power, but that this time the power to be balanced is less that of states or ideologies than of the processes-transcending states and ideologies-that are tending toward integrationist and fragmentationist extremes. Instead of balancing the forces of democracy against those of totalitarianism, the new task may well be to balance the forces of integration and fragmentation against each other.

What would this mean in practical terms? In the best of all possible worlds, of course, it would require taking no action at all, because integrationist and fragmentationist forces would balance themselves. Unfortunately, though, in the imperfect world in which we live things rarely work out this neatly. Gaps generally exist between what one wants to have happen and what seems likely to happen; it is here that the choices of states-and of the leaders who govern them-make a difference.

These choices in the post-Cold War world are likely to center on those areas in which integrationist and fragmentationist forces are not now balanced; where the triumph of one over the other could upset the international stability upon which rest the security interests of the United States, its allies, and other like-minded states; and where action is therefore needed to restore equilibrium. They are likely to include the following:

The Soviet Union and eastern Europe.

Over the next decade, the most serious source of instability in world politics will probably be the political, economic and social fragmentation that is already developing where

communism has collapsed. Marxism-Leninism could hardly have suffered a more resounding defeat if World War III had been fought to the point of total victory for the West.

Fortunately victory, this time, did not require a war. The trouble with victory, though, is that it tends to produce power imbalances. It was precisely to avoid this danger that the peacemakers of 1815 and 1945, who designed the two most durable peace settlements of modern times, moved quickly after their respective triumphs to rehabilitate defeated adversaries and to invite them back into the international state system. Perhaps because the communist regimes of the Soviet Union and eastern Europe have not actually suffered a military defeat-and also because of recent distractions in the Persian Gulf-we in the West are not focusing as carefully as we should on the problems of reconstruction and reintegration in that part of the world. But should fragmentationist forces prevail there, the resulting anarchy-and mass emigration away from anarchy-could destabilize any number of power balances. The situation then would certainly command our attention, even if it does not now.

The peoples of the Soviet Union and eastern Europe will of course have to bear the principal burdens of reconstruction. But they will not be able to accomplish this task alone, and already discouragement and demoralization have set in among them. It is in dealing with this kind of despair that aid from the "West"-including Japan-can have its greatest impact. A multinational Marshall Plan for former communist states sounds impractical given the extent of the problem and the existence of competing priorities at home, but the "highly leveraged" character of that earlier and highly successful enterprise ought not to be forgotten. The Marshall Plan worked by employing small amounts of economic assistance to produce large psychological effects. It restored self-confidence in Europe just at the point, some two to three years after the end of the war, at which it was sagging. What

was critical was not so much the extent of the aid provided as its timing, its targeting and its publicity: its main purpose was to shift the expectations of its recipients from the belief that things could only get worse to the conviction that they would eventually get better.

It will serve no one's interests in the West now, anymore than it would have served the interests of the victorious allies after World War II, to allow despair, demoralization and disintegration to prevail in the territories of defeated Cold War adversaries. What happened in Germany after World War I ought to provide a sufficiently clear warning of the consequences that can follow when victors neglect the interests of those they have vanquished, and thereby, in the long run, neglect their own.

New security and economic structures for Europe.

Glaciers, when they invade a continent, not only obscure its topography but, through the weight of the accumulated ice, literally press its surface down into the earth's mantle. Retreats of glaciers cause old features of the landscape slowly to rise up again, sometimes altered, sometimes not. The expansion of Soviet and American influence over Europe at the end of World War II had something of the effect of such a glacier. It froze things in place, thereby obscuring old rivalries and bringing peace-even if a "cold" peace-to a continent that had known little of it throughout its history.

But now that the Cold War is over, geopolitical glaciers are retreating, the situation is becoming fluid once again, and certain familiar features of the European landscape-a single strong German state, together with ethnic and religious antagonisms among Germany's neighbors to the east-are once more coming into view. The critical question for the future stability of Europe is the extent to which the Cold War glacier permanently altered the terrain it covered for so long.

Integrationist structures like the EC and NATO suggest such alteration; but they could also have been artifacts of the glaciation itself. If so, these organizations will become increasingly vulnerable as the forces of fragmentation revive.

No economic or security structure for Europe can hope to be viable over the long term unless it incorporates and benefits all of the major states on that continent: the classic lesson is the Versailles Treaty of 1919, which sought to build a peace that treated Germany as a pariah and excluded Soviet Russia altogether. But neither the EC nor NATO has given sufficient attention to how each might restructure itself to accommodate the interests of the former Warsaw Pact states, including whatever is left of the Soviet Union. Few efforts have been made to think through how these integrative organizations might expand the scope of their activities to counter the fragmentationist challenges-coming from the reunification of Germany, the liberation of Eastern Europe and the possible collapse of the U.S.S.R.-that are already evident.<sup>8</sup>

The United States has used its influence, over the years, to favor integration over fragmentation in Europe; indeed without that influence, it is difficult to see how integration could have proceeded as far as it has. But Americans cannot expect to maintain the authority the Cold War gave them on the continent for very much longer, especially now that the Soviet "glacier" is so obviously retreating. We would do well, then, to consider what new or modified integrative structures might replace the role that the United States-and, by very different means, its former adversaries-played in "freezing" disintegrative forces in Europe during the Cold War. Otherwise, serious imbalances could develop in that part of the world as well.

Deterring aggression.

One thing the Cold War did was to make the use of force by the great powers against one another virtually unthinkable. It created inducements that caused states to seek to resolve peacefully-or even to learn to live with-accumulated grievances that could easily, prior to 1945, have provoked major wars. It did this by appealing more to fear than to logic, but patterns of behavior that arise out of fear can, in time, come to seem quite logical. Few today would question the desirability of perpetuating, and if necessary reinforcing, the inhibitions that arose, during the postwar decades, against once violent patterns of great power behavior.

The unprecedented multinational response to Saddam Hussein's aggression against Kuwait suggests that an opportunity now exists to extend disincentives to war beyond the realm of the great powers. The need to do this is urgent because the end of the Cold War is likely to end the informal crisis-management regime the United States and the Soviet Union have relied upon in the past to keep such regional conflicts limited.

Woodrow Wilson's vision of collective international action to deter aggression failed to materialize after 1919 because of European appeasement and American isolationism, and after 1945 because of the great power rivalries that produced the Cold War. None of these difficulties exist today. The world has a third chance to give Wilson's plan the fair test it has never received, and fate has even provided an appropriate occasion: successful U.N. action to restore Kuwaiti independence sets a powerful example that could advance us some distance toward bringing the conduct of international relations within the framework of international law that has long existed alongside it, but too often apart from it.<sup>9</sup>

Can such a legalistic vision sustain the realistic security interests of the United States? Whether rightly or wrongly, the answer was negative after World Wars I and II; but

Americans have reasons, this time, for giving a more positive reply. The "long peace" that was the Cold War has already created in the practice of the great powers mechanisms for deterring aggression that have worked remarkably well: these did not exist prior to 1945. There could be real advantages now in codifying and extending this behavior as widely as possible. The evolution of a new world order designed to deter aggression could ensure that the most important benefits of the "long peace" survive the demise of the Cold War. It could also counteract the dangerous conviction, which American leaders still at times appear to hold, that only the United States has the will and the capacity to take the lead in policing (or nannying) the world.

Finding appropriate limits of interdependence.

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait raises another issue, though, that will involve more difficult choices: it has to do with just how far we want economic integration to proceed. The purpose of having global markets is to ensure prosperity, not to compromise national sovereignty. And yet, it was the international market in oil and armaments that made it possible for Saddam Hussein to violate Kuwaiti sovereignty. Economic integration, in this instance, produced literal political fragmentation. This unexpected and dangerous juxtaposition suggests strongly the need to think, more seriously than we have to this point, about how the economic and political forces that are shaping our world intersect with one another, and about where our own security interests with respect to these lie.

Certainly there is much to be said, from a strictly economic perspective, in favor of reducing barriers to trade, investment and even labor flows across international boundaries if the result is to maximize production, minimize prices and ensure that consumer needs are satisfied. But what if the result is also to allow despots easy access to sophisticated military

technology, or to increase the West's reliance on energy resources it does not control? Do market principles require that we welcome on a continuing basis the dispatch of troops to safeguard critical supplies halfway around the world? There are political costs to be paid for economic integration, and we are only now beginning to realize what they are.

These issues are only part of the much larger problem of how one balances the advantages of economic integration against its political and social disadvantages. Are Americans really sure, for example, that they want to integrate their own economy into the world market if the result of doing that is to shut down industries they have historically relied upon for both jobs and national defense? When the effects of integration are to transform once-diversified industrial complexes into strings of fast-food outlets and shopping malls, with the reduction in wages that kind of employment normally brings, one can hardly expect people to be out in the streets cheering for them, however ingenious the rationalizations of our professional economists.

Increasing labor mobility, together with the liberalized immigration policies that facilitate it, provides yet another example of how economic integration could produce political fragmentation. There are undeniable advantages in allowing immigration, not just because it provides cheap labor but also because in some instances the host nation can gain a diverse array of sophisticated skills as a result. But immigration also risks altering national identity, and the forces of integration have by no means advanced to the point at which one can dismiss concerns over that issue as anachronistic.<sup>10</sup> As a nation of immigrants, the United States handles problems of cultural assimilation more easily than most nations. Still, they are real problems, and they exist on a world-wide scale. Attempts to write them off as reflections of an antiquated "nationalism," or even "racism," are not likely to make them go away.

What all of this suggests, therefore, is that we need better mechanisms for balancing the processes of integration and fragmentation at those points at which economic forces intersect those of politics and culture. The increasing permeability of boundaries is going to be an important characteristic of the post-Cold War world, and it would be a great mistake to assume-as market principles encourage us to assume-that in such an environment an "invisible hand" will always produce the greatest benefits for the greatest number. As in most other areas, an equilibrium will be necessary: if imbalances of power are not to develop, then a certain amount of protectionism, within prudent limits, may be required.

#### Regaining solvency.

The principle of balancing power also requires that ends be balanced against means. National security, even in the most auspicious of circumstances, does not come cheap. This country's reluctance to bring the costs of providing for its security into line with what it is willing to pay suggests that integrative and disintegrative mechanisms are imperfectly balanced within the United States as well as beyond its borders.

The last American president to preoccupy himself with solvency, Dwight D. Eisenhower, regularly insisted that the National Security Council specify as "the basic objective of our national security policies: maintaining the security of the United States and the vitality of its fundamental values and institutions." To achieve the former without securing the latter, he warned, would be to "destroy what we are attempting to defend."<sup>11</sup>

Too often during the years that have followed Eisenhower's presidency the quest for security has overwhelmed concern for the vitality of fundamental values and institutions. The

Vietnam War, which came close to tearing this country apart, was fought for geopolitical reasons that remain obscure to this day. The Watergate and Iran-contra scandals revealed how excesses committed in the name of national security can subvert constitutional processes. And no one would be more appalled than Eisenhower himself to see the extent to which Americans now finance the costs of defense-as well as everything else-on credit extended by the unborn (who cannot object to the process) and by foreigners (who someday may).

A return to solvency in its broadest sense-by which I mean not just balanced budgets but bearing the full pain of what one is doing at the time one is doing it-might discipline our conception of the national interest in the way that it should be disciplined: through the constantly annoying, but also intellectually bracing, demands of stringency. The result might well be less grandiose visions, but more sustainable policies.

## VI

Which is going to win-integration or fragmentation? At first glance, it would seem that the forces of integration will almost certainly prevail. One cannot run a modern postindustrial economy without such forces, and that, many people would say, is the most important thing in the world. But that is also a parochial view. Running a postindustrial economy may not be the most important thing to the peasant in the Sudan, or to the young urban black in the United States or to the Palestinian who has spent his entire life in a refugee camp. For those people, forces that might appear to us to be fragmentationist can be profoundly integrationist, in that they give meaning to otherwise meaningless lives.

We should also recognize that the forces of integration may not be as deeply rooted as we like to think. It comes as something of a shock when one realizes that the most

important of them-the global market, collective security, the "long peace" itself-were products of the Cold War. Their survival is by no means guaranteed into the post-Cold War era. Fragmentationist forces have been around much longer than integrationist forces, and now that the Cold War is over, they may grow stronger than at any point in the last half century.

We should not necessarily conclude from this, though, that it will always be in our interest to try to ensure that the forces of integration come out on top. Surely, in light of the Persian Gulf War, the international community will want to restrict future sales of arms across boundaries, and it would not be a bad idea to develop alternatives to dependency on Middle East oil as well. The increasing permeability of borders-the very thing most of the world welcomes when it comes to the free flow of ideas-will by no means be as welcome when commodities, capital and labor begin flowing with equal freedom. And Americans are already beginning to move away from the view that they can leave everything-international trade, energy resources and especially the regulation of the savings and loan industry-to the "invisible hand" of market forces that the integrationist model in principle recommends.

But swinging toward autarchy, nationalism or isolationism will not do either. The forces of fragmentation lurk just beneath the surface, and it would take little encouragement for them to reassert themselves, with all the dangers historical experience suggests would accompany such a development. We need to maintain a healthy skepticism about integration: there is no reason to turn it into some kind of sacred cow. But we also need to balance that skepticism with a keen sense of how unhealthy fragmentationist forces can be if allowed free rein.

So we are left, as usual, groping for the middle ground, for that rejection of extremes, that judicious balancing of pluses

and minuses, that is typical of how articles like this are supposed to end. This one will be no exception to that rule. I would point out, though, that practical statecraft boils down, most of the time, to just this task of attempting to navigate the middle course, while avoiding the rocks and shoals that lie on either side. Certainly Americans, of all peoples, should find this a familiar procedure, for what is our own Constitution if not the most elegant political text ever composed on how to balance the forces of integration against those of fragmentation? It had been necessary, Madison wrote in *The Federalist*, no. 51, so to contrive "the interior structure of the government as that its several constituent parts may, by their mutual relations, be the means of keeping each other in their proper places."<sup>12</sup> That would not be a bad design to follow with regard to the external world as all of us think about how we might come to grips-as the Founding Fathers had to-with the centripetal and centrifugal forces that are already shaping our lives.

4 William F. Buckley, Jr., *Gratitude: Reflections On What We Owe To Our Country*, New York: Random House, 1990.

7 James Chace has suggested, persuasively in my view, that this attitude goes back to Lyndon Johnson's attempt to fight the Vietnam War without asking for sacrifices on the home front. See his *Solvency: The Price of Survival*, New York: Random House, 1981, p. 15.

8 The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, now little more than a framework for negotiations, suffers from a deficiency opposite to that of NATO and the European Community: with the single exception of Albania, it includes all of the states of Europe, from the largest to the most microscopic, and it requires unanimity in order to act, which in most cases ensures that it will not.

9 For an eloquent discussion of the advantages adherence to

international law can offer, see Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *On the Law of Nations*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990.

12 *The Federalist Papers*, New York: New American Library, 1961, p. 320.

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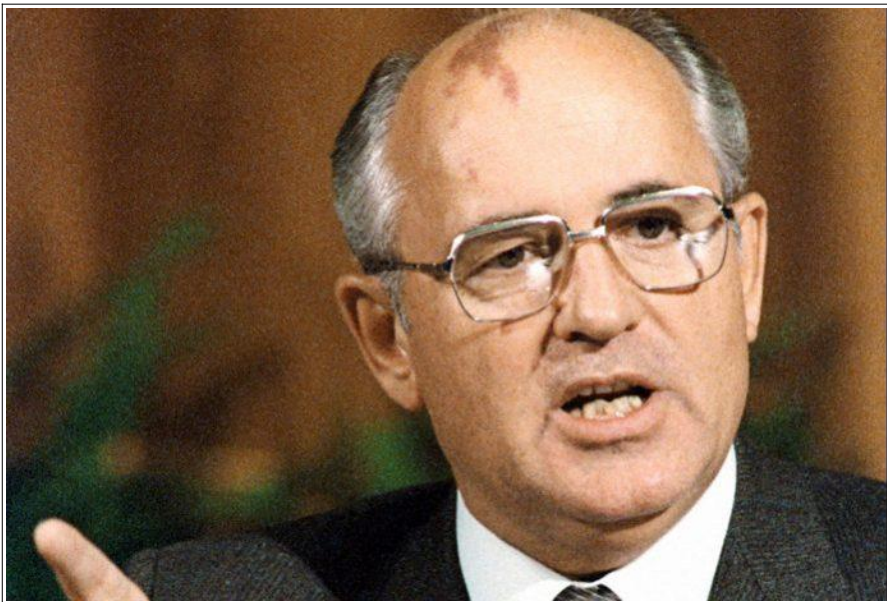
JOHN LEWIS GADDIS is Distinguished Professor of History and Director of the Contemporary History Institute at Ohio University. This article is adapted from a longer essay in the forthcoming book, *American Defense Annual: 1991-1992*.

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# America's Stake in the Soviet Future

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*Graham Allison and Robert D. Blackwill*



*Mikhail Gorbachev in 1986.*

The day after Iraqi troops marched into Kuwait, Secretary of State James Baker and Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze jointly condemned the action and announced a cutoff of arms to Iraq. In the weeks that followed the Soviet Union not only voted for each U.N. resolution condemning Iraq and demanding its withdrawal, but also played an important role in persuading others to go along. Had the Soviet ambassador to the United Nations voted no, thus denying the United Nations authority, would President Bush have gone forward? Try to imagine the U.S.-led international offensive against Saddam Hussein absent active Soviet

cooperation.

Americans now take for granted the strategic consequences of Soviet "new thinking" and the changes it has produced in Soviet foreign policy. Glasnost, perestroika and democratization have unleashed previously unthinkable changes within the Soviet Union as well. Despite some serious setbacks, these rapidly unfolding reforms constitute a "Second Russian Revolution." When completed, its consequences for politics, economics, ownership and the character of the Soviet government may be no less profound than those of 1917. Voltaire observed that the Holy Roman Empire was neither holy nor Roman nor an empire. What we have known as the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics will increasingly be neither a union nor Soviet nor socialist.

Maintaining perspective when confronting revolutionary turbulence is difficult. The fixed point for our compass must be U.S. interests. The Soviet Union cannot be marginalized in international affairs but must continue to maintain a singular claim on American interests and attention. Western achievements in foreign policy in recent years are the result not only of Western strategy and strengths, but also of the Gorbachev government's specific conclusions and choices. Although the Baltic republics are a special case, America has no preeminent interest in the rapid disintegration of the Soviet Union. Higher priority interests are the security of the United States and its allies, peaceful change in Europe, the rights of individuals in the Soviet Union and the peaceful resolution there of issues of self-determination and borders. The violent disintegration of the Soviet Union would pose first-order threats to vital American interests. The U.S. stake in the Soviet Union's future merits a strategy of engagement as robust and refined as America's Cold War strategy.

Gorbachev's cooperation in the gulf crisis was essential to the U.S.-led multinational defeat of Iraq. But the Soviet leader's policies toward eastern and central Europe in 1989-90 will have the greatest geopolitical impact on American and global interests in the next decade and beyond. It is easy to regard as inevitable the astonishing changes in Soviet policy that occurred between the spring of 1989, when eastern Europe began to bubble, and July 1990, when Gorbachev and Helmut Kohl struck the final deal accepting a united Germany as a full member of NATO.

Some now suggest that Soviet acquiescence in the liberation of eastern Europe was beyond Gorbachev's capacity to resist. But Moscow certainly had the force available to crush those revolutionary stirrings, as it demonstrably had before. Such a classic and bloody Soviet response may well have been the predominant preference of the Soviet military, intelligence services and the Communist Party. Yet Gorbachev chose a peaceful course. Eastern Europe changed. Our world changed. His choices reflected various considerations including the desire to promote Western economic assistance and the Soviet Union's international reputation. But there was nothing inevitable about it. It was instead the direct result of a remarkable Soviet leader's particular and extraordinary change of national policy-a change that ran deeply against the grain of entrenched Soviet bureaucracies.

Gorbachev's acceptance of a unified Germany in NATO was in some ways even more surprising than his willingness to allow noncommunist regimes in eastern Europe or the formal dissolution of the Warsaw Pact. He could have refused. As Shevardnadze has stressed, important voices in Moscow were insisting on just such a confrontational course. Instead, Gorbachev accepted every important element of the West's position concerning Germany. It is difficult to think of another single decision by any foreign leader in the past three decades that has so improved international peace and

security.

These are not the only examples of Gorbachev's significant alterations of Soviet national security policy. In the treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe, Moscow agreed to eliminate the Soviet Union's overwhelming conventional military superiority in Europe-the focus of NATO's fears for four decades. The CFE treaty, if Soviet compliance problems are resolved, will represent the most substantial arms reduction agreement ever reached. In Strategic Arms Reduction Talks, the Soviet Union and the United States are nearing the first agreement to reduce strategic arms in almost 20 years, one that will cut the Soviet arsenal in important categories by about 50 percent. The verification procedures for CFE and START require military openness to outside inspection previously unimaginable for a secretive Soviet society. In its regional policies outside the Middle East, the Soviet Union has withdrawn its military forces from Afghanistan, watched without interference as democratic elections ousted a communist government in Nicaragua, cooperated with Washington to bring independence to Namibia and worked closely with the United States to try to work out a ceasefire in Cambodia. Moreover, today Jews and others are permitted to emigrate from the Soviet Union in greater numbers than the United States and others in the West are willing to welcome.

In sum, the Gorbachev era of foreign and defense policies has been exceedingly good for the United States and the West, and not in a fleeting way. Future generations across Europe and especially in Germany will reap the benefits of Gorbachev's past decisions and actions. As America designs its policies for the coming phase of U.S.-Soviet relations, it should not be forgotten that these historic developments would not have occurred without the active support or acquiescence of Mikhail Gorbachev.

III

Gorbachev's announced aspiration is to transform the Soviet Union by evolutionary means-"not relying on the methods of the past." The objectives of his reform program are captured in three images. He wants the Soviet Union to be a "great power," a "normal society" and "integrated into the world community."

For Russians status as a great power is as much an element of national identity as it is for Americans. More remarkable therefore is Gorbachev's expression of the Soviet Union's aspiration to become a "normal society." A painfully revealing choice of words, this phrase has struck a responsive chord across Soviet society. By allowing the press relatively free rein, permitting Soviet citizens to travel abroad and encouraging contact with the flood of visitors to the Soviet Union, Gorbachev has given millions of Soviets some direct experience of life in the West. The number of Soviet visas issued for travel in the West has risen from several thousand to several hundreds of thousands in 1990.

Does Gorbachev have a strategy to realize his objectives for the Soviet Union? None is evident in the pattern of his actions. One of Gorbachev's closest, if not most objective, watchers, Boris Yeltsin, has observed that Gorbachev is a congenital compromiser, always choosing half steps rather than decisive strides. Repeatedly, Gorbachev chooses actions the predictable consequences of which he neither intends nor anticipates. But if one focuses on consequences, not stated intentions, subtle patterns emerge. More rapidly than any observer of the Soviet Union predicted, his program of reform has relaxed the fear that was the dominant chord of Soviet society, and has undermined the state's authoritarian institutions including the military, the apparatchik, and indeed, the Communist Party. Supporters and critics alike have noted his visceral aversion to violence. Democratic reformers condemn Gorbachev's use of force but privately acknowledge his restraint as evidence of residual values.

Conservatives argue that hesitation to use force now will only necessitate violence on a much larger scale in the near future. And reactionaries take his reserve as decisive evidence of his unfitness to lead.

Gorbachev clearly admires Western achievements and expresses appreciation for Western values of "freedom" and "democracy." Nevertheless, as westerners romanticize this Russian leader, they should recall that Gorbachev grew up under communism, rose to power through the party's ranks and continues to pledge his allegiance to communism. His decision to stick with the party is explicable in terms of sheer calculations of power-weighing the 16 million members of an unpopular, declining but still powerful Communist Party against the disorganized democratic reformers. But in his continuing commitment to communism, one smells more than a whiff of Bolshevism.

#### IV

Every week brings surprising news of events in the Soviet Union heralded by headlines as major turning points. Exaggerated euphoria about the second coming of democracy and free markets has been overtaken by pronouncements of the death of perestroika. But beneath this surface turmoil it is possible to identify four systemic crises confronting the Soviet leadership: those of authority, union, the economy and political power.

The crisis of authority is evident in the parade of sovereignties, the war of laws and the vanishing arm of enforcement. Republics, autonomous regions, cities and even districts within cities proclaim themselves "sovereign and independent" and pass laws contradicting those of the levels of government above them. Since these laws are not enforced, this "warfare" has no operational effect. Elections select members to "soviets" roughly equivalent to U.S. city councils,

and the elected proclaim "all power to the soviet." At Gorbachev's request the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. grants special presidential authority, pursuant to which he issues decrees: for Armenians to turn in their arms, for Georgians to rescind their order disbanding South Ossetia as an autonomous region. The decrees are disregarded and often nothing follows.

During the seventy years of Lenin's experiment in the Soviet Union, most of what is considered legal behavior in Western societies was declared illegal-from free speech to free association to the free exchange of goods. In Western societies whatever is not prohibited is permitted. The Bolsheviks turned this presumption on its head, making what was not permitted prohibited. The Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. in 1988 set this presumption back on its feet. The effects have been dizzying. Supreme Soviets at every level rushed to pass laws to cover broad areas previously blanketed by the general prohibition. Coinciding as it did with major constraints on enforcement, this new situation creates substantial ambiguity about the lines between the legal, the semi-legal and the illegal.

In all societies authority is a function of habit, fear of punishment for violation, and legitimacy. What is beyond dispute in the Soviet Union is the breakdown of habit or routine as an effective way of solving the simplest problems of daily life-from finding aspirin for a sick child to getting a critical component of an industrial production process. Illegality tends to breed illegality. Soviet citizens now find themselves victims of what Americans have come to think of as "normal" levels of real crime. Reported crimes in the Soviet Union in 1989 rose 32 percent over the previous year. The Soviet publication Komsomolskaia pravda sent reporters out with dollars in November 1990 to see what weapons they could purchase on Moscow's black market. The list included automatic rifles, rocket launchers and promise of a tank.

Such circumstances make more understandable the appeal of calls for a return to "law and order." This translates into a desire by most people for an improved, predictable supply of the necessities of life. Thus the response to Gorbachev's presidential decree assigning military personnel to accompany local police on patrols in 400 cities has engendered less opposition than expected. But the agendas of many of those who constitute the instruments of "law and order" go well beyond increases in lawfulness as it is understood in normal society.

Gorbachev and the current leadership inherited the crisis of union. Over the past five centuries their predecessors assembled the 11-time-zone expanse that is now the U.S.S.R. What held this union together was the unquestioned expectation of Moscow's iron fist. In a century marked by the rising tide of nationalism and transcendent claims of national independence, no one should be surprised by the consequences of Moscow's relaxed hand. Behind current complaints are decades, sometimes centuries, of injustices and disputes between the central government and the regions, between Russians and non-Russian ethnic groups. In opposing "Moscow" some provincials object to the unitary totalitarian state, others to the current Gorbachev government seated in that city, and still others to the Russian domination centered there that long preceded the Bolsheviks. Of the republics and autonomous regions demanding independence few are nationally or ethnically homogenous. Rather they are unmelted pots containing various minority groups, each with grievances against the majority and other local minorities.

Over 25 million Russians live outside the Russian republic, many of them (or their ancestors) originally sent there as part of the colonial apparatus. Resentment of Russian military commanders, police officers, party officials, factory directors and others is the norm. So too is the susceptibility of the

Russian majority in the Russian republic to believing reports of harm or threat to Russians in other parts of the union.

The industrial economy of the union was designed to emphasize interdependence. Thus the costs of a breakup of the economic union would be larger for each member than in a normal colonial relationship. Moreover, driven by paranoia, the Soviet military has built extensive perimeter defenses around the current borders of the U.S.S.R., from the Baltic to the Pacific. Beyond military facilities, there is the vexing problem of how joint property could be divided among republics, most of which have significant border disputes with their neighbors.

Last fall Gorbachev and his key associates contemplated the likely disintegration of the Soviet Union. They concluded it was unacceptable. In his New Year's Day message to the Soviet Union, Gorbachev declared that the preservation of the union was "our sacred duty." He finds it difficult to conceive of the Soviet Union as a great power under circumstances of disintegration.

The Soviet Union's economic crisis is evident in the deteriorating conditions of life for Soviet citizens. The shops are barer and the lines longer than in the worst of what Soviets call the Brezhnev "era of stagnation." In a modern farce mimicking hunter-gatherer societies, families now spend five hours or more a day foraging for essentials at ever higher prices. After a decade of slowing growth, in 1990 Soviet GNP actually declined. Currently, economic output is collapsing, falling more than 10 percent in the first quarter of 1991, according to government estimates.

The underlying problem is that piecemeal reforms have relaxed the central control system without establishing the signals and discipline essential to a market economy. Moscow has yet to create the infrastructure of a market economy,

including ownership, the freeing of prices and competition among enterprises. The center has instead stumbled from error to error with minimal understanding of what it is doing and little sense of the effects of its policies. A budget crunch-caused by republics withholding payments of taxes to the center-has forced the government to print rubles and expand credit. These measures can only produce hyperinflation that will provoke strikes and demands for compensating wage increases, already the case with Soviet miners and others. As the center yields, its deficit will expand. This sad tale has been played out many times in developing countries, where it leads to collapse-a balance of payments crisis, reduced foreign credits, shrunken international trade. The result is a dramatic fall in production that rapidly erodes living standards. In the textbook case, such economic disruption frequently produces a change of regime.

The attempt to escape from the current economic crisis runs headfirst into the fact that, in truth, there exists no known formula for moving from a command economy to a free market. As former Russian Finance Minister Grigory Yavlinsky has observed, moving from a market economy to a command economy is like turning an aquarium into a fish stew: all you have to do is boil it. The question is whether the process can be reversed.

The Soviet political crisis pits the democratic reformers-Gorbachev and those to his left-against the established institutions of authority-Gorbachev and those to his right-whose positions, power and perquisites are threatened. It is a revolutionary struggle about the shape and ownership of society and the character of government. The establishment's reluctance to relinquish its position should come as no surprise. If the leaders of the party, government apparatus, military, defense industries, collective farms, KGB and MVD needed a wake-up call, the object lesson of eastern Europe provided it. Where are their counterparts in eastern Europe

today?

Neither the democratic reformers nor their counterrevolutionary opponents exist as effective groups. In the Soviet Union democratic reformers have often been more extreme and unrealistic in their aspirations as conservatives and reactionaries become more focused in their opposition. One is sometimes reminded of the comment of the Russian minister of justice, Ivan Shcheglovitov, in 1915: "The paralytics in the government are struggling feebly, indecisively, as if unwillingly, with the epileptics of the revolution."

On a second axis, the political crisis has pitted Gorbachev against the leaders of the republics. The political imperatives of each decree no comfortable accommodation. The most deadly duel has been that between Gorbachev and Yeltsin, leader of the Russian republic. Outsiders have long observed that objective conditions should lead the two men to cooperate: "They cannot survive without each other." Yeltsin's February call for Gorbachev to resign was read as a declaration of war. Then on April 23 the two rivals and the leaders of eight other republics reached a potentially significant agreement for power sharing. Nonetheless, while Yeltsin remains more popular than Gorbachev and will translate this popularity into increased legitimacy by general election to the Russian presidency, Gorbachev remains more powerful than Yeltsin and could still move to undermine him.

Amidst these four systemic crises, the people persevere. But observers sense a growing disorientation in the general population, expressed well in a television documentary that Gorbachev urged all the members of the Supreme Soviet to watch carefully. Its title: "We Can't Go On Living Like This."

What these crises have in common are no easy answers. They cannot be speedily "resolved," but must rather be endured. Their interplay will shape the Soviet Union's future. But which future? No serious analyst can think clearly about the year or two ahead without reflecting simultaneously on at least four alternatives: Gorbachev's muddling, messy reform and repression; the democratic reformers' agenda; a counterrevolutionary crackdown; and disintegration into chaos or civil wars.

In each of these possible near-term futures there remain certain brute facts. The oft-repeated line that the Soviet Union is no longer a superpower but rather "a Third World nation with nuclear weapons" could not be farther from the truth. The Soviet Union is and will remain a great power. It may enter a period of convulsion for a time; there may be changes in its existing territorial expanse. But even Russia alone would remain a great European power. It possesses about twice the population of Germany or France and many multiples their land mass and military capability. The strategic portion of the 30,000 weapons in the Soviet nuclear arsenal can promptly destroy the United States as a functioning society. Soviet conventional forces-from three to four million soldiers and the largest weapons arsenal in the world-will still be capable of threatening Europe in the absence of an American guarantee. The Soviet Union will remain the world's largest producer of oil and many other essential minerals as well. These facts will persist across alternative Soviet futures. While these futures could be described at great length, brief sketches convey the key features.

The zigs and zags in the Soviet Union over the past year can be extended to project a future image of Gorbachev's muddling, messy reform and repression-all in classic Gorbachev half steps. In this scenario perestroika entered a peredyshka, or breathing space, last fall from what by any

historical standards must count as tumultuous, wrenching societal reform. The next few years would thus be a period of halting but slow steps to consolidate reform by retrenchment and intermittent repression.

Under the banner of "preserving the union" Lithuania proves a harbinger of the future, and is followed by other violent but contained uses of force against separatists in Georgia and elsewhere. Internal security police begin to reawaken the lively sense of the fear that heretofore dominated people's lives. The union persists, cobbled together, though in a sullen state. Glasnost is ratcheted back, especially for television. More lies, undoubtedly more sophisticated lies, are told to justify acts like Bloody Sunday in Vilnius, though publication of some critical commentary continues. Gorbachev strengthens his relationship first with the conservative majority in the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R., but then accommodates the opposition who persist in expressing dissenting views. A compromise is reached in the Federation Council that permits the republics more autonomy, especially in pursuing local economic reforms. The instruments of law and order reassert some discipline and make some improvements in the supply of necessities. But macroeconomic management stumbles from crisis to crisis. The overall economy continues to deteriorate, as gray and black markets and initiatives by entrepreneurs continue bubbling up.

In foreign affairs Western gains of the last several years stand. But as the role of the military and conservatives grows, Soviet positions in arms control negotiations would continue to harden, for example, in the next phases of CFE and START. Gorbachev maintains lively ties to Western leaders and continues to value their views of him. But Shevardnadze's strong presumption favoring cooperation with the United States fades. The Soviet approach in dealing with regional issues-especially the Middle East but also Europe and East

Asia-focuses on differences between U.S. and Soviet interests and seeks to exploit these to Soviet advantage.

How manageable this scenario may prove internally is uncertain. The instruments of control employed to reassert discipline in the economy will meet resistance. Such measures will not create the conditions necessary for a market economy and will discourage international investments and joint ventures. Gorbachev's half steps run the risk of either going too far or falling short. Falling short would mean failing to achieve the stability desired. Going too far would tip the government into dictatorship, of which Shevardnadze so presciently warned.

A second future-the democratic reformers' agenda-is more desirable from the perspective of the West, if less likely. It calls for continuing peaceful evolution to a looser federal structure based on emerging democratic institutions and a market economy increasingly integrated with the world. In effect, it imagines an acceptance of the Gorbachev-Yeltsin deal of last summer, along the lines of the 500-Day Plan, and then projects forward.

In this scenario, after six months of semi-successful repression aimed at holding the union together, Gorbachev senses that the degree of repression he can tolerate will not succeed. He makes yet another turn back to reform, starting with the April 23 agreement. Gorbachev (or a successor) accepts substantial devolution of power to the republics, each of which is encouraged to move to a market economy.

The core of this new program includes substantial sovereignty for the republics and the maintenance of an economic common market. But the center accepts the right of the republics to opt out of the union, and the Baltics, Moldavia, Georgia and perhaps others accelerate divorce proceedings. National economic policy adopts a new and much improved

combination of the 500-Day Plan and the report by the international lending institutions. A new central government announces a determined march to the market and takes what essential steps it can, including cutting deficits to achieve fiscal stability, legalizing ownership, freeing most prices and privatizing state enterprises. The demand for more democratization leads to the democratic election of the presidents of a number of the republics, beginning with the Russian federation, and new elections for the Supreme Soviets in the Ukraine and elsewhere without reserved seats for the party establishment. Some republics institute more democracy and glasnost and some less, as their chosen governments oppress local minorities.

Soviet foreign policy is marked by an absence of attention to events abroad, internal preoccupation, sharp reductions of defense spending and an openness to further arms control agreements as well as unilateral cuts. New republican foreign ministers make sporadic forays into the international arena on issues of special interest to a republic, for example, Moldavia in relations with Romania or an Azeri-Iranian friendship treaty.

The viability of this future is uncertain. Would the traditional authoritarian institutions, including the military and party apparatchiks, relinquish control without a fight? The overriding question is how such a future avoids a spiraling disintegration that would collapse the national economy and inflame regional disputes, fueled by conflicting territorial claims.

Thus in a third Soviet future a counterrevolutionary iron hand could seize control of the union. Gorbachev's queasiness about applying the levels of violence required to suppress independence movements could lead him to quit or be replaced as party and government leader. The continuing deterioration of material conditions could provoke a general

strike, even a march on the Kremlin, that would lead to large-scale violence and Gorbachev's removal. Whatever the occasion, the strength of the counterrevolution would come from the security establishment-MVD, RGB and military-supported by conservatives and reactionaries. It would most likely be chauvinistically Russian, justifying suppression as the protection of Russians living in other republics and the preservation of Russian culture. It could well have the blessings of the Russian Orthodox Church.

This counterrevolution's rallying cries would be the preservation of the union, the demand for law and order and the necessity for clear responsibility. According to one of the oldest Russian traditions, avoidance of chaos is seen to require the iron hand (Zheleznaya Ruka). Declaring a national state of emergency, MVD forces, supplemented by selected paratrooper units from the military, temporarily suspend republican Soviets and arrest dissident leaders, certainly including Yeltsin and his key associates. Glasnost is repealed and the traditional security apparatus becomes active again, reviving personal fear as a fact of daily life. A restoration of discipline could alleviate shortages of certain necessities, at least in the big cities, though overall the economy would continue to decline. (In the Pinochet or South Korean version of this future, which is being discussed in Moscow, an authoritarian leader in partnership with defense enterprises seeks to march the nation toward a market economy.)

This scenario also includes a revival of enemy images to justify internal repression. The new government would repudiate Gorbachev's "capitulation" to the West. In the military one would see rapid growth of an already nascent "Weimar Syndrome": blaming Gorbachev and Shevardnadze for surrendering in negotiations what the Soviet Union had won on the battlefield and not lost in the Cold War. Many of the Western gains in recent years are likely to prove irreversible. But such a Soviet government would try to

regain traditional positions wherever it could: refusing to implement the CFE treaty fairly; renegotiating "concessions" in the current draft agreement of START and reopening agreed issues in START II; making Soviet withdrawal from Germany and Poland an ugly process, and continually raising the price. Regionally, such a government could reinvigorate destabilizing Soviet policies in the Middle East, beginning with large arms transfers, revive relations with anti-Western terrorists and generally oppose U.S. interests elsewhere in the world. Emigration, including of Jews to Israel, would drop precipitously.

The biggest questions about this scenario concern the costs at which independence and freedom could be suppressed. Most acutely, how would such a central government control reformist impulses in the Russian federation government, the Russian military and among Russians in other predominantly conservative institutions?

Unsatisfactory answers to key questions about each of these three futures lead to a fourth alternative: chaos and civil wars. Note the plural: wars. The disintegration of the union into Balkanized republics, autonomous zones and regions, each asserting its own laws and refusing to comply with those of others, could become anarchic. With the breakdown of trade, industries in one region would be denied critical inputs from another and the national economy could collapse. Sixty-five million people in the Soviet Union live in areas dominated by nationalities other than their own. Pockets of such groups would be suppressed by local majorities. Substantial fighting would ensue. As small-scale violence led to larger civil wars, there would be mass migration of refugees to neighboring states to the west and to the south. European studies estimate the number of refugees at perhaps 10 million. Suppressed groups would call for help from outsiders: Russians from the Russian federation, Moldavians from Romanians, Muslims from their brothers to the south. Instability in various Soviet

republics could spill over into eastern Europe to the west and Muslim nations to the south.

Under conditions of chaos and civil wars, would central control of nuclear weapons be maintained? In December 1990 the commander of the Soviet Union's most capable divisions, those in East Germany, was dismissed for failing to prevent his company commanders from selling advanced weapons. No student of the civil warfare in the Soviet Union from 1917 to 1921 can fail to be chilled by the sheer ruthlessness and senselessness of the violence. Under such circumstances nuclear and chemical weapons could fall into the hands of renegade groups prepared to use them for blackmail or to offer them for sale. Such possibilities stagger the imagination. But one should recall how many other equally inconceivable events have occurred in the past several years.

## VI

Whatever Gorbachev's contributions to Western interests during the period 1985-91, U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union cannot be based in an enduring way on Moscow's past actions. Rather, it must ask what important American interests are currently entwined with existing and future Soviet policies.

The preeminent U.S. interest in the Soviet Union continues to be to avoid a nuclear war between the two countries. Although the likelihood of a nuclear exchange has mercifully declined, the consequences of a failure of deterrence are so great that the nuclear issue must continue to top any list of U.S. interests vis-à-vis the Soviet Union.

This priority is emphasized by two other facets of the nuclear problem, one familiar, one new. No one need be reminded of the effects in Europe and potentially beyond of another Soviet civil nuclear accident. If the Soviet Union were a

fundamentally stable political entity, one would nevertheless worry about the safety of its 50 aging and primitive reactors. With the possibility of widespread Soviet internal disorder, it is easy to imagine a tragic intersection between civil violence and a civil nuclear facility, or an accident resulting from neglect. Moreover, the bloody disintegration of the Soviet Union would also raise a new specter of transcending interest to the United States, the loss of nuclear command and control by the Soviet central authority. And no single event in the postwar period would pose such high and uncontrollable risks of nuclear war as the violent collapse of the Soviet Union into chaos and civil wars.

The size, capabilities and location of Soviet conventional forces will also continue to matter to the United States and its European allies. The prospective total withdrawal of Soviet troops and equipment from eastern Europe and Germany by the end of 1994 will reduce the Soviet conventional threat to Europe beyond Cold War recognition. All the same, and even if the Soviets comply with the 1990 CFE treaty, Soviet armed forces will be the largest and most capable in Europe. These factors are important because of the risks they present, their impact on U.S. defense spending and the size of the American forces that should prudently remain in Europe. With respect to the military aspects of evolving Soviet policy, both nuclear and conventional, the United States has a profound interest in whether the Soviet Union, even with its severe economic problems, eventually begins a new round of force modernization or pursues force reductions, either unilaterally or through arms control agreements. A breakup of the Soviet Union and a fragmenting of its enormous military force into war among its components would pose unprecedented defense policy challenges for Washington.

Even if the most drastic outcomes in the Soviet Union are avoided, many of Moscow's policies in the political and diplomatic arena will affect important U.S. interests. Will

Moscow be a partner with the West in trying to help manage the emergence of an independent and peaceful eastern Europe, or will Soviet actions add to the inherent instability in that region? Will Soviet new thinking extend to Asia, and particularly to Soviet-Japanese relations? Will the Soviet government continue its cooperation with Washington to ameliorate internal and regional conflicts, to build a more stable Middle East after the Gulf War? And will Moscow support Western efforts to slow the flow of nuclear, chemical, biological and ballistic missile technology to unstable parts of the world, in particular, to the Middle East and South Asia?

The United States thus has notable political-military and diplomatic interests at stake in the future expression of Soviet external policies. But U.S. interests do not end there. The broad U.S. public responded to Gorbachev's reforms not because they promised a slowdown in Soviet T-80 tank production, however welcomed that was. Rather, glasnost and democratization touched the broad public because these reforms reflected American values. The prospect, however distant, of nearly 300 million more human beings enjoying freedom's benefits and the market's prosperity must gladden the spirit of America and must be fundamentally in this nation's enduring interests.

But what of America's interests, in light of the continuing tensions within the Soviet Union between order and reform, between power at the center and its devolution to the republics, and between the preservation of the union and outright independence or self-determination? The immediate consequences of the collapse of empire have generally been much more negative than positive, both for the former colonies of the empire and for the international system. Churchill commented on the fate of the former members of the Austro-Hungarian Empire after World War I: "There is not one of the peoples or provinces that constituted the Empire of the Hapsburgs to whom gaining their independence has not

brought the tortures which ancient poets and theologians reserved for the damned." Nor should one forget the contribution of these newly independent countries' instabilities to the coming of the Second World War.

Banality offers an almost irresistible temptation. It is easy to say that the U.S. interest is in peaceful evolution based on the democratically expressed views of Soviet citizens. But to give such simple and general advice to Soviet leaders does not seem realistic, given that country's numerous, bitter and often violent ethnic rivalries, its economic decline and lack of democratic and free-market traditions. There is a middle ground between empty, even feckless, lectures from afar and excuses from the same distance for Gorbachev's every undemocratic action. Here are some guidelines.

The violence against the Baltic people must stop and, because of their unique history, Gorbachev must allow these three republics to regain their independence. A fair divorce proceeding between Moscow and the Baltic capitals that produces this result could take several years. But negotiations must have an end point, and that end point must allow independence.

As for the other 12 Soviet republics, any arrangement acceptable to any republic and the Soviet central government should of course be acceptable to the United States. More power to the constituent parts of the Soviet Union in some kind of federal arrangement is a necessary condition for any successful Soviet future. But universal self-determination is not an American constitutional principle, as amply demonstrated by our own civil war. There is no end to boundless self-determination or to the progressively smaller ethnic groups that will demand it. Why should the United States support endless and automatic self-determination based on nationality-and at whatever price-in the Soviet Union, including Russia and the Ukraine, more vigorously

than in Croatia, Transylvania, Slovakia or for Quebec? The United States should refuse to be intimidated by invocations of this principle-both as a matter of priorities and because of its destructive effect on the territorial integrity of the Soviet Union and, therefore, on the U.S. interests that would surely be profoundly threatened by the Soviet Union's violent disintegration.

Finally, America's interests clearly require that it support and speak out on behalf of democratic change. This is consistent with both its values and its best traditions. But there is also in this case a compelling geopolitical reason for such an American stance. It is highly unlikely that Soviet new thinking in matters of foreign policy can flourish, or even survive, in the context of internal repression. The best long-term prospect for cooperative Soviet behavior abroad is the sustained development of Soviet democratic institutions at home.

## VII

Many believe there is little the United States can do to affect the outcome of the Soviet domestic struggle: there is too much turmoil to be influenced from the outside; Gorbachev's perestroika may be winding down anyway; the United States has no money and little or no influence; America has to tend to its own problems. The West therefore must simply watch events unfold, hoping for the best but expecting far less.

Such passivity is curious, if not dangerous, on a matter that has such profound implications for the future security of the United States. Having spent some five trillion dollars to meet the military challenge of the Soviet Union around the globe, is the United States (and its allies) to opt out now when the Soviet future is being formed? Will the United States and its allies in Europe and Asia later regret this passivity, especially if internal retrenchment in Soviet policies again forces the

democracies to spend vast amounts to counter Moscow's international activities?

It is important, as critics stress, to recognize the difficulty of the task of aiding Soviet transition to democratic institutions and a market economy. It may well be that a large and coordinated Western effort would fail because of Soviet bureaucratic resistance or incompetence, opposition of the Soviet people or Gorbachev's (or his successor's) unwillingness to make the necessary reforms. The odds of failure indeed appear higher than those of success. But with so much at stake, Western delay in trying to affect the odds on which Soviet future emerges is myopic.

What, then, should the West do, and do urgently, to try to promote a positive Soviet future, to avoid the return of dangerous and destabilizing Soviet external policies or the violent disintegration of the Soviet state?

First, we should recognize that events in the Soviet Union present a historic window of opportunity. People in the Soviet Union have concluded that their society has failed. They believe that the economic and political democracies of the West have succeeded. They truly aspire to be a "normal society." They know that they do not fully understand what that means, or how it can be achieved. They believe that people in the West do know. They thus stand at a "learning moment," eagerly receptive to the lessons of Western experience in normal societies. The West must not abandon the brave Soviets fighting for reform. If it gives up, many of them will prudently do the same. If the West can pause to recall the central values on which its economic and political institutions were founded, it should make a major effort to distill and communicate these core truths to Soviet citizens whose entire lives have been confined to a prison of distorting mirrors. The conversion of a military-industrial society must occur most importantly in the minds of key people: one by

one.

The West should pursue a strategy of building the infrastructure for democracy. The Soviet Union is today open to printing presses, copying machines, personal computers, fax machines and satellite dishes. Specific assistance can make the opening of the Soviet consciousness irreversible. Western support, however, must be differentiated. Help should be given to those whose actions will help bring democracy and a market economy, not to opponents or those who wish to dismember, violently if necessary, the U.S.S.R. Reform, yes. Repression, no. Encourage devolution to a new confederation of sovereign republics. Discourage anarchy surrounding the disintegration of the Soviet state.

Second, the United States should continue active attempts to engage the Soviet Union in the management of what will remain a dangerous international environment.

Third, in an effort to forestall Soviet futures that would most deeply threaten Western interests and global stability, a coalition of Western governments led by the United States should immediately design and offer to the Soviet Union at the Group of Seven Summit in July a bargain of Marshall Plan proportions. The terms: substantial financial assistance to Soviet reforms conditional upon continuing political pluralization and a coherent economic program for moving rapidly to a market economy. The strategy: create incentives for leaders at the center and in the republics to choose a future consistent with our mutual best interest by promising real assistance for real reform. The outline of such a historic bargain can be perceived:

On the Soviet side, a major step toward meeting the terms required by the West was taken on April 23 in the "Nine-plus-One" power-sharing agreement signed by Gorbachev and the leaders of the nine major republics. The terms include:

-Recognition of the depth of the crisis and the real risk of violent disintegration.

-Acceptance of the republics as "sovereign states" each of which has the specific right to decide independently whether to join the new union or to be separate and independent.

-For those who join the union, agreement on a common economic space among them, protection of human rights of all individuals and restoration of constitutional order and strict compliance with current law.

-Immediate preparation of a new Union treaty, followed by a new constitution of the U.S.S.R. and national elections.

The draft of the new Union treaty embodying these principles has recently been completed and is slated to be signed in June by the nine republics and most likely others as well. What more should the West require? Essentially two points. First, consistent with the "Nine-plus-One" accord and commitments by the U.S.S.R. to the CSCE treaty, Soviet authorities at all levels would reaffirm their international commitment to respect human rights of individuals within the Soviet Union whatever their national, ethnic or religious identification.

Second, the states that join the Union would have to make a collective commitment to focus in the next stage of development-the next three years-on a rapid transition to a market economy as the essential foundation for sustaining democracy. Experts designated by the center and the republics would devise in consultation with Western representatives a realistic program for moving rapidly to a free market economy with substantial Western cooperation and assistance. The Marshall Plan offers an instructive precedent. The United States promised financial aid only if the European parties could agree on a joint plan for reconstruction. The major steps in the Soviet program must

include: (a) stabilization: sharp reductions in fiscal and monetary deficits by cutting defense spending and subsidies to state enterprises; (b) legalization of enterprise: beginning with ownership, legalizing economic initiative including much of what remains gray or black in the present Soviet economy; (c) liberalization of prices: moving in stages to total decontrol in which prices will reflect scarcity values, first within the Soviet Union and soon thereafter in the world economy; and (d) demonopolization and privatization: transferring productive economic activity to private hands in an environment in which many enterprises compete.

The U.S.-Western side of the grand bargain should entail a well-designed, step-by-step, strictly conditional program of assistance provided both to the center and to the republics to motivate and facilitate rapid transition to a market economy. Core elements of the program of incentives would include:

- A clear signal of the West's commitment to help the Soviet Union in this peaceful transformation in any way Western assistance can impact upon the probability of success.
- Forthrightness that this means major financial assistance only if and as the Soviet Union is committed to a realistic plan for the transition to the market economy, a plan to which Western assistance can make a difference. Unconditional aid, no. Aid contingent upon actions that increase the probability of success, yes.
- Special status in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank. As the Soviet government, in conjunction with Western assistance, undertakes the necessary structural changes in its economic and financial institutions and policies, it should become eligible for billions of dollars of aid from these institutions as well.
- Massive technical assistance distilling lessons of

international experience and providing those lessons in any array of training programs for essential activities in the transition.

-Financial assistance of \$15 billion to \$20 billion per year for each of the next three years in grants, not loans, the cost to be shared by the U.S., Europe and Japan. The grants should be allocated appropriately between the center and the republics. Funds would go for general balance of payments support, project support for key items of infrastructure (like transportation and communication), and the maintenance of an adequate safety net as part of a general "conditionally program" that followed basic IMF-World Bank principles.

Would Gorbachev or a successor strike such a bargain? Perhaps not today. But as conditions worsen, the beacon of substantial Western assistance could indeed come to concentrate the minds not only of reformers, but of straddlers as well. Even if the offer and its historic incentives should ultimately be refused, the West could take some comfort in knowing that the Soviet reform effort did not fail for want of something the West could have provided.

In Washington today conventional wisdom declares the Soviet situation a lost cause. We believe it is too early to draw such a fateful conclusion. Recall that it was not until three years after the end of World War II that George Marshall called for a massive coordinated program to assist the reconstruction of Europe. The founding fathers of the transatlantic relationship on this side of the ocean persevered against what many at the time believed were very long odds, knowing that to do otherwise would be to consign generations to come to a world less stable and less safe. A U.S.-led effort to help transform the Soviet Union would certainly be significantly more difficult than the challenge undertaken by the United States through the Marshall Plan. Nevertheless, there are more than enough reasons of self-interest and values to try.

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GRAHAM ALLISON and ROBERT BLACKWILL are members of the faculty of the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.

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# Beyond Boris Yeltsin

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*Philip Zelikow*



KREMLIN.RU / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

*Boris Yeltsin in 1989.*

## FOLLOWING AMERICA'S ENDURING INTERESTS

Beset by foreign policy crises in Bosnia, Somalia and Haiti, President Clinton and his chief advisers have argued over and over again that they are at least getting the big issues right. They invariably point to their policy toward Russia as the exemplar of this success. Indeed, the administration deserves great credit for energetically organizing multinational economic

assistance to the former Soviet Union. It also chose wisely to endorse Russian President Boris Yeltsin's dictatorship during the September struggle with his parliamentary opponents--though it was inconceivable that any American administration could have lined up behind Ruslan Khasbulatov and Aleksandr Rutskoi. The real choice was whether to support Yeltsin with strong words or weak ones.

Individual accomplishments, however, must be judged against some external standard. The best measure of success with Russia is the extent to which America and its friends have become safer and more secure. Judged by this ruler, the results are troubling. The Clinton administration has elevated support for internal reform in Russia--a means to an end--into an end in itself. It is revealing that the administration's own policy czar of all the Russias, Strobe Talbott, has emphasized to the Congress that, "Bill Clinton made clear that support for reform in the newly independent states would be the number one foreign policy priority of his administration."

While there has been much support for reform, there has been less success so far on the objective of enhancing America's security. American policies have not kept pace with the growing danger of dispersal of nuclear weapons and materials within the former Soviet Union. Russia and other republics could still become important conventional arsenals for America's adversaries. And the record of cooperation in "global problem solving" with Russia has gone from excellent at the end of 1991 to problematic by the end of 1993.

After Russian-American rapprochement swelled into a genuine entente between Moscow and Washington during 1990 and 1991, both the Bush and Clinton administrations were hopeful that they might press on to turn the relationship into a true "strategic partnership" or quasi-alliance. These hopes are now fading. In the years ahead it will be difficult enough to protect the old entente as the path to democracy

grows more tortuous, divergences between Russian and American interests become clearer, and the Russians react to a geopolitical relationship they increasingly consider to be one-sided.

President Clinton has wholly cast America's lot with Yeltsin, despite having criticized President Bush for too strongly and lengthily attaching American interests to Mikhail Gorbachev. The alternative to the current U.S. policy is not abandonment of Russian reform. It is the articulation of coherent policy goals that transcend internal Russian politics. The adherence to Yeltsin risks encouraging within Russia exactly the polarized, anti-American tendencies that Washington fears. The United States should make clear that its policies are guided by the lodestar of enduring American security objectives, whatever Russian faction prevails. Such a position can more easily be explained and defended to Congress and the American people. Meanwhile, the United States would remain free to support whichever Russian leaders are most able to help the United States achieve its security goals. Such a position may be more candid. It will certainly be more durable. The Russians and others will respect both qualities.

#### SECURITY ISSUES REMAIN PARAMOUNT

America is not bound to Russia, Ukraine or other former Soviet republics by deep or intrinsic ties of history, culture, demography or commerce. Before the Second World War Russia did not have an important role in the history or interests of the United States. Usually friendly, sometimes hostile, American relations with Russia were, above all, distant. Concerns about Russia, for instance, played little part in bringing America into either World War I or World War II. American interest in Russia during and after World War II arose from Russia's involvement in or threat to those areas where the United States did have such deep and intrinsic interests. In other words, American national interests in the

Soviet Union during the last half century were an outgrowth of concerns about Soviet security policy.

This condition has not really changed. The real and latent military capabilities, threat of conflict, and possible imbalances of power emanating from the former Soviet Union remain the primary reason for American interest in the region. Contrary to statements from the Clinton administration, there is nothing especially compelling about Russia's value to the United States either as a market for goods or as a source of commodities (except for oil). Russia ranks alongside Turkey in the value of its trade with the United States. American direct investment in Russia is one-fortieth of its investment in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and does not even match what Disney has risked in opening its French amusement park. In 1991 the United States exported more to tiny Malaysia than it did to Russia and all of the other republics of the former Soviet Union put together.

Traditional security concerns--concerns about conflict and military power--thus remain the principal motives for strong American interest in the fate of Russia and the Eurasian republics. And among those, no issue is more important to the United States than the fate of the enormous nuclear arsenal that belonged to the Soviet Union.

#### THE QUIET NUCLEAR CRISIS

The Clinton administration has made little progress on the problem of nuclear weapons dispersed in the former Soviet republics, specifically in Ukraine. The strategy is such a patchwork of improvisation that at this point it is difficult to make out what theory of persuasion lies beneath it. When it was a strategy of appeasement--offering reassurances and promises of aid to propitiate Kiev--the results were counterproductive. If it has since become a strategy of both

carrots and sticks, then the only stick has been to withhold baby carrots. Nor is it clear why Washington has not involved West European allies to a greater extent and has instead reserved for itself all the risks and burdens of a problem that concerns all.

Thus to influence Kiev to give up nuclear weapons, the Clinton administration has moved from single-issue pressure tactics to promises of fruitful general relations to aid enticements to military "cooperation" in exchange for Kiev's early deactivation of strategic missiles. Washington has also tried to arrange purchase of Ukraine's resulting cache of highly enriched uranium. Some useful progress was made during the summer, aided by Secretary Les Aspin's use of defense-to-defense channels. But by the end of September the deal had fallen apart, along with the Ukrainian government. Ukraine's ability to carry forward any major policy initiative now appears overwhelmed by the country's economic and political crisis. The Ukrainian position on retaining nuclear weapons has hardened. The day before Secretary of State Warren Christopher's October visit to Kiev, President Leonid Kravchuk stated in a speech that Ukraine's nonnuclear goals should be viewed in the same way and on the same timetable as the global nuclear disarmament of all other nations. A month after Christopher left Kiev, the Ukrainian parliament openly and overwhelmingly defied the United States by refusing to join the nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty or to forswear nuclear weapons.

The primary weakness of U.S. strategy has been that it alternates between anemic support and toothless hostility of the kind that annoys without commanding respect. Ukraine has correctly assumed that America unconditionally backs its continued independence, a view that is the logical outgrowth of the American sympathy for the forces of self-determination in the Soviet Union's declining years. But the administration must clearly condition its future support for an independent

Ukrainian state. After all, Kiev's assurances about nuclear weapons were linked to America's original 1991 recognition of the new state. The United States must spell out a strong set of positive and negative consequences for Ukrainian behavior.

If Ukraine does not abjure nuclear weapons, Washington should make clear that it will lobby Western Europe to join in cutting off support for Kiev. The United States and the European Community, moreover, would not only stand aloof from Ukraine's disputes with Russia but would also be forced to look to Russia as the ultimate guarantor of Eurasian stability. Ukraine could well conclude that, under such circumstances, retaining nuclear weapons would only place its national survival in greater doubt. If, on the other hand, Ukraine chose to align itself with the West, it would receive substantial U.S. assistance, not only economic, but also for its conventional military defenses -- concrete military aid, not empty security "guarantees." Russia might dislike this Western course but, given the choice, it would still choose a nuclear-free Ukraine above all else.

The United States must also worry about the vast stockpile of some 30,000 nuclear weapons in Russia itself. Although the Russians have many more nuclear weapons than the United States, Washington's concern now is not with the strategic military balance. The more urgent issue is the safety and security of this tremendous arsenal, the related stockpiles of fissile material and other human and material assets used in building nuclear bombs. Russian nuclear forces are scattered among more than 200 different locations throughout the federation. At many of these sites isolated detachments guard aging stockpiles of obsolete bombs or missiles, parts of a nuclear custodial system designed for a very different environment than the one that now exists. One-tenth of one percent of the Russian nuclear arsenal could devastate dozens of large cities and kill millions of people. Yet Russia today is a country where the government cannot confidently assert

effective control over 99.9 percent of anything.

## THE ARSENAL OF ANTIDEMOCRACY?

Another deeply worrying security problem that faces the United States is the supply of arms to radical states. The stance of Russia (and Ukraine) will plainly be critical for revisionist challenges to the hierarchy of world power led by the United States. States like Iran do not need to match America's military might; they need only start by building up enough sophisticated forces to offset the portion of America's power regularly available in the region, raising the stakes for American involvement in a crisis and threatening U.S. freedom of action.

Russia and Ukraine are among the few states able to sell the sophisticated military technology that can even aspire to American levels of quality. Both states know this fact and are anxious to sell more arms. Konstantin Sorokin has pointed out: "Today in Russia, any criticism of arms sales practices on moral or other grounds is rare....This strategy has a broad and influential constituency as well as full governmental backing."<sup>1</sup>

In 1991 Russia signed a deal to sell three Kilo-class diesel attack submarines to Iran and appears to be renewing substantial military cooperation with China. Ukraine has already begun turning to Iran as a source of oil to replace Russian supplies. Arms sales to Iran have been reported as a likely medium of exchange. The lure of the Iranian, Chinese and possibly even Iraqi markets will be powerful as Russia's traditional arms markets in Eastern Europe dry up or, like India, turn to other sources of supply.

Russian-American disputes over the new arms export policy were crystallized in 1993 by the Russian sale of cryogenic rocket engines to India. Months of high-level negotiations

finally produced an agreement that turned a blind eye to some transactions that had already taken place while forbidding new ones. In return for Russia's forbearance, the United States and Russia concluded a new agreement for cooperation in future manned space exploration.

The cryogenic engines themselves were less important than the apparent lack of connection between the international pledges of Russia's political leaders and the international behavior of Russia's state enterprises. The Russian media has reported on the North Korean attempt to set up a ballistic missile research institute with Russian scientists and on the underground delivery to China of technologies and experts in ballistic missile guidance, cruise missiles and sophisticated antisubmarine weapons.

Increasingly U.S. officials are finding that traditional channels for handling international problems through Russia's foreign ministry seem inadequate or even irrelevant. Although some deals can be struck more or less directly with the entities wielding power over the issue in question, the long-term trend can only worry the United States. The Russian government openly approves of expanded arms sales, and the climate for authorized and "partly authorized" arms exports seems permissive.

## HOPE FADES FOR STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

Genuine entente once inspired hope in both the Bush and Clinton administrations that relations with Moscow could be turned into a "strategic partnership." Those hopes have faded. They may vanish altogether as the path to Russian democracy grows more tortuous and the divergence between Russian and American interests becomes clearer. Though rarely heard in the United States, more conservative Russian voices, which represent not only the dominant view of the "outsiders" but also many within the Yeltsin regime, express discontent with

a geopolitical relationship that is increasingly one-sided. Russia has done little to interfere with U.S. policy initiatives through the United Nations in regions where Russia took little interest, such as Somalia or Haiti. Little cooperation has been needed on Middle Eastern issues. But Russia has already begun to balk at cooperating on smaller matters, disassociating Moscow from the U.S. punitive strike against Iraq in January 1993, refusing to pay Russia's share of the peacekeeping assessment for U.N. forces in Cyprus, and balking at movement toward harsher U.N. sanctions against Libya.

The major global problem in 1992-93 of common concern to both countries was the Bosnian crisis. Moscow's principal diplomatic initiative was in May 1993, at a time when military action seemed imminent to enforce Serbian agreement to a cease-fire and acceptance of the Vance-Owen peace initiative. Russia intervened to propose that the Bosnian Muslims be safeguarded in U.N.-protected "safe havens." Moscow won President Clinton's and Secretary Christopher's support for the idea. The joint safe-havens proposal, developed after U.S.-Russian consultations, was duly deployed before the end of May.

It is hard to determine what U.S. interests were served by the safe-havens proposal, a policy whose fate soon outran the most pessimistic predictions made for it. At the time the initiative also undermined what little coherence remained in America's Bosnian policy. This initiative was a success, however, from the Russian perspective. It dissipated the ripening threat of anti-Serb military action. The subsequent movement toward partition has been encouraged by Moscow.

Fears have grown in the West about Russia's assertive policies in the republics of the former Soviet Union, including the use of force and covert action to reduce Georgia and Azerbaijan to Russian protectorates. The Clinton

administration has preferred to say little about these developments, which clash so jarringly with the image of Yeltsin's Russia being purveyed in order to convince Congress and the public to appropriate aid money. Other commentators have urged, however, that Western leaders use their economic and political leverage to check Russian "adventurism."

In searching for broader themes to determine American policy, two considerations should stand out. The first is U.S. security interests in the region. Except for Ukraine and the Baltic states, America's stakes in the fate of other republics are at the moment limited. The United States lacks strong intrinsic interests in Moldova, Georgia or Tajikistan. In fact Russia's interests may coincide more with American interests than those of other states, such as Iran, that may be tempted to become involved in these peripheral conflicts. For the United States a continued posture of disinterested detachment may be the best way to help defuse potential conflicts.<sup>2</sup>

The second guiding principle for American "nationalities" policy should be the preservation of global respect for critical norms of international behavior. One of these is the promotion of peaceful, rather than violent, settlement of international disputes. Yet "self-determination" may not be such a norm, if taken in the collective sense asserted by ethnic groups or nations. A narrower interpretation of self-determination could define it as allowing all individuals the opportunity for effective participation in their government's political process.

It should be noted, too, that the model of Western-style democratization might not promote civil peace. Several examples suggest that the process of democratization actually inflames or institutionalizes ethnic tensions in severely divided societies, until conditions or political procedures

better reward the formation of multiethnic governing coalitions or encourage needed devolution of central control.

## AMERICA'S MARRIAGE TO REFORM

Defending the Russian-American entente has been complicated by the Clinton administration's deliberately simplistic rhetoric, which has portrayed America's choice in Russia as one of reform versus reaction. The policy is reminiscent of Dean Acheson's decision to be "clearer than truth" in enunciating the Truman Doctrine in 1947. While such simplified language may be useful in persuading Congress and the American people to support aid programs, it also shapes false perceptions and expectations. In this binary formulation the forces of Russian "reform" are portrayed as synonymous with peace, democracy and national contentment, and the "reactionary" elements with authoritarianism, imperialism and the prospect of a new Cold War. No attempt has been made to prepare the American people for the murkier realities that lie ahead.

Our old assumption was that all reform in Russia was good, because it undermined the totalitarian organization of the Soviet state, which we considered inherently dangerous. Carrying this assumption over to the new era, Ambassador Talbott has described the new U.S. approach as a "strategic alliance with reform" in Russia. Yet not only can America not be sure that reform will win, it cannot even be sure that the reformers, in winning, will maintain many features of democratic governance. Yeltsin effectively assumed dictatorial powers in October 1993 after beating back the parliamentary challenge to his rule, and few Russians believe subsequent elections will be truly free and fair. It also appears increasingly probable that Russia will need to take extraordinary measures to restore basic conditions of public order. In Marshal Yevgeny Shaposhnikov's July 1993 elaboration of Moscow's new security concept, it was striking

how often he mentioned crime as a threat to be addressed by Russia's armed forces.

Whether reform wins or not, America will want to have a strategic relationship with Russia that furthers U.S. security objectives. The real U.S. alliance should be with any group of leaders in Russia that will guide their state in this direction. Democrats in Russia do tend to be more congenial partners for America's leaders and help sustain harmony between American global policies and the popular and congressional backing for those policies. Democratic institutions are also more conducive over the long term to both domestic and international stability. Market reform will make Russia stronger in time, and "for the reasons mentioned earlier--a strong Russia can be good for the United States. Yet America got on quite amicably with Czarist Russia during the first century of our republic's history because the two countries shared common strategic interests.<sup>3</sup> While Yeltsin was plainly preferable to Ruskoi and Khasbulatov, the political battle has already passed into a new stage. Understanding the current struggle as one against "ex-communists" is no more use than trying to analyze the French revolutionary battle between Robespierre and Danton as a battle involving "ex-monarchists."

Democrats and advocates of greater freedom are often the most strident secular nationalists. The same Jacksonian democrats who wanted to open up American politics and society during the 1820s and 1830s, helping build the modern American nation, were also among the principal authors of the doctrine of America's "manifest destiny" to expand to the West.

The United States government should therefore take care in how it draws political portraits of its idealized Russia. It can, if it is careless, use such broad brush strokes that it becomes boxed in. In a major policy address in March, Secretary

Christopher declared that: "The most important point is that Russia must remain a democracy during this period, moving toward a market economy. This is the basis the only basis, for the U.S.-Russian partnership."<sup>4</sup> More comments like these and Secretary Christopher might have felt even more awkward when he stood up six months later to endorse Yeltsin's extralegal assumption of dictatorial power including prior restraints on freedom of expression and the press.

Washington should also recognize that, even if economic reform succeeds, it is no guarantee of political stability. England in the 1640s, France in the 1780s and Iran in the 1970s all experienced rapid economic growth. Critical in these cases were the social forces unleashed by economic transformation, placing insupportable demands on governmental institutions and fiscal structures. What we know about the history and sociology of revolutionary movements implies that the revolutionary flood in Russia has not crested. It is still rising.

In the period of turmoil ahead, Washington's real alliance should be with America's "friends" rather than with the internal cause of reform. America cannot dictate the outcome of Russia's internal debates. Russians will choose the government and society they wish to live in. And America will want to seek an enduring, positive relationship with Russia regardless of how Russians choose to be ruled.

#### FOOTNOTES:

1 Konstantin Sorokin, "Russia's 'New Look' Arms Sales Strategy," *Arms Control Today*, October 1993.

2 An August 1993 furor over Washington's appointment of veteran diplomat James F. Collins as a possible mediator between former Soviet republics obscured the central point: American mediation was conceivable only if the United States

did not have a vital stake in the outcome. Collins' appointment, in conjunction with complacent ruminations about the opportunities for international peacekeeping, caused some observers to infer an American desire to intervene, even militarily, in these troubled regions. The inference, thankfully, was false. On the controversy, see Steven Erlanger, "U.S. Peacekeeping Policy Debate Angers Russians," *The New York Times*, August 29, 1993.

4 Address before the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, the Executives Club of Chicago, and the Mid-America Committee, March 22, 1993, in Department of State Dispatch, March 29, 1993, p. 175.

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PHILIP ZELIKOW is Assistant Professor of Public Policy at Harvard University's John F Kennedy School of Government. Formerly a Foreign Service Officer with the Department of State, he served on the staff of the National Security Council from 1989 to 1991.

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# Can Russia Change?

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*David Remnick*



*Russian President Yeltsin (C), Defence Minister Grachev (R) and Interior Minister Yerin*

## THE DISAPPOINTMENT OF THE PRESENT

There was celebration in the State Department when Boris Yeltsin won re-election last July, but polls show that in Moscow and other Russian cities and towns there was no joy, only relief, a sense of having dodged a return to the past and the Communist Party. Political celebration, after all, usually welcomes a beginning, and the Yeltsin regime, everyone understood, was no beginning at all. Yeltsin had accomplished a great deal both as an outsider and as a president, but now, in his senescence, he represented the exhaustion of promise.

To prevail, Yeltsin had been willing to do anything,

countenance anything, promise anything. Without regard for his collapsed budget, he doled out subsidies and election-year favors worth billions of dollars; he gave power to men he did not trust, like the maverick general Aleksandr Lebed; he was willing to hide from, and lie to, the press in the last weeks of the campaign, the better to obscure his serious illness.

Power in Russia is now adrift, unpredictable, and corrupt. Just three months after appointing Lebed head of the security council, Yeltsin fired him for repeated insubordination, instantly securing the general's position as martyr, peacemaker, and pretender to the presidency. On the night of his dismissal, Lebed giddily traipsed off to see a production of Aleksei Tolstoy's *Ivan the Terrible*. "I want to learn how to rule," he said.

In the new Russia, freedom has led to disappointment. If the triumph of 1991 seemed the triumph of liberal democrats unabashedly celebrating a market economy, human rights, and Western values, Yeltsin's victory in 1996 was distinguished by the rise of a new class of oligarchs. After the election, the bankers, media barons, and industrialists who had financed and in large measure run the campaign got the rewards they wanted: positions in the Kremlin, broadcasting and commercial licenses, and access to the national resource pile. Before 1991, these oligarchs had been involved mainly in fledgling small businesses -- some legitimate, some not -- and then, under the chaotic conditions of the post-Soviet world, they made their fortunes. Anatoly Chubais, who led Yeltsin's privatization and presidential campaigns, suddenly forgot his vow never to re-join the government and became chief of staff in the new administration, a position Yeltsin's bad health made all the mightier. Perhaps personifying the Kremlin's shamelessness, Chubais led the push to appoint one of the leading oligarchs, Boris Berezovsky, as deputy minister of security. The few Muscovites with enough patience left to care about Kremlin politics wondered what qualifications

Berezovsky, who had made his fortune in the automobile business, brought to his new job.

The new oligarchs, both within and outside the Kremlin, see themselves as undeniably lucky, but worthy as well. They righteously insist that their fortunes will spawn a middle class, property rights, and democratic values. No matter that the Kremlin lets them acquire an industrial giant like the Norilsk Nickel Works for a thief's price; they claim to be building a new Russia, and rationalize the rest. Mikhail Smolensky, who runs Moscow's powerful Stolichnii Bank from his offices in the restored mansion of a nineteenth-century merchant, told me, "Look, unfortunately, the only lawyer in this country is the Kalashnikov. People mostly solve their problems in this way. In this country there is no respect for the law, no culture of law, no judicial system -- it's just being created." In the meantime, bribery greases the wheels of commerce. Government officials, who issue licenses and permissions of all sorts, "practically have a price list hanging on the office wall," Smolensky said.

The new oligarchs are humiliating to Russians, not because they are wealthy but because so little of their wealth finds its way back into the Russian economy. According to Interpol and the Russian Interior Ministry, rich Russians have sent more than \$300 billion to foreign banks, and much of that capital leaves the country illegally and untaxed. Yeltsin's Kremlin capitalism has so far failed to create a nation of shopkeepers -- the British middle-class model. It has, however, spawned hundreds of thousands of chelnoki, or shuttle traders, young people who travel to and from countries like China, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates carrying all manner of goods for sale. This sort of trade is probably only a crude, transitional form of capitalism, but it is also uncontrolled, untaxed, and mafia-ridden.

Under Yeltsin, power at the Kremlin has become almost as

remote from the people it is supposed to serve as it was under the last communist general secretaries. In its arrogance, in its refusals to answer questions from the press, Yeltsin's Kremlin seems to believe that its duty to observe democratic practices ended with the elections. The Russian people, understandably, believe the government has much to answer for. The poverty rate is soaring. Life expectancy for men is plunging. The murder rate is twice as high as it is in the United States and many times higher than in European capitals to the west. According to Russian government statistics, by late 1995, 8,000 criminal gangs were operating in the country -- proportionately as many as in Italy. The fastest-growing service industry in Russia is personal security. Hundreds of thousands of men and women now work for private businesses as armed security guards. The police are too few, and usually too corrupt, to do the job.

Though far better than in Soviet times, the press is still not free. State television, which is largely owned by the new oligarchs, is extremely cautious, even sycophantic, when it comes to Yeltsin. After acting like cheerleaders during the election campaign, some newspapers and magazines have once again become aggressive and critical, even probing impolitely into the state of Yeltsin's health. An investigation by Itogi, a Moscow magazine, forced Yeltsin to go public with his heart ailments, which in turn led him to agree to quintuple-bypass surgery last November. But there is still no institution -- not the press, not parliament, certainly not the weak judiciary -- with the authority to keep the Kremlin honest.

One of the most troubling deficiencies in modern Russia is the absence of moral authority. The country lacks the kind of ethical compass it lost when Andrei Sakharov died in 1989. Human rights groups like Memorial, in the forefront of the democratic reform movement under Mikhail Gorbachev, are now marginal. If Sakharov had a leading prot,g,, it was Sergei

Kovalyov, a biologist who spent many years in prison under Brezhnev and later helped lead the human rights movement. One of Yeltsin's most promising gestures was his appointment of Kovalyov as commissioner of human rights, and one of the most depressing events of his reign was Kovalyov's resignation when he recognized that he could not convince the government to end the war in Chechnya. Kovalyov is hardly a presence in public life these days -- he appears more often in *The New York Review of Books* than in *Izvestia* -- and no one seems to have replaced him. Even the most liberal journalists seem uninterested in Kovalyov or anyone of his ilk. After years of talking about ideas and ideals, they are cynical, intent only on discussing economic interests; the worst sin is to seem naive, woolly, bookish -- or hopeful.

"The quality of democracy depends heavily on the quality of the democrats," Kovalyov told me after the elections. "We have to wait for a critical mass of people with democratic principles to accumulate. It's like a nuclear explosion: the critical mass has to accrue. Without this, everything will be like it is now, always in fits and starts. Our era of romantic democracy is long over. We have finally fallen to earth."

## THE DAMAGE OF RUSSIAN HISTORY

When and how will that critical mass accumulate? Russia should not be mistaken for a democratic state. Rather, it is a nascent state with some features of democracy and, alas, many features of oligarchy and authoritarianism. When and how will a more complete transformation of its political culture occur? Is Russia capable of building a stable democratic state, or is it forever doomed to follow a historical pattern in which long stretches of absolutism are briefly interrupted by fleeting periods of reform?

First, it pays to review the legacy -- the damage -- of history. Russia seems at times to have been organized to maximize

the isolation of the people and, in modern times, to prevent the possibility of democratic capitalism. For example, the Russian Orthodox Church, for centuries the dominant institution in Russian life, was by nature deeply suspicious of, even hostile to, the outside world. After the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the church distanced itself from transnational creeds like Protestantism, Catholicism, Judaism, and Buddhism. Xenophobia pervaded both church and state. During the Soviet regime that xenophobia only intensified. Under the banner of communist internationalism, the Bolsheviks successfully kept the world at bay until the glasnost policy was instituted in the late 1980s.

Russian absolutism has proved unique in its endurance and intensity. In many regards the authority of the tsars exceeded that of nearly all other European monarchs. As Richard Pipes points out in the June 1996 Commentary, throughout Europe, even in countries living under absolutist regimes, it was considered a truism that kings ruled but did not own: a popular formula taken from the Roman philosopher Seneca that "unto kings belongs the power of all things and unto individual men, property." Violations of the principle were perceived as a hallmark of tyranny. This whole complex of ideas was foreign to Russia. The Muscovite crown treated the entire realm as its property and all secular landowners as the tsar's tenants-in-chief, who held their estate at his mercy on the condition of faithful service.

Tsarist absolutism was far more severe than the English variety because of its greater control of property. With the rise of the Bolshevik regime, property became, in the theoretical jargon of the period, the property of all, but in practice it remained the property of the sovereign -- the Communist Party and its general secretary. And the communists were even less inclined to develop a culture of legality -- of property rights, human rights, and independent courts -- than the last of the Romanovs had been.

Likewise, under both the tsars and general secretaries, the government had only, in Gorbachev's rueful phrase, "the legitimacy of the bayonet." Violence and the threat of violence characterized nearly all of Russian political history. The two great breakthroughs -- the fall of Nicholas II in February 1917 and the fall of Gorbachev as Communist Party leader in August 1991 -- came only after it was clear that both figures would refuse, or were incapable of, the slaughter necessary to prolong their regimes. Many Russian intellectuals today, including gulag survivors like the writer Lev Razgon, believe that the communist regime's policy of forced exile, imprisonment, and execution exacted a demographic, even genetic, toll on the Russian people's inherent capacity to create a democratic critical mass. "When one begins to tally up the millions of men and women, the best and the brightest of their day, who were killed or forced out of the country, then one begins to calculate how much moral and intellectual capacity we lost," Razgon told me. "Think of how many voices of understanding we lost, think of how many independent-minded people we lost, and how those voices were kept from the ears of Soviet citizens. Yes, I am furious beyond words at Yeltsin for the war in Chechnya and for other mistakes. But we have to look at our capacities, the injuries this people has absorbed over time."

Finally, Russia will have to alter its intellectual approach to political life. Even though Gennady Zyuganov failed to carry the elections last year with his nationalist-Bolshevik ideology, he proved that maximalist ideas still resonate among a certain segment of the population. In 1957 Isaiah Berlin, writing in the October issue of *Foreign Affairs*, accurately described the traditional Russian yearning for all-embracing ideologies rooted in the anti-intellectual and eschatological style of the Russian Orthodox Church. As Berlin pointed out, the Russian revolutionaries of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were obsessed not with liberal ideas, much less political and

intellectual pluralism, but were instead given to a systemic cast of mind -- and in the most extreme ways. They first absorbed German historicism in its Hegelian form, in which history obeyed scientific laws leading it in a determinate direction, and then the utopian prophecies of Saint-Simon and Fourier:

Unlike the West, where such systems often languished and declined amid cynical indifference, in the Russian Empire they became fighting faiths, thriving on the opposition to them of contrary ideologies -- mystical monarchism, Slavophile nostalgia, clericalism, and the like; and under absolutism, where ideas and daydreams are liable to become substitutes for action, ballooned out into fantastic shapes, dominating the lives of their devotees to a degree scarcely known elsewhere. To turn history or logic or one of the natural sciences -- biology or sociology -- into a theodicy; to seek, and affect to find, within them solutions to agonizing moral or religious doubts and perplexities; to transform them into secular theologies -- all that is nothing new in human history. But the Russians indulged in this process on a heroic and desperate scale, and in the course of it brought forth what today is called the attitude of total commitment, at least of its modern form.

By the end of the process, Russian intellectuals -- not least Lenin himself -- derided the weakness, the unsystematic approach, of Western liberalism. For Lenin, Marxism provided a scientific explanation for human behavior. All he needed was the technological means of altering that behavior.

But while the Russian and Soviet leadership have been xenophobic, absolutist, violent, and extremist, there have always been signs of what the scholar Nicolai Petro, in his 1995 book *The Rebirth of Russian Democracy*, calls an "alternative political culture." If Russians today were to attempt to create a modern state purely from foreign models

and experience, if there was nothing in Russian history to learn from, rely on, or take pride in, one could hardly expect much. But that is not the case. Perhaps Russia cannot rely, as the Founding Fathers did, on a legacy like English constitutionalism, but the soil of Russian history is still far from barren.

Even the briefest survey of alternative currents in Russian history must take note of the resistance to absolutism under Peter I and Catherine the Great or, in the nineteenth century, the Decembrist revolt against Nicholas I. While Nicholas was able to crush the Decembrists, their demands for greater civil and political authority did not fade; in fact, their demands became the banner of rebellion that persisted, in various forms and movements, until the February revolution of 1917. Alexander II's decree abolishing serfdom was followed by the establishment of local governing boards, or zemstvos, and out of that form of limited grassroots politics came more pressure on the tsar. In May 1905, after a long series of strikes, the Third Zemstvo Congress appealed to the tsar for a transition to constitutional government, and the tsar soon issued an edict accepting constitutional monarchy. The constitution published in 1906 guaranteed the inviolability of person, residence, and property, the right of assembly, freedom of religion, and freedom of the press -- so long as the press was not criticizing the tsar.

Under Soviet rule, the Communist Party was far quicker to suppress signs of an alternative political culture than Nicholas II had been, but expressions of resistance and creativity endured. Under Khrushchev, in the thaw years, a few artists and journalists began to reveal the alternative intellectual and artistic currents flowing under the thick ice of official culture, and beginning in the late 1960s one began to see the varied currents of political dissent: Sakharov and the Western-oriented human rights movement; "reform" socialists like Roy Medvedev; religious dissidents like Aleksandr Men

and Gleb Yakunin, both Russian Orthodox priests; and traditionalist neo-Slavophile dissidents like Solzhenitsyn and the authors of *From Under the Rubble*.

Yeltsin's government has not been especially successful in articulating the nature of the new Russian state. But, however formless, the new state has made a series of symbolic overtures. By adopting the prerevolutionary tricolor and double-headed eagle as national emblems, the government has deliberately reached back to revive a sense of possibility from the past. Similarly, the mayor of Moscow, Yuri Luzhkov, has had restored and rebuilt dozens of churches and monuments destroyed during the Soviet period, including the enormous Cathedral of Christ the Savior on the banks of the Moscow River. There is also a revived interest in Ivan Ilyin, Nikolai Berdyayev, and other „migr., philosophers who tried to describe Russian political and spiritual values. Academics are struggling to write new textbooks. Religious leaders are coping with the revival of the Russian Orthodox Church among a people with little religious education and only a sentimental attachment to their faith. These outcroppings are not mere kitsch or intellectual fashions but an attempt to reconnect Russians to their own history and the notion of national development that was shattered with the Bolshevik coup of 1917.

## THE PROMISE OF RUSSIAN LIFE

Although daily life in Russia suffers from a painful economic, political, and social transition, the prospect over the coming years and decades is more promising than ever before. As former Deputy Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar has said, "Russia today is not a bad subject for long-term prognostication, and a very inappropriate subject for short-term analysis." There seems no reason why Russia cannot break with its absolutist past in much the way that Germany and Japan did after World War II.

Since the late 1980s, Russia has come a long way in this direction. The decades of confrontation with the West are over. Russia has withdrawn its talons, and except for the need to vent some nationalist rhetoric once in a great while, it offers little threat to the world. For all the handwringing by Henry Kissinger and other Russophobes, there is no imminent threat of renewed imperialism, even within the borders of the old Soviet Union. The danger of conflict between Russia and Ukraine over the Crimea or between Russia and Kazakhstan over northern Kazakhstan has greatly diminished in the last few years. After centuries of isolation, Russia seems ready to live not merely with the world but in it. The peril it poses is less a deliberate military threat than chaos and random events like the theft of "loose nukes." Russians are free to travel. They are free to consume as much foreign journalism, intellectual history, and popular culture as they desire. The authorities encourage foreign influence and business: more than 200,000 foreign citizens reside in Moscow, many times the number before 1990. Communication with the outside world is limited only by Russia's dismal international telephone system, and scholars and businesspeople have finessed that limitation with personal computers and electronic mail, which are rapidly becoming more widely available.

In the short term, most Russians cannot hope for much, especially from their politicians. If after his surgery Yeltsin's health does not improve dramatically, there will likely be an atmosphere of permanent crisis in Moscow. "I lived through the last days of Brezhnev, Andropov, and Chernenko, and I know how illness in power leads to danger," Mikhail Gorbachev told me shortly after the recent elections. "We survived back then thanks only to the inertia of the Soviet system. But Russia needs dynamic people in office and now, well . . ." Gorbachev has never been charitable to Yeltsin (nor Yeltsin, Gorbachev), but he was right.

The most important figures in the government will be Yeltsin's chief of staff, Chubais, the prime minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin, and Yeltsin's daughter, Tatyana Dyachenko. Such a government is likely to uphold a more or less friendly relationship with Washington and the West and to preside over a semicapitalist, semioligarchic economy. But unless the government begins to fight corruption, create a legal order, and strengthen the court system, the state will continue to be compared with the Latin American countries and the South Korea of the 1970s.

If Yeltsin dies sooner rather than later, his circle will either follow the letter of the constitution and hold presidential elections after three months, or it will find an excuse to avoid them. The latter choice would go a long way toward negating the limited progress made since 1991. Russia has yet to prove it can undergo a peaceful and orderly transfer of power -- one of the most crucial tests in the development of a democracy. If the government does go forward with elections, the likely combatants would include Chernomyrdin, Luzhkov, Lebed, and Zyuganov.

Lebed's popularity is the highest of the four, but what kind of man he is and what sort of president he would be is unknown. He is considered flexible and educable by many Western visitors, but his is a flexibility born mainly of ignorance. Lebed is a military man, but unlike Colin Powell or Dwight Eisenhower -- to say nothing of his hero, Charles de Gaulle -- he has hardly any experience beyond the military. Lebed must be given credit for signing a peace treaty with the Chechens during his short tenure as security minister. He is also, by most accounts, a decent and honest man, which sets him apart from most who have set foot in the Kremlin. But he has displayed a willful, even outrageous, disregard for the president he was ostensibly serving. Aleksandr Lebed's first priority, so far, appears to be Aleksandr Lebed. It is discouraging that the most visible political alliance he formed

after leaving the Kremlin was with Aleksandr Korzhakov, Yeltsin's crony and bodyguard before he was bounced from the government during the campaign. Korzhakov, for his part, has landed easily on his feet; he has decided to run for parliament from Lebed's home district, Tula, and should any of his old rivals threaten him, he has promised to release "incriminating evidence" against Yeltsin and his aides.

Lebed's potential rivals are more fixed in their views and political behavior, but they are not a promising lot. Zyuganov still has supporters, especially in the oldest and poorest sectors of the population, but he has little or no chance to win if he repeats the tactics and rhetoric of 1996. The communists would do well to jettison any traces of the past and adopt, as some are proposing, a new name for the party and younger faces to run it. A party of social democrats is inevitable in Russia, but not under Zyuganov.

Chernomyrdin represents a longed-for predictability abroad, but to Russians he represents the worst of Yeltsin's government: corruption, privilege, and an almost delusional disregard for the public. Chernomyrdin is also singularly inarticulate. The only way he could win the presidency would be to exploit the resources of the Kremlin and gain the support of the media to an even greater degree than Yeltsin did in 1996. As mayor, Luzhkov is extremely popular in Moscow -- a kind of Russian Richard Daley -- but he would have to cope with the traditional Russian tendency to be suspicious of political figures from the capital.

At this writing, the Kremlin depends on the heart tissue of one man and the conflicting economic and political interests of his would-be inheritors.

But not all depends on Yeltsin, or on Moscow. Russia is a far less centralized country than the Soviet Union was, for while Moscovite political life is rife with intrigue and gives off the

whiff of authoritarian arrogance, it is also relatively weak. In Soviet times, regional party leaders looked to Moscow as if to Mecca. Now one decree after another is issued, but local authorities adopt what they like and ignore the rest. Development and progress are wildly different in the country's 89 regions, and much depends on the local political map. Beyond Moscow, in the most encouraging region, centered around Nizhny Novgorod, young, progressive politicians like Mayor Boris Nemtsov have made good on their promises to create "capitalism in one country." One of the biggest problems with the Soviet economy was its heavy militarization; Nizhny Novgorod, the third-largest city in the country, was one of the most militarized. Yet not only has the city managed, by privatizing, breaking up monopolies, and issuing bonds, to create thriving service and manufacturing sectors, it has also converted 90 percent of its collective farms to private ownership. Meanwhile, 500 miles down the Volga River, the communist-run city government of Ulyanovsk, Lenin's hometown, has refused to participate in radical reform. Ulyanovsk's economy is a shambles. Unfortunately, too many Russian cities have followed the path of Ulyanovsk rather than Nizhny Novgorod.

Not all regions, however, can thrive simply by adopting the market reforms of Nizhny Novgorod. The coal-mining regions of western Siberia will continue to suffer for the same reasons the miners of many other countries have suffered: the mines are nearly exhausted and no alternative industry has developed. Most farming regions have resisted the difficult transformation to private enterprise, largely because of the vast amounts of capital needed for modern equipment and the inevitable reductions in the work force privatization entails. Agricultural areas like the Kuban or Gorbachev's home region of Stavropol have only suffered since 1991.

The mafia and tough moral questions also play a local role in deciding how or whether reform occurs. The mobster

Vladimir "The Poodle" Podiatev controls the city of Khabarovsk to the extent that he has his own political party and television station. Chechnya will continue to gnaw at the attention, if not the conscience, of Moscow. Grozny, Chechnya's capital city, is in ruins, and the local authorities consider themselves victors; the rule of Islam, not the rule of Moscow, now prevails.

When describing Russia's situation and the country's prospects, analysts tend to grope for analogies with other countries and eras. The rise of oligarchy summons up Argentina, the power vacuum evokes Weimar Germany, the dominance of the mafia hints at postwar Italy, and the presidential constitution recalls de Gaulle's France of 1958. But while Russia's problems alarm the world on occasion, none of these analogies takes into account the country's possibilities.

Since 1991 Russia has broken dramatically with its absolutist past. The almost uniformly rosy predictions for China and the almost uniformly gloomy ones for Russia are hard to justify. Political reform is not the only advantage Russia has. Unlike China, where rural poverty and illiteracy still predominate, Russia is an increasingly urban nation with a literacy rate of 99 percent. Nearly 80 percent of the Russian economy is in private hands. Inflation, a feature of all formerly communist countries, dropped from a runaway 2,500 percent in 1992 to 130 percent in 1995. Russia's natural resources are unparalleled. In their perceptive 1996 book, *The Coming Russian Boom*, Richard Layard of the London School of Economics and John Parker, a former Moscow correspondent for *The Economist*, arm themselves with an array of impressive statistics allowing them to predict that by the year 2020 Russia "may well have outstripped countries like Poland, Hungary, Brazil and Mexico with China far behind."

Not least in Russia's list of advantages is that its citizens

show every indication of refusing a return to the maximalism of communism or the xenophobia of hard-line nationalism. The idea of Russia's separate path of development is increasingly a losing proposition for communists and nationalists alike. The highly vulgarized versions of a national idea -- Zyuganov's "National Bolshevism" or the various anti-Semitic, anti-Western platforms of figures like the extremist newspaper editor Aleksandr Prokhanov -- have repelled most Russian voters, no matter how disappointed they are with Yeltsin. Anti-Semitism, for example, has no great political attraction, as many feared it would; even Lebed, who has his moments of nationalist resentment, has felt it necessary to apologize after making bigoted comments. He will not win as an extremist. Rather, he appeals to popular disgust with the corruption, violence, and general lack of integrity of the Yeltsin government.

Perhaps it is a legacy of the Cold War that so many American observers demand so much so soon from Russia. Russia is no longer an enemy or anything resembling one, yet Americans demand to know why, for example, there are no developed political parties in Russia, somehow failing to remember that it took the United States -- with all its historical advantages, including its enlightened founders -- more than 60 years of independence to develop its two-party system, or that in France nearly all the parties have been vehicles for such less than flawless characters as Francois Mitterrand and Jacques Chirac. The drama of 1991 so accelerated Western notions of Russian history that our expectations became outlandish. Now that many of those expectations have been disappointed, deferred, and even betrayed, it seems we have gone back to expecting only the worst from Russia.

The most famous of all nineteenth-century visitors to Russia, the Marquis de Custine, ended his trip and his narrative by writing, "One needs to have lived in that solitude without tranquillity, that prison without leisure that is called Russia,

to appreciate all the freedom enjoyed in other European countries, no matter what form of government they have chosen . . . It is always good to know that there exists a society in which no happiness is possible, because, by reason of his nature, man cannot be happy unless he is free." But that has changed. A new era has begun. Russia has entered the world, and everything, even freedom, even happiness, is possible.

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DAVID REMNICK is a Staff Writer at The New Yorker and was the Moscow Correspondent for The Washington Post from 1988 to 1991.

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# Russia Renewed?

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*Daniel Treisman*



*President Bush and President Putin sign an arms reduction treaty at the Kremlin in Moscow, Russia in May 2002, White House Archives.*

## ANOTHER COUNTRY

Is Vladimir Putin remaking Russia? To many observers, the answer is obvious. The country seems to have changed radically in the last few years. Under its energetic and sober young president, Russia's political system and economy appear finally to have stabilized. Dramatic reforms, including changes to the country's tax code, judiciary, and federal structure, have sailed through the parliament with hardly an amendment. Firmly pro-Western in its bias, Moscow is now racing to join NATO and the World Trade Organization and has volunteered to assist the fight against international

terrorism. The economy has enjoyed three years of growth and a stock market boom so impressive that even those foreign investors who fled the country after the 1998 financial crisis are now creeping back. Commentators no longer complain about anarchy and stagnation; instead, they worry that Putin will go too far in his quest for order, crushing the fragile shoots of democracy in the process.

Long gone, it seems, are the chaotic years of Boris Yeltsin's stewardship, when crises were a way of life. The economy lurched from one meltdown to the next, as prices soared and the GDP plummeted. Widespread corruption stifled small businesses. A few unscrupulous oligarchs concentrated much of the country's capital in their hands and seemed to dangle Russia's leaders from golden strings. Provincial governors threatened and bargained with the Kremlin while exploiting their regions like feudal fiefdoms. An aggressive, obstructionist Duma (Russia's lower house of parliament) dominated by Communists blocked any attempt at reform. And all the while Yeltsin, alternately indecisive and headstrong, cultivated competing clans of courtiers, each with its own commercial interests.

That all changed on January 1, 2000, when Yeltsin stepped down and appointed Putin acting president. At least, so goes the popular version of events. In this view, Putin (confirmed in office by an election that March) personally put an end to the disorder that flourished under his predecessor. The new president tamed both oligarchs and regional barons and began replacing corruption with a "dictatorship of law." Economic reforms inspired local entrepreneurs, sparking a rapid recovery. In parliament, the Communists lost control to a centrist, pro-Putin coalition. And the Russian public fell in love with its tough and decisive new commander in chief.

There is certainly some truth to this account. But it also contains a large dose of political mythology. The fact is that

Putin's Russia, although it sports a glossy new coat of paint, remains Yeltsin's Russia underneath -- a truth with both good and bad consequences. The good news is that Yeltsin's Russia was never quite as terrible as people thought. The bad news, however, is that Putin's Russia is rather less stable and reformed than its supporters believe. On close examination, much that looks new and different in Russia today turns out to be neither. At the same time, the genuinely novel features -- namely, robust economic growth and a popular president -- owe more to the high price of oil and other unpredictable economic factors than to Putin's policies or any actual reforms.

#### ALL IN THE FAMILY

One of the most important of Putin's declared goals on coming to office was to break the power of the oligarchs, whom many Russians had come to view as the country's real rulers. During the late 1990s, a handful of tycoons had seemed to dominate Russian politics. At the heart of this system was the "family": a murky clique of Yeltsin associates and government officials who spanned the allied worlds of big business and political power. Putin promised to "eliminate the oligarchs as a class" and to hold all businessmen at "an equal distance." His background as an outsider from St. Petersburg, plus his tough reputation as a former officer of the FSB (the successor to the KGB), led many Russians to hope that the new president would follow through on such promises.

Two and a half years later, however, the "family" remains as strong as ever. The chief of staff Putin inherited from Yeltsin, Aleksandr Voloshin, acts as the kingpin for this clique, and the prime minister, Mikhail Kasyanov, is seen as defending the clan's economic interests. It is true that the "family" now faces challenges from a newer, "St. Petersburg" clan -- an odd combination of FSB officers and liberal economists from the northern city. But the latter group has not wrenched control

of the economic bureaucracy from the Muscovites. Putin, rather than reducing the power of such clans as promised, has maneuvered between them in a manner reminiscent of Yeltsin. Some minor reforms have occurred -- for instance, Putin managed to inject a new team of executives into the giant, semiprivatized gas monopoly, Gazprom, and has slowed the disappearance of state assets elsewhere. Former Railways Minister Nikolai Aksenenko, a leading member of the Moscow "family," has been persuaded to resign. But the pace of change is glacial.

Although Putin promised to hold the oligarchs at "an equal distance from power," for some the distance clearly remains more equal than for others. A couple of tycoons have been exiled as far away as London or the French Riviera. But other new faces have emerged to fill their places. Oleg Deripaska of Russian Aluminum and Sergei Pugachev of Mezhprombank enjoy the privilege of long, private conferences with the president. Other oligarchs visit him in a group, under the leadership of their chief lobbyist, Arkady Volsky. And several major corporations -- Alfagroup, for instance -- have even managed to place former employees on the presidential staff.

Meanwhile, in purely economic terms, the role of big business in Russia is growing, not shrinking. Capital is even more concentrated today than it was a few years ago. In 1997, Russia's top ten companies accounted for 57 percent of the country's total net profits. In 2000, however -- the last year for which figures were available -- their share reached 61 percent. Simultaneously, the number of small enterprises is falling; it dropped by 48,000 in Putin's first two years. According to Pavel Teplukhin, an investment consultant, those small firms that survive face major barriers to growth. As a result, Teplukhin says, Russia's economy today consists mostly of "a few financial-industrial groups and hundreds of thousands of kiosks."

Indeed, the biggest difference between the late Yeltsin period and today is simply that the oligarchs no longer brag about their influence or try to manipulate politics in a public way. This does not mean their influence has diminished, however; it has merely become institutionalized. Spheres of interest have been divided between the large corporate groups, and the war of all against all is largely over. Instead of fighting for resources in the political arena, the tycoons now lobby for them quietly at the top of the bureaucratic pyramid. Meanwhile, oligarchs are increasingly buying power at the regional level. Major businessmen have had themselves elected governor in the Chukotka, Taimir, and Evenki regions; others have won appointments to the new upper house of parliament (representing the regions of Tuva, Mordovia, Penza, Bryansk, and Taimir, for instance). Even when oligarchs do not run for office themselves, gubernatorial elections have often become contests between competing business teams and their chosen candidates.

In part, the smoother public relationship that exists today between Russia's big businesses and its politicians reflects a spontaneous alignment of underlying interests. Paradoxically, the stabilization of oligarchical capitalism has given the oligarchs a longer-term perspective. Having acquired massive, undervalued state resources, the tycoons now have more to gain from cleaning up corporate governance and attracting foreign investors than from squabbling over the few still-unappropriated crumbs of Russia's patrimony. Two years ago, for example, the oil company Yukos adopted transparent financial reporting and began paying regular dividends. Its stock market valuation soared from less than \$1 billion to more than \$10 billion, turning its chief executive, Mikhail Khodorkovsky -- who has a reported personal stake in the business of \$6.9 billion -- into one of Russia's richest individuals. This trend also helps explain why other businesses are now pushing for liberal economic legislation.

The ideas for tax reform, for example, might have come from Putin and his economic advisers. But the government was pushed by business lobbyists in the Duma to lower tax rates on corporate profits even further than it had planned.

## FEUDERALISM

Another supposed change effected by Putin relates to Russia's government structure. Putin has enacted five reforms that some claim amount to a revolution in Russian federalism. He has consolidated the country's 89 regions into seven administrative districts, each under a presidentially appointed prefect. He has pressed regional legislatures to reconcile their laws and constitutions with federal law. He has pushed through legislation authorizing him to ask a court to remove regional governors who repeatedly violate federal laws or the constitution. He has changed the system for appointing the federal parliament's upper house; instead of regional governors and legislative speakers serving ex officio, governors and legislatures now appoint representatives. Finally, Putin has overseen reforms of the tax system that have shrunk the regions' share of revenues.

Although together these reforms did reinvigorate the central government, the individual measures have had considerably less effect than was expected. Putin's seven presidential prefects were given unclear powers and few resources, and they face resistance from the federal ministries whose regional employees they supposedly coordinate. Although Putin's representatives may be able to intimidate weaker governors, stronger ones ignore them or exploit them for lobbying the capital. According to the pro-Kremlin newspaper *Argumenti i Fakti*, the president of Tatarstan, Mintimer Shaimiev, treats Putin's representative as he would a waiter: "First he listens attentively, then he orders his favorite dish."

Putin's campaign to harmonize regional and federal laws and

constitutions has also mostly failed. Governors generally surrendered only those laws they cared little about and kept the ones they liked. And some local leaders -- Tuva's president, for instance -- used the opportunity to slip in additional clauses strengthening their own power. In December 2001, after 18 months of work, the Kremlin had to admit that 72 percent of Bashkortostan's laws still violated federal ones -- even more than had at the start of the process. Both Bashkortostan and Tatarstan, meanwhile, have refused to withdraw their controversial claims to sovereignty.

Still other reforms, touted as revolutionary, look that way only with the help of a little amnesia. Since February 2001, Putin has had the authority, when supported by the courts, to fire recalcitrant governors. This mechanism is hard to use, however, and Putin has so far chosen instead to bribe uncooperative local leaders with federal jobs or other inducements to leave office voluntarily. If that fails, other methods are employed: for instance, one governor the Kremlin disliked was kept from running for reelection on a technicality. Although some disputed his authority to do so, Yeltsin was actually much more aggressive about firing troublesome governors outright, including several -- such as Yuri Lodkin of Bryansk and Aleksandr Surat of Amur -- who had been popularly elected. When regional chiefs have left under Putin, their replacements have often been little better than the originals. In both Primore and Sakha, the new governor came from the old one's inner circle. In fact, since early 2000, in those elections where the Kremlin expressed a clear preference, the candidate Moscow opposed won about half the time -- a surprising fact, given that Putin's choices were often also incumbents.

Another of Putin's supposedly revolutionary reforms related to the system for choosing members of the upper house of parliament. But Putin was not the first Russian president to change this system. Yeltsin did so twice, in both 1993 and

1995. In fact, at one point, Yeltsin went so far as to have members of the upper house popularly elected (this lasted only from 1993 to 1995). In comparison, Putin's move, which merely replaced the governors and local legislative speakers in parliament with their chosen representatives, seems quite marginal. Although the new senators have so far supported most of Putin's initiatives, this allegiance reflects not institutional change but a political deal between regional and central elites (see below), along with Putin's current stratospheric popularity. Both the deal and the popularity may not last.

The most dramatic change Putin has actually made to the country's federal system is in the distribution of tax revenues. Subnational governments received 61 percent of total state revenues in 1998, but only 48 percent in 2001. A variety of reforms have centralized revenue sources and lowered tax rates largely at the regions' expense. Several factors made this change possible politically. First, Putin's team has exploited its unprecedented majority in the Duma and the interests of the poorer regions in a tactically astute manner. Since most regions get more in central transfers than they pay in taxes, they stood to gain if centralization increased still further. Richer "donor" regions, of course, protested the change -- Moscow's mayor, Yuri Luzhkov, accused Putin of playing with the governors as if they were "skittles" -- but they were outnumbered. Second, rapid economic growth meant that even though the regions lost revenues as a share of GDP, they gained in the aggregate in real terms. Total subnational budget revenues, corrected for inflation, were 15 percent higher in 2001 than in 1998.

Even these fiscal changes were not as radical or stable as might appear, however. Putin was actually completing a reform that had been conceived of and partly implemented in earlier years. The key players -- Sergei Shatalov, Viktor Khristenko, Aleksei Lavrov, Yegor Gaidar -- had sketched out

most aspects of the change as early as 1997-98. And critical elements -- the creation of a federal treasury, reform of the system of federal transfers -- had already been implemented.

Furthermore, the current centralization of Russia's resources may prove no more than the temporary swing of a pendulum, similar to others that have alternately swelled and shrunk the federal tax share since the 1990s. Governors of donor regions, having lost revenues, now blame Moscow for its failure to provide local services. Putin won political credit for wiping out delays in paying pensions and public-sector wages. Now these are on the rise again, however, sparking sporadic protests and strikes from teachers and doctors. With parliamentary and presidential elections scheduled for 2003 and 2004, the federal budget is already being stretched thin -- in classic Yeltsin-era fashion -- to provide emergency aid to delinquent regions lest money troubles dent Putin's ratings.

All of this notwithstanding, it is true that the tenor of relations between Moscow and the governors has improved, far more than most observers -- myself included -- anticipated. But the current detente owes less to central intimidation and institution-building than to backroom deal-making of the Yeltsin variety. The governors' key priorities have been to stay in power and keep their newfound personal wealth. Putin has granted them this, at the expense of local democracy. To the dismay of his liberal supporters, he lobbied hard for a law that now exempts most sitting governors from the previous two-term limit, buying them the prospect of four -- or even eight -- more years. He also permitted governors to serve as federal senators after leaving office, thus acquiring political immunity. And by letting one notorious former governor, Yevgeny Nazdratenko of Primorye, retire to the federal fisheries committee rather than to a prison cell, Putin has signaled to other local leaders accused of corruption that if they stay loyal all will be forgiven. Indeed, governors who play ball with Moscow have been left a relatively free hand to

pressure mayors, manipulate elections, intimidate the local press, and collude with regional businesses. As a result, although the balance of power has shifted somewhat toward the center, in the words of Sergei Mitrokhin, deputy chairman of the Duma's committee on local government, "the foundations of Yeltsin's neo-feudal system remain."

## DICTATORSHIP OF LAW?

In his annual address to parliament last April, Putin urged Russia's law enforcement agencies to mount a "tough struggle against the racket, administrative abuses, and corruption." His administration has shown an intelligent understanding of corruption's causes and has passed legislation to try to reduce it. Yet abuses seem to have become, if anything, more widespread. General crime has also increased: 1.3 million more crimes were registered in 1999-2001 than in the preceding three years. (This probably does not reflect greater zeal in enforcement, since the ratio of convictions to crimes registered went down slightly.) "Corruption is great," says Kakha Bendookidze, the chief executive officer of United Heavy Machinery (one of Russia's largest companies), "and so far the struggle against it is not effective."

Why not? Several obstacles stand in the way. Most obviously, Russia's system of oligarchical capitalism makes exposing and punishing senior officials difficult. No major figures have actually been prosecuted. Although highly placed bureaucrats are sometimes investigated and threatened with charges, the selectiveness of such incidents makes them look more like sorties in the covert struggle between clans than real cleanup efforts. The administration's intimidation of the press is also taking its toll: reports in the mass media of high-level corruption are now extremely rare.

Another reason corruption in Russia has been hard to reduce is because of the staggering number of agencies -- local,

regional, and federal -- that are authorized to inspect and regulate businesses. To open up shop, a typical small retailer must first satisfy the licensing office, building inspectorate, police, fire department, health inspectorate, tax inspectors, tax police, trade inspectorate, labor inspectorate, consumer rights office, weights and measures center, environmental protection committee, and medical insurance fund. One entrepreneur recently told the newspaper Novie Izvestia he had to visit 24 offices, pay nearly \$5,000 in fees, replace the bulbs of 35 street lamps, and resurface part of his street before he was allowed to build a small addition to his cafe.

Putin has pushed legislation through parliament that, as of July 1 this year, simplified business registration procedures. Since August 2001, moreover, each agency has been limited to inspecting businesses at most once every two years. However, an early study (by the Moscow Center for Economic and Financial Research) suggests that conditions have worsened since this rule was passed. The survey of 1,927 small and medium-size firms from 20 regions found that the average number of inspections by health officials rose from 0.95 in the first half of 2001 to 1.11 in the second, and the average number of visits by fire inspectors rose from 1.06 to 1.28. Since the law permits each inspection to last up to two months, the burden these place on businesses is enormous. And however good federal legislation is, it must often be enforced at the local or regional levels by precisely those agents accused of extracting bribes.

The Kremlin has also tried to fight corruption and general crime through judicial reform. On one hand, changes to the criminal procedural code have made it harder for police and prosecutors to arrest suspects arbitrarily: arrests must now be approved by a judge. Jury trials are to become more widespread. On the other hand, judicial reforms have also left judges slightly more dependent on the executive branch; instead of appointments for life, about half of judges now

serve shorter terms, and their immunity from prosecution has been limited. The aim of this change was to end the impunity of judges who sold their verdicts to business interests. But some judges have apparently been so intimidated by these relatively minor changes that they have started issuing questionable rulings in prosecutors' favor.

## EAST MEETS WEST

Many in both the West and Russia have applauded Putin for dramatically reorienting Moscow's foreign policy. In the last two years, the president quietly accepted the U.S. abrogation of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and agreed with Washington to cut nuclear arsenals by two-thirds. He deepened Russian participation in NATO and softened opposition to NATO expansion into the Baltic. After September 11, Putin was quick to express solidarity with the United States, and he raised no objection to the temporary stationing of American troops in the former Soviet states of Central Asia. Moscow has also actively sought admission to the WTO. Such policies have won exuberant praise from Putin's supporters. In the words of the well-known reformer Anatoli Chubais, interviewed recently in *Moskovskie Novosti*, Putin has "turned Russian foreign policy around 180 degrees. ... There may never have been a change on a similar scale in all the history of Russian statehood."

Putin's warm embrace of the United States after September 11 was indeed a masterful step, which did make him some enemies in the Russian elite. To see Putin's foreign policy as radically new, however, requires both hyperbole and forgetfulness. Putin is, after all, the third Kremlin leader to be credited with "ending the Cold War." Without diminishing his contributions, they surely pale beside Mikhail Gorbachev's initiatives on arms control and acceptance of Eastern Europe's freedom, or Yeltsin's peaceful recognition of the other Soviet republics' independence. Russia's current

course, in fact, looks less like a new departure than a return to the early Yeltsin policy. Even in Yeltsin's later years, under the combative Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov, Russia took some major steps toward partnership with the West -- for instance, when it signed the Russia-NATO Founding Act in 1997.

Nor has Putin's pro-Western course been quite as politically risky as has sometimes been thought. As Putin himself has explained, closer ties to the West reflect not just "the political philosophy of Russian leaders" but Russia's "domestic situation and public opinion." Between May 1999 (after the Kosovo crisis) and late September 2001, the percentage of Russian survey respondents saying they felt "basically good" or "very good" about the United States doubled from 32 to 70 percent (according to the Russian Center for Public Opinion Research, VCIOM). And as of June 2002, the figure had not dipped below 59 percent. Although some military and academic elites have continued to grumble and public opinion becomes more ambivalent if one probes deeper, the basic orientation of Putin's policy continues to be popular.

## WAR AND PRESS

In one obvious but tragic respect, Russia looks very much like it did seven years ago. Similar to Yeltsin in 1995, Putin has found himself fighting an unpopular and probably unwinnable war against Chechen guerrillas with no end in sight. Popular backing for the operation in Chechnya peaked in March 2000 at 73 percent of survey respondents. As of June 2002, however, only 33 percent of Russians favored continuing the war, and 59 percent thought Russia should begin peace negotiations. The Russian military admits that it has lost 4,200 soldiers since 1999, and the real total may be even higher.

In another regard -- press freedom -- Putin's government has

distinguished itself from its predecessor. The Kremlin's heavy-handed approach toward critical media outlets has shocked liberal opinion. Vladimir Gusinsky and Boris Berezovsky, two oligarchs who controlled major television stations, have been forced into exile and pressured into selling their media shares. (The Kremlin denies any involvement and says the oligarchs fell afoul of independent prosecutors and creditors.) The news team from Gusinsky's NTV fled to Berezovsky's TV6, which then ran into financial problems itself. In the end, TV6 was pried out of Berezovsky's hands, but the journalists were allowed to stay. Meanwhile, the Gusinsky-funded newspaper Segodnya and the magazine Itogi also suffered hostile takeovers. Although satire and sharp criticism can still be found on small stations and in fringe publications, Sergei Ivanenko, a member of the Duma's committee on information policy, is probably right to say that in Russia today, "there is freedom of speech, but not in prime time."

Still, the difference from the Yeltsin years can be exaggerated, and the issues are more complicated than is sometimes understood. On the whole, Yeltsin was undeniably more tolerant than is Putin of a media that often criticized and ridiculed him. But at moments he also wavered. Putin's team was not the first to rough up Gusinsky's employees; in fact, Yeltsin's bodyguard, Aleksandr Korzhakov, raided the tycoon's offices in 1994 and rubbed the security guards' faces in the snow. Then again, Putin has in the end allowed Gusinsky's journalists to keep working. Yevgeny Kiselev, the oligarch's erstwhile news anchor, is back on television, although he now faces a new threat. This time, however, the danger is not state censorship; his show, even in cosmopolitan Moscow, has earned low ratings.

Even Russia's ardent liberals sometimes feel a bit ambivalent about defending Berezovsky's and Gusinsky's version of a "free" press. Both tycoons won shares or frequencies from the state in nontransparent deals and relied on large loans from

state sources for operating expenses. Indeed, they often seemed like adolescents who prize their independence highly until the phone bill arrives. During election campaigns and sometimes in between, the tycoons turned their TV stations into blatant propaganda tools to push their own commercial or political interests. The oligarchs' brazen claims to have gotten Yeltsin reelected in 1996 by manipulating coverage -- and their demands to be rewarded -- helped to discredit them in a way that simplified Putin's task. This does not, of course, justify the state's attacks on press freedoms, but it does illuminate the somewhat ambiguous context.

## WHAT'S NEW?

Although the effectiveness and novelty of Putin's regime are often exaggerated, some significant changes have occurred since Yeltsin resigned. The most remarkable change, however, is not in Putin's policies but in his popularity. For the first time in more than a decade, Russia has a leader that the overwhelming majority of citizens support. Since October 1999, Putin's approval rating has varied between 61 and 84 percent. This kind of popularity helped secure the election of a Duma which, for the first time since 1992, is not dominated by the Communists or other opposition forces. And it facilitated the quick passage of legislation that had been blocked for five years or more.

What explains Russia's love affair with its leader? Putin's ratings jumped to their current level before voters knew almost anything about his policies except that he intended to take a tough stand on Chechnya. The initial leap, from 31 percent in August 1999 to 80 percent in November 1999, can be ascribed to public shock, since it came after terrorists bombed apartment blocks in central Russian cities and Chechen guerrillas invaded Dagestan. Putin's response -- sending in the army and promising to "whack [the guerrillas] in the outhouse" -- captured the public mood perfectly.

But the president's ratings have remained high even as the public has deserted him on Chechnya and as his image of decisiveness has faded. Some commentators now even speak of Putin's "Hamlet complex" or worry that he may be falling into a "Gorbachev trap" as he maneuvers between the "family" and his St. Petersburg proteges, unsure whether to side with economic liberals or the security forces. In fact, Putin's very lack of clarity may be a political asset, given the deep divisions in public opinion. Even strong supporters describe him as something of a chameleon. According to Chubais, Putin "has one fantastic characteristic -- after a conversation with him everyone leaves convinced that now the president is on his side."

The sources of Putin's appeal are probably complex, but rapid growth in living standards has surely played a part. Real wages and pensions have risen steadily under his rule, and real wage arrears have dropped dramatically. This points to the second major difference from the Yeltsin era: for three years now, Russia has experienced rapid economic growth (5 percent in 1999, 9 percent in 2000, 5 percent in 2001, and 3.8 percent in the first half of 2002). Although poverty and inequality remain high, the upward trend has changed perceptions of the government markedly and given the state budget breathing room. The upturn reflects a recovery from the 1998 financial crisis, the benefits of a sharply devalued exchange rate, and rising oil prices. These effects have been exhausted, however, and growth, now based more on consumer demand than on these other factors, is slowing. A spike in oil prices caused by a war in the Middle East might give Russia an additional boost, but failing this event, the need for

improvements in productivity will intensify.

Indeed, to the extent that Putin's popularity depends on continuing economic improvement -- and political stability

depends on his popularity -- the current equilibrium looks vulnerable. With elections coming in 2003 and 2004, and \$17 billion in debt payments due next year, Putin seems understandably anxious about the economic indicators. In outbursts reminiscent of Yeltsin, he recently berated the prime minister for offering an estimate of 2003 growth that was insufficiently "ambitious," and he scolded his ministers for letting wage arrears to teachers and doctors return.

A final difference from the Yeltsin years is more subtle. Despite the continuing obstacles in the way of Russia's modernization, there is in Moscow these days an unfamiliar whiff of optimism. Elites of all persuasions seem to have confidence in the future. Businesspeople say that, for the first time, they are planning years ahead, instead of day-to-day. The Communists have been defeated, Russia's westward movement is increasingly secure, and the present market economy -- whatever its defects -- is here to stay. One-third of Russians now expect that their lives "will become somewhat better" within a year, compared to just over one-eighth in July 1998. This psychological breakthrough may turn out to be as important in the end as objective continuities.

Even Putin's liberal political opponents say the words "reform" and "democracy," discredited for years by the economic turmoil and corruption of the 1990s, are coming back into fashion. Others speak of the gradual emergence of a civil society. Although human rights campaigners are genuinely alarmed by the security services' new assertiveness, they allow themselves a dose of humor and irony. The veteran liberal activist Valeria Novodvorskaya recently made a cameo appearance on a television sitcom about a struggling radio station. The embarrassed station manager has to cancel her interview because his bungling engineer has locked the door to the recording studio and lost the key. "It's the FSB," Novodvorskaya insists, "I'm 100 percent sure." When Putin's critics can make fun of their own

suspensions, something must be on the right track.

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DANIEL TREISMAN is Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of California, Los Angeles. He is the author of *After the Deluge: Regional Crises and Political Consolidation in Russia*.

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# Russia Leaves the West

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*Dmitri Trenin*



*President Bush and President Putin in the Oval Office, Friday, Sept. 16, 2005 in Washington, White House photo by Eric Draper.*

## THE END OF THE AFFAIR

As President Vladimir Putin prepares to host the summit of the G-8 (the group of eight highly industrialized nations) in St. Petersburg in July, it is hardly a secret that relations between Russia and the West have begun to fray. After more than a decade of talk about Russia's "integration" into the West and a "strategic partnership" between Moscow and Washington, U.S. and European officials are now publicly voicing their concern over Russia's domestic political situation and its relations with the former Soviet republics. In a May 4 speech in Lithuania, for example, U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney

accused the Kremlin of "unfairly restricting citizens' rights" and using its energy resources as "tools of intimidation and blackmail."

Even as these critics express their dismay, they continue to assume that if they speak loudly and insistently, Russia will heed them and change its ways. Unfortunately, they are looking for change in the wrong place. It is true, as they charge, that Putin has recently clamped down on dissent throughout Russia and cracked down on separatists in Chechnya, but more important changes have come in Russia's foreign policy. Until recently, Russia saw itself as Pluto in the Western solar system, very far from the center but still fundamentally a part of it. Now it has left that orbit entirely: Russia's leaders have given up on becoming part of the West and have started creating their own Moscow-centered system.

The Kremlin's new approach to foreign policy assumes that as a big country, Russia is essentially friendless; no great power wants a strong Russia, which would be a formidable competitor, and many want a weak Russia that they could exploit and manipulate. Accordingly, Russia has a choice between accepting subservience and reasserting its status as a great power, thereby claiming its rightful place in the world alongside the United States and China rather than settling for the company of Brazil and India.

The United States and Europe can protest this change in Russia's foreign policy all they want, but it will not make any difference. They must recognize that the terms of Western-Russian interaction, conceptualized at the time of the Soviet Union's collapse 15 years ago and more or less unchanged since, have shifted fundamentally. The old paradigm is lost, and it is time to start looking for a new one.

A HALF-OPEN DOOR

The West deserves some of the blame for the shift in Russian foreign policy. The sudden collapse of Soviet power and the speed of German reunification took the United States and Europe by surprise. European governments, led by France, responded by transforming the European Community into a more tightly knit European Union (EU), while deferring the question of what to do about Eastern Europe and Russia. Washington, meanwhile, focused on managing the ever-weakening Soviet Union and rejoicing in its victory in the Cold War, neglecting to define a strategy for post-Soviet Russia. President George H. W. Bush's "new world order," articulated when the Soviet Union still existed, asked only that the Soviets stop their meddling around the globe. Only later did policymakers start thinking about organizing a true post-Cold War order, and when they did, their approach to handling post-Soviet Russia almost guaranteed failure.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall, in 1989, Western governments created a multitude of partnerships with their former communist adversaries in an effort to project their values and influence beyond the ruins of the wall. They hoped that some countries would quickly join Europe, now "whole and free," while others would gravitate toward it more slowly. The conflict in the Balkans dampened this early enthusiasm and demonstrated the United States' aloofness and Europe's weakness in the face of the forces released by the end of the superpower confrontation.

From the beginning of the post-Cold War era, the West saw Russia as a special case. Armed with nuclear weapons, its great-power mentality shaken but unbroken, and just too big, Russia would be granted privileged treatment but no real prospect of membership in either NATO or the EU. The door to the West would officially remain open, but the idea of Russia's actually entering through it remained unthinkable. The hope was that Russia would gradually transform itself, with Western assistance, into a democratic polity and a

market economy. In the meantime, what was important was that Russia would pursue a generally pro-Western foreign policy.

Moscow found such an offer unacceptable. It was only willing to consider joining the West if it was given something like co-chairmanship of the Western club -- or at the very least membership in its Politburo. Russian leaders were not willing to follow the guidance coming from Washington and Brussels or to accept the same rules that its former Soviet satellites were following. Thus, despite all of the talk about Russia's integration into Western institutions, the project was stillborn from the beginning. It was just a matter of time before that reality became obvious to both sides.

As other former Warsaw Pact countries were being drawn into the expanding West, Russia, considered too important to ignore, was offered new arrangements, but it was still kept at arm's length. Bringing Russia into the G-7 (to make it the G-8) was intended to tie Moscow to the West politically and to socialize its leaders. The NATO-Russia Council was supposed to harmonize security agendas and to promote military reform in Russia. The EU-Russia "common spaces" were designed to "Europeanize" Russia economically and socially and associate it with Europe politically. The Council of Europe, to which Russia was admitted while the first Chechen war still unresolved, was supposed to promote Western values and norms in Russia.

These arrangements did not so much fail as grossly underperform. The G-8 is still the old G-7 plus Russia, even though Russia technically has equal status with the other countries (except when the finance ministers meet). The NATO-Russia Council is merely a low-key technical-cooperation workshop operating at NATO's side. The EU-Russia road maps for the creation of the "common spaces," meant to enhance cooperation on the basis of greater mutual

compatibility, offer only a set of very general objectives with no hard commitments that just paper over a growing gap. The Council of Europe, especially its Parliamentary Assembly, has turned into an oratorical battleground between Russian lawmakers and their European counterparts on Chechnya and other human rights issues. (Moscow has even threatened to halve its contribution to the council's budget if the criticism does not cease.) Even the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty, which date from the Cold War, are floundering. Russia has chosen to ignore the former, which it accuses of political meddling in post-Soviet states, and has indicated that it might withdraw from the key provisions of the latter, which Moscow believes place unfair constraints on the Russian forces. So much for integration with the West.

After 9/11, Putin took the opportunity to offer the White House a deal. Russia was prepared to trade acceptance of U.S. global leadership for the United States' recognition of its role as a major ally, endowed with a special (that is, hegemonic) responsibility for the former Soviet space. That sweeping offer, obviously made from a position of weakness, was rejected by Washington, which was only prepared to discuss with Moscow the "rules of the road" in the post-Soviet Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

The Kremlin gave Westpolitik another try by joining the "coalition of the unwilling" at the time of the Iraq war. By joining the major European powers in opposing the U.S. invasion, Moscow hoped to enter the Western system through the European door and create a Russo-German-French axis to counterbalance Washington and London. Russia failed again. A new anti-American entente did not materialize; situational agreement with Moscow (and disagreement with Washington) could not overcome the fundamental character of transatlantic relations.

Instead, transatlantic and European institutions continued to enlarge to the east, taking in the remaining former Warsaw Pact and Council for Mutual Economic Assistance countries and the Baltic states. With the entry of Poland and the Baltics into the EU, the EU's overall approach became even more alarming for Moscow. At the same time, both the United States and Europe began supporting regime change from within and geopolitical reorientation in Russia's borderlands, most notably in Ukraine and Georgia, thus projecting their power of attraction beyond the former Soviet border into the CIS. The concept of "the near abroad," which Moscow used in the 1990s to justify its hegemony over the new states on Russia's periphery, was suddenly revived -- only now there were two versions of it, one from the perspective of Moscow, the other from the perspective of Brussels, both of which were claiming the same territory. From 2003 to 2005, for the first time since 1991, Moscow's relations with both parts of the West -- the United States and Europe -- soured at the same time.

## PARADIGM LOST

Toward the end of Putin's first presidential term, in 2004, Western governments finally concluded that Russia was not going to turn democratic in the foreseeable future. In their view, Russia no longer belonged to the same group as Poland, or even Ukraine. Reluctantly, they put Russia into the same slot as China, even while still hoping -- improbably, perhaps -- to make the most of the partnership established in a happier era.

But the changes on the Russian side went beyond domestic politics and had broad implications. For two decades prior to 2005, Russia had been continuously retreating in the realm of international politics. The "color revolutions" in Ukraine, Georgia, and Kyrgyzstan made it clear that even the post-Soviet space -- an area where Moscow was still dominant and

felt more or less at ease -- was starting to disintegrate. In late 2004 and early 2005, in the wake of the Beslan school hostage crisis and the Ukrainian election fiasco, the self-confidence of the Putin government hit an all-time low.

Astonishingly, the Kremlin bounced back -- and very quickly. Lessons were learned, new resources mobilized, and morale restored, all helped along mightily by high oil and gas prices. At first, Moscow acted cautiously, still somewhat unsure of itself. It joined Beijing in calling for the withdrawal of the U.S. military from Central Asia. Then, toward the end of 2005, it boldly embraced Uzbekistan as a formal ally, and the year ended with a dispute with Ukraine over gas supplies. The Kremlin did not hesitate to take on the post-Soviet republics' "beacon of democracy."

In the past year, Russia has begun acting like the great power it was in tsarist times. It conducted its first-ever military exercises with China and a smaller one with India. It ended gas subsidies for its former Soviet neighbors and cut off supplies to Ukraine when Kiev balked at a 400 percent price increase. It welcomed Hamas leaders to Moscow after the United States and the EU declared that they would not talk to them and offered financial support to the Palestinians even as the Americans and the Europeans were cutting off or suspending theirs. Russia has squarely rejected placing Iran under sanctions for its uranium-enrichment activities and has declared that its nuclear energy cooperation and arms trade with Tehran will continue and that the Russian armed forces would stay neutral should the United States decide to attack Iran.

Having left the Western orbit, Russia is also working to create its own solar system. For the first time since the unraveling of the Soviet Union, Moscow is treating the former Soviet republics as a priority. It has started promoting Russian economic expansion in the CIS in an effort both to obtain

lucrative assets and to enhance its political influence.

Facing what it sees as an emerging new world -- which features a new version of great-power nationalism -- the Russian leadership exudes confidence. Beyond the former Soviet space, Russia sees U.S. influence gradually waning and considers the EU as an economic, but not a political or military, unit that will remain self-absorbed for a while. Moscow admires China's progress and, careful but not fearful of its giant neighbor, is cooperating ever more closely with Beijing; it considers the more distant India unproblematic.

Part of the reason for Moscow's confidence is Russia's much-improved financial situation and the consolidation of power in the hands of the ruling circle. High energy prices have resulted in a huge surplus in Russia's coffers, which has allowed the Kremlin to build the third-largest currency reserves in the world, set aside over \$50 billion in a domestic "stabilization fund," and start repaying its foreign debts ahead of schedule. With the standard of living in Russia rising, the political opposition marginalized, and government authority recentralized, the Kremlin has grown assertive and occasionally arrogant. The humility of the post-Soviet period has passed: Russians have made it clear that their domestic politics is no one else's business -- Vladislav Surkov, Putin's chief-political-officer-cum-ideologue, often emphasizes that the country is a "sovereign democracy" -- and Russian leaders have begun playing hardball in the world arena.

## FROM IRONCLADS TO OIL RIGS

In the late nineteenth century, Russia's success was said to rest on its army and its navy; today, its success rests on its oil and gas. Energy is a key resource that should be exploited while prices are high, but it is also an effective political weapon, although one to be handled with care. So far, Moscow has done the right thing -- ending energy subsidies to

the former Soviet republics -- but in the wrong way. Rather than reforming the energy relationship with Ukraine in a steady and open manner, for example, Russia's state-controlled energy company, Gazprom, resorted to an eleventh-hour pressure tactic, which seemed like blackmail and made Russia look like a threat to global energy security.

To the extent that the Russian ruling elite cares about the West, it cares about economics, particularly the markets for oil and gas. The elite was overjoyed by Gazprom's steep rise in capitalization in early January 2006, which it took as vindication of its hard-line policies toward Ukraine. It wants Russian corporate giants to become transnational, and Gazprom is one of the world's biggest corporations. In several industries, including energy, metals, and chemicals, Russian national champions are looking to compete for places in the top ten.

By and large, however, Russian leaders do not care much about acceptance by the West; even the Soviet Union worried more about its image. Officials in Moscow privately enjoy Senator John McCain's thunderous statements about kicking Russia out of the G-8 because they know it is not going to happen and they take pleasure in the supposed impotence of serious adversaries. Public relations and lobbying are simply not high on the Kremlin's agenda. GR -- government relations -- is considered more important than PR. Russia's engaging former German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder for a gas pipeline project and wooing Donald Evans, the former U.S. commerce secretary, for an oil job are just two stunning examples of this approach. Russia, the Kremlin believes, will get bad press in the West almost no matter what it does, so why bother?

All of this promises serious tension, and even conflict, between Russia and the West, although nothing like a return to the Cold War. There is no ideological antagonism, since

today's Russia lacks a state ideology. And in a number of important areas -- including fighting Islamist radicalism -- there will be cooperation. On others issues, such as the rise of China and energy security, there will be some cooperation, but Russia will hardly side with the West as a matter of course. In the test case of Iran, when push comes to shove, Moscow would prefer to see Tehran pursue its nuclear program, even if it is imperfectly safeguarded, than a U.S. attack to stop it. Whereas the Iraq war led the Kremlin away from the White House and into the arms of l'Elysée, a war on Iran is likely to push Moscow further away from both Washington and Brussels -- and into the arms of Beijing.

#### NEITHER WITH US NOR AGAINST US

The West needs to rethink the fundamentals of its approach to Russia. Russia's domestic transformation will not follow the course of, say, Poland's: modernizing Russia by means of EU integration will not be an option. Nor will Russia adopt the French approach: an occasionally dissenting but solidly Euro-Atlantic foreign and security policy. Nor should the West be banking on a historical shortcut: no democratic, pro-Western tsar will suddenly emerge from some color revolution to hitch Russia to the U.S.-EU wagon.

On the other hand, Russia today is not, and is not likely to become, a second Soviet Union. It is not a revanchist and imperialist aggressor bent on reabsorbing its former provinces. It is not a rogue state, nor a natural ally of those states that may be called rogues. A Sino-Russian alliance against the United States could only occur as a result of exceptionally shortsighted and foolish policies on Washington's part. Today's Russia may not be pro-Western, but neither is it anti-Western.

In light of Russia's new foreign policy, the West needs to calm down and take Russia for what it is: a major outside player

that is neither an eternal foe nor an automatic friend. Western leaders must disabuse themselves of the notion that by preaching values one can actually plant them. Russia will continue to change, but at its own pace. The key drivers of that change must be the growth of capitalism at home and openness to the outside world. The West needs to adopt an issue-based approach when dealing with the Russian government, but it should not expect Moscow always to follow its lead. Engaging Russia is over, and engaging with Russia, where possible and desirable, must be based on mutual self-interest. Most important, Western leaders have to avoid wishful thinking when trying to embrace either a Kremlin ruler or a liberal opposition figure.

Looking ahead, the current complications are likely to get worse in the near and medium term. The G-8 summit in St. Petersburg will be accompanied by intense criticism of Kremlin policies in the Western media. Russia's World Trade Organization accession process has already slowed down as a result of U.S. and EU demands. Kosovo's coming formal independence from Serbia will be taken up by Russia as a model for resolving the stalemated conflicts in Georgia and Moldova, where the West is insisting on territorial unity and Moscow is supporting the separatist enclaves. On the all-important issue of Iran, Russia will continue essentially to share Western goals while opposing Western (and especially U.S.) hard-line policies.

Tension will culminate in 2008, the year of the Russian and U.S. presidential elections. Supreme power will likely be transferred from the current incumbent to another member of the ruling circle in Moscow, and this anointment will be legitimized in a national election. (There are other scenarios, of course -- ranging from Putin's running for a third term to a union with Belarus -- but they seem less probable at the moment.) Thus, the real question will be not about the Russian election but about the reaction to that election in the

West, and above all in the United States. Will it be pronounced free but not fair, as before? Or neither free nor fair? Declaring the post-2008 Russian leadership illegitimate could push the U.S.-Russian relationship from cool estrangement to real alienation. And all of this would be happening in the midst of the U.S. presidential campaign and could coincide with Ukraine's taking an important step toward joining NATO.

With U.S.-Russian relations at their lowest point -- and the Kremlin at its most confident -- since 1991, Washington must recognize that frustrated Russia-bashing is futile. It must understand that positive change in Russia can only come from within and that economic realities, rather than democratic ideals, will be the vehicle for that change. And most important, as president and CEO of the international system, the United States must do everything it can to ensure that the system does not once again succumb to dangerous and destabilizing great-power rivalry.

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DMITRI TRENIN is Deputy Director of the Carnegie Moscow Center.

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# Losing Russia

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## The Costs of Renewed Confrontation

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*Dimitri K. Simes*



*At a meeting of the Russian State council in December 2007, Kremlin Archives.*

Faced with threats from al Qaeda and Iran and increasing instability in Iraq and Afghanistan, the United States does not need new enemies. Yet its relationship with Russia is worsening by the day. The rhetoric on both sides is heating up, security agreements are in jeopardy, and Washington and Moscow increasingly look at each other through the old Cold War prism.

Although Russia's newfound assertiveness and heavy-handed conduct at home and abroad have been the major causes of mutual disillusionment, the United States bears considerable responsibility for the slow disintegration of the relationship as

well. Moscow's maladies, mistakes, and misdeeds are not an alibi for U.S. policymakers, who made fundamental errors in managing Russia's transition from an expansionist communist empire to a more traditional great power.

Underlying the United States' mishandling of Russia is the conventional wisdom in Washington, which holds that the Reagan administration won the Cold War largely on its own. But this is not what happened, and it is certainly not the way most Russians view the demise of the Soviet state. Washington's self-congratulatory historical narrative lies at the core of its subsequent failures in dealing with Moscow in the post-Cold War era.

Washington's crucial error lay in its propensity to treat post-Soviet Russia as a defeated enemy. The United States and the West did win the Cold War, but victory for one side does not necessarily mean defeat for the other. Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, Russian President Boris Yeltsin, and their advisers believed that they had all joined the United States' side as victors in the Cold War. They gradually concluded that communism was bad for the Soviet Union, and especially Russia. In their view, they did not need outside pressure in order to act in their country's best interest.

Despite numerous opportunities for strategic cooperation over the past 16 years, Washington's diplomatic behavior has left the unmistakable impression that making Russia a strategic partner has never been a major priority. The administrations of Bill Clinton and George W. Bush assumed that when they needed Russian cooperation, they could secure it without special effort or accommodation. The Clinton administration in particular appeared to view Russia like postwar Germany or Japan -- as a country that could be forced to follow U.S. policies and would eventually learn to like them. They seemed to forget that Russia had not been occupied by U.S. soldiers or devastated by atomic bombs.

Russia was transformed, not defeated. This profoundly shaped its responses to the United States.

Since the fall of the Iron Curtain, Russia has not acted like a client state, a reliable ally, or a true friend -- but nor has it behaved like an enemy, much less an enemy with global ambitions and a hostile and messianic ideology. Yet the risk that Russia may join the ranks of U.S. adversaries is very real today. To avoid such an outcome, Washington must understand where it has gone wrong -- and take appropriate steps today to reverse the downward spiral.

## DEATH OF AN EMPIRE

Misunderstandings and misrepresentations of the end of the Cold War have been significant factors in fueling misguided U.S. policies toward Russia. Although Washington played an important role in hastening the fall of the Soviet empire, reformers in Moscow deserve far more credit than they generally receive.

Indeed, in the late 1980s, it was far from inevitable that the Soviet Union or even the Eastern bloc would collapse. Gorbachev entered office in 1985 with the goal of eliminating problems that Leonid Brezhnev's administration had already recognized -- namely, military overstretch in Afghanistan and Africa and excessive defense spending that was crippling the Soviet economy -- and with a desire to enhance the Soviet Union's power and prestige.

His dramatic reduction of Soviet subsidies for states in the Eastern bloc, his withdrawal of support for old-line Warsaw Pact regimes, and perestroika created totally new political dynamics in Eastern Europe and led to the largely peaceful disintegration of various communist regimes and the weakening of Moscow's influence in the region. Ronald Reagan contributed to this process by increasing the pressure

on the Kremlin, but it was Gorbachev, not the White House, who ended the Soviet empire.

U.S. influence played even less of a role in bringing about the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The George H. W. Bush administration supported the independence of the Baltic republics and communicated to Gorbachev that cracking down on legally elected separatist governments would jeopardize U.S.-Soviet relations. But by allowing pro-independence parties to compete and win in relatively free elections and refusing to use security forces decisively to remove them, Gorbachev virtually assured that the Baltic states would leave the Soviet Union. Russia itself delivered the final blow, by demanding institutional status equal to the other union republics. Gorbachev told the Politburo that permitting the change would spell "the end of the empire." And it did. After the failed reactionary coup attempt in August 1991, Gorbachev could not stop Yeltsin -- and the leaders of Belarus and Ukraine -- from dismantling the Soviet Union.

The Reagan and first Bush administrations understood the dangers of a crumbling superpower and managed the Soviet Union's decline with an impressive combination of empathy and toughness. They treated Gorbachev respectfully but without making substantive concessions at the expense of U.S. interests. This included promptly rejecting Gorbachev's increasingly desperate requests for massive economic assistance, because there was no good reason for the United States to help him save the Soviet empire. But when the first Bush administration rejected Soviet appeals not to launch an attack against Saddam Hussein after Iraq invaded Kuwait, the White House worked hard to pay proper heed to Gorbachev and not "rub his nose in it," as former Secretary of State James Baker put it. As a result, the United States was able to simultaneously defeat Saddam and maintain close cooperation with the Soviet Union, largely on Washington's terms.

If the George H. W. Bush administration can be criticized for anything, it is for failing to provide swift economic help to the democratic government of the newly independent Russia in 1992. Observing the transition closely, former President Richard Nixon pointed out that a major aid package could stop the economic free fall and help anchor Russia in the West for years to come. Bush, however, was in a weak position to take a daring stand in helping Russia. By this time, he was fighting a losing battle with candidate Bill Clinton, who was attacking him for being preoccupied with foreign policy at the expense of the U.S. economy.

Despite his focus on domestic issues during the campaign, Clinton came into office with a desire to help Russia. The administration arranged significant financial assistance for Moscow, primarily through the International Monetary Fund (IMF). As late as 1996, Clinton was so eager to praise Yeltsin that he even compared Yeltsin's decision to use military force against separatists in Chechnya to Abraham Lincoln's leadership in the American Civil War.

The Clinton administration's greatest failure was its decision to take advantage of Russia's weakness. The administration tried to get as much as possible for the United States politically, economically, and in terms of security in Europe and the former Soviet Union before Russia recovered from the tumultuous transition. Former Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott has also revealed that U.S. officials even exploited Yeltsin's excessive drinking during face-to-face negotiations. Many Russians believed that the Clinton administration was doing the same with Russia writ large. The problem was that Russia eventually did sober up, and it remembered the night before angrily and selectively.

## EAT YOUR SPINACH

Behind the façade of friendship, Clinton administration

officials expected the Kremlin to accept the United States' definition of Russia's national interests. They believed that Moscow's preferences could be safely ignored if they did not align with Washington's goals. Russia had a ruined economy and a collapsing military, and it acted like a defeated country in many ways. Unlike other European colonial empires that had withdrawn from former possessions, Moscow made no effort to negotiate for the protection of its economic and security interests in Eastern Europe or the former Soviet states on its way out. Inside Russia, meanwhile, Yeltsin's radical reformers often welcomed IMF and U.S. pressure as justification for the harsh and hugely unpopular monetary policies they had advocated on their own.

Soon, however, even Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev -- known in Russia as Mr. Yes for accommodating the West -- became frustrated with the Clinton administration's tough love. As he told Talbott, who served as ambassador at large to the newly independent states from 1993 to 1994, "It's bad enough having you people tell us what you're going to do whether we like it or not. Don't add insult to injury by also telling us that it's in our interests to obey your orders."

But such pleas fell on deaf ears in Washington, where this arrogant approach was becoming increasingly popular. Talbott and his aides referred to it as the spinach treatment: a paternalistic Uncle Sam fed Russian leaders policies that Washington deemed healthy, no matter how unappetizing these policies seemed in Moscow. As Talbott adviser Victoria Nuland put it, "The more you tell them it's good for them, the more they gag." By sending the message that Russia should not have an independent foreign policy -- or even an independent domestic one -- the Clinton administration generated much resentment. This neocolonial approach went hand in hand with IMF recommendations that most economists now agree were ill suited to Russia and so painful for the population that they could never have been

implemented democratically. However, Yeltsin's radical reformers were only too happy to impose them without popular consent.

At the time, former President Nixon, as well as a number of prominent U.S. business leaders and Russia specialists, recognized the folly of the U.S. approach and urged compromise between Yeltsin and the more conservative Duma. Nixon was disturbed when Russian officials told him that the United States had expressed its willingness to condone the Yeltsin administration's decision to take "resolute" steps against the Duma so long as the Kremlin accelerated economic reforms. Nixon warned that "encouraging departures from democracy in a country with such an autocratic tradition as Russia's is like trying to put out a fire with combustible materials." Moreover, he argued that acting on Washington's "fatally flawed assumption" that Russia was not and would not be a world power for some time would imperil peace and endanger democracy in the region.

Although Clinton met with Nixon, he ignored this advice and disregarded Yeltsin's worst excesses. A stalemate between Yeltsin and the Duma and Yeltsin's unconstitutional decree dissolving the body soon followed, ultimately leading to violence and tanks shelling the parliament building. After the episode, Yeltsin forced through a new constitution granting Russia's president sweeping powers at the expense of the parliament. This move consolidated the first Russian president's hold on power and laid the foundation for his drift toward authoritarianism. The appointment of Vladimir Putin -- then the head of Russia's post-KGB intelligence service, the FSB -- as prime minister and then as acting president was a natural outcome of Washington's reckless encouragement of Yeltsin's authoritarian tendencies.

Other aspects of the Clinton administration's foreign policy further heightened Russia's resentment. NATO expansion --

especially the first wave, which involved the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland -- was not a big problem in and of itself. Most Russians were prepared to accept NATO enlargement as an unhappy but unthreatening development -- until the 1999 Kosovo crisis. When NATO went to war against Serbia, despite strong Russian objections and without approval from the UN Security Council, the Russian elite and the Russian people quickly came to the conclusion that they had been profoundly misled and that NATO remained directed against them. Great powers -- particularly great powers in decline -- do not appreciate such demonstrations of their irrelevance.

Notwithstanding Russian anger over Kosovo, in late 1999, Putin, then prime minister, made a major overture to the United States just after ordering troops into Chechnya. He was troubled by Chechen connections with al Qaeda and the fact that Taliban-run Afghanistan was the only country to have established diplomatic relations with Chechnya. Motivated by these security interests, rather than any newfound love for the United States, Putin suggested that Moscow and Washington cooperate against al Qaeda and the Taliban. This initiative came after the 1993 World Trade Center bombing and the 1998 bombing of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, by which time the Clinton administration had more than enough information to understand the mortal danger the United States faced from Islamic fundamentalists.

But Clinton and his advisers, frustrated with Russian defiance in the Balkans and the removal of reformers from key posts in Moscow, ignored this overture. They increasingly saw Russia not as a potential partner but as a nostalgic, dysfunctional, financially weak power at whose expense the United States should make whatever gains it could. Thus they sought to cement the results of the Soviet Union's disintegration by bringing as many post-Soviet states as possible under Washington's wing. They pressed Georgia to participate in building the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline, running from

the Caspian Sea to the Mediterranean and bypassing Russia. They encouraged Georgia's opportunistic president, Eduard Shevardnadze, to seek NATO membership and urged U.S. embassies in Central Asia to work against Russian influence in the region. Finally, they dismissed Putin's call for U.S.-Russian counterterrorist collaboration as desperate neoimperialism and an attempt to reestablish Russia's waning influence in Central Asia. What the Clinton administration did not appreciate, however, was that it was also giving away a historic opportunity to put al Qaeda and the Taliban on the defensive, destroy their bases, and potentially disrupt their ability to launch major operations. Only after nearly 3,000 U.S. citizens were killed on September 11, 2001, did this cooperation finally begin.

#### FROM SOUL MATES TO RIVALS

When George W. Bush came to power in January 2001, eight months after Putin became president of Russia, his administration faced a new group of relatively unknown Russian officials. Keen to differentiate its policy from Clinton's, the Bush team did not see Russia as a priority; many of its members saw Moscow as corrupt and undemocratic -- and weak. Although this assessment was accurate, the Bush administration lacked the strategic foresight to reach out to Moscow. Bush and Putin did develop good personal chemistry, however. When they first met, at a June 2001 summit in Slovenia, Bush famously vouched for Putin's soul and democratic convictions.

The events of September 11, 2001, dramatically changed Washington's attitude toward Moscow and prompted a strong outpouring of emotional support for the United States in Russia. Putin reiterated his long-standing offer of support against al Qaeda and the Taliban; he granted overflight rights across Russian territory, endorsed the establishment of U.S. bases in Central Asia, and, perhaps most important,

facilitated access to a readily available Russian-armed and Russian-trained military force in Afghanistan: the Northern Alliance. Of course, he had Russia's own interests in mind; to Putin, it was a blessing that the United States had joined the fight against Islamist terrorism. Like many other alliances, U.S.-Russian cooperation on counterterrorism came into existence because of shared fundamental interests, not a common ideology or mutual sympathy.

Despite this newfound cooperation, relations remained strained in other areas. Bush's announcement in December 2001 that the United States would withdraw from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, one of the last remaining symbols of Russia's former superpower status, further wounded the Kremlin's pride. Likewise, Russian animosity toward NATO only grew after the alliance incorporated the three Baltic states, two of which -- Estonia and Latvia -- had unresolved disputes with Russia relating principally to the treatment of ethnic Russian minorities.

At roughly the same time, Ukraine became a source of major tension. From Russia's perspective, U.S. support for Viktor Yushchenko's Orange Revolution was not just about promoting democracy; it was also about undermining Russia's influence in a neighboring state that had joined the Russian empire voluntarily in the seventeenth century and that had both significant cultural ties with Russia and a large Russian population. Moreover, in Moscow's view, contemporary Ukraine's border -- drawn by Joseph Stalin and Nikita Khrushchev as an administrative frontier between Soviet provinces -- stretched far beyond historical Ukraine's outer limits, incorporating millions of Russians and creating ethnic, linguistic, and political tensions. The Bush administration's approach to Ukraine -- namely, its pressure on a divided Ukraine to request NATO membership and its financial support for nongovernmental organizations actively assisting pro-Yushchenko political parties -- has fueled Moscow's

concerns that the United States is pursuing a neocontainment policy. Few Bush administration officials or members of Congress considered the implications of challenging Russia in an area so central to its national interests and on an issue so emotionally charged.

Georgia soon became another battleground. President Mikheil Saakashvili has been seeking to use Western support, particularly from the United States, as his principal tool in reestablishing Georgian sovereignty over the breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, where Russian-backed separatists have fought for independence from Georgia since the early 1990s. And Saakashvili has not just been demanding the return of the two Georgian enclaves; he has been openly positioning himself as the leading regional advocate of "color revolutions" and the overthrow of leaders sympathetic to Moscow. He has portrayed himself as a champion of democracy and an eager supporter of U.S. foreign policy, going so far as to send Georgian troops to Iraq in 2004 as part of the coalition force. The fact that he was elected with 96 percent of the vote -- a suspiciously high number -- along with his control of parliament and Georgian television, has provoked little concern outside the country. Nor has the arbitrary prosecution of business leaders and political rivals. When Zurab Zhvania -- Georgia's popular prime minister and the only remaining political counterweight to Saakashvili -- died in 2005 under mysterious circumstances involving an alleged gas leak, members of his family publicly rejected the government's account of the incident with a clear implication that they believed Saakashvili's regime had been involved. But in contrast to U.S. concern over the murder of Russian opposition figures, no one in Washington seemed to notice.

In fact, the Bush administration and influential politicians in both parties have routinely supported Saakashvili against Russia, notwithstanding his transgressions. The United States has urged him on several occasions to control his temper and

avoid provoking open military confrontation with Russia, but it is clear that Washington has adopted Georgia as its main client in the region. The United States has provided equipment and training to the Georgian military, enabling Saakashvili to take a harder line toward Russia; Georgian forces have gone so far as to detain and publicly humiliate Russian military personnel deployed as peacekeepers in South Ossetia and Georgia proper.

Of course, Russia's conduct vis-à-vis Georgia has been far from exemplary. Moscow has granted Russian citizenship to most residents of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and has imposed economic sanctions against Georgia, often on dubious grounds. And Russian peacekeepers in the area are clearly there to limit Georgia's ability to rule the two regions. But this blind U.S. support for Saakashvili contributes to a sense in Moscow that the United States is pursuing policies aimed at undermining what remains of Russia's drastically reduced regional influence. The sense in the Kremlin is that the United States cares about using democracy as an instrument to embarrass and isolate Putin more than it cares about democracy itself.

## DEALING WITH A RESURGENT RUSSIA

Despite these growing tensions, Russia has not yet become a U.S. adversary. There is still a chance to stop further deterioration of the relationship. This will require a clearheaded evaluation of U.S. objectives in the region and an examination of the many areas where U.S. and Russian interests converge -- especially counterterrorism and nonproliferation. It will also require careful management of situations such as the nuclear standoff in Iran, where the two countries' goals are similar but their tactical preferences diverge. Most important, the United States must recognize that it no longer enjoys unlimited leverage over Russia. Today, Washington simply cannot force its will on Moscow as

it did in the 1990s.

The Bush administration and key congressional voices have reasonably suggested that counterterrorism and nonproliferation should be the defining issues in the U.S.-Russian relationship. Stability in Russia -- still home to thousands of nuclear weapons -- and the post-Soviet states is also a key priority. Moscow's support for sanctions -- and, when necessary, the use of force -- against rogue states and terrorist groups would be extremely helpful to Washington.

The United States has an interest in spreading democratic governance throughout the region, but it would be far-fetched to expect the Putin government to support U.S. democracy-promotion efforts. Washington must continue to ensure that no one, including Moscow, interferes with the rights of others to choose a democratic form of government or make independent foreign policy decisions. But it must recognize that it has limited leverage at its disposal to achieve this goal. With high energy prices, sound fiscal policies, and tamed oligarchs, the Putin regime no longer needs international loans or economic assistance and has no trouble attracting major foreign investment despite growing tension with Western governments. Within Russia, relative stability, prosperity, and a new sense of dignity have tempered popular disillusionment with growing state control and the heavy-handed manipulation of the political process.

The overwhelmingly negative public image of the United States and its Western allies -- carefully sustained by the Russian government -- sharply limits the United States' ability to develop a constituency inclined to accept its advice on Russia's domestic affairs. In the current climate, Washington cannot hope to do much more than convey strongly to Russia that repression is incompatible with long-term partnership with the United States. To make matters worse, the power of the United States' moral example has been damaged.

Moreover, suspicion of U.S. intentions runs so deep that Moscow reflexively views even decisions not directed against Russia, such as the deployment of antimissile systems in the Czech Republic and Poland, with extreme apprehension.

Meanwhile, as Moscow looks westward with suspicion, Russia's use of its energy for political purposes has angered Western governments, not to mention its energy-dependent neighbors. Russia clearly sets different energy prices for its friends; government officials and executives of the state-controlled oil company Gazprom have occasionally displayed both bravado and satisfaction in threatening to penalize those who resist, such as Georgia and Ukraine. But on a fundamental level, Russia is simply rewarding those who enter into special political and economic arrangements with it by offering them below-market prices for Russian energy resources. Russia grudgingly accepts the Atlanticist choices of its neighbors but refuses to subsidize them. Also, it is somewhat disingenuous for the United States to respond to Russia's political use of energy with self-righteous indignation considering that no country introduces economic sanctions more frequently or enthusiastically than the United States.

U.S. commentators often accuse Russia of intransigence on Kosovo, but Moscow's public position is that it will accept any agreement negotiated by Serbia and Kosovo. There is no evidence that Russia has discouraged Serbia from reaching a deal with Kosovo; on the contrary, there have even been some hints that Moscow may abstain from voting on a UN Security Council resolution recognizing Kosovo's independence in the absence of a settlement with Belgrade. If unrecognized territories from the former Soviet Union, especially Abkhazia and South Ossetia, could likewise become independent without the consent of the states from which they seek to break away, Moscow would benefit. Many in Russia would not mind Kosovo's becoming a precedent for unrecognized post-Soviet territories, most of which are eager for independence

leading to integration with Russia.

A variety of other foreign policy disagreements have exacerbated tensions further. It is true that Russia did not support the United States' decision to invade Iraq, but nor did key NATO allies such as France and Germany. Russia has supplied conventional weapons to some nations the United States considers hostile, such as Iran, Syria, and Venezuela, but it does so on a commercial basis and within the limits of international law. The United States may understandably view this as provocative, but many Russians would express similar feelings about U.S. arms transfers to Georgia. And although Russia has not gone as far as the United States and Europe would like when it comes to disciplining Iran and North Korea, Moscow has gradually come to support sanctions against both countries.

These numerous disagreements do not mean that Russia is an enemy. After all, Russia has not supported al Qaeda or any other terrorist group at war with the United States and no longer promotes a rival ideology with the goal of world domination. Nor has it invaded or threatened to invade its neighbors. Finally, Russia has opted not to foment separatism in Ukraine, despite the existence there of a large and vocal Russian minority population. Putin and his advisers accept that the United States is the most powerful nation in the world and that provoking it needlessly makes little sense. But they are no longer willing to adjust their behavior to fit U.S. preferences, particularly at the expense of their own interests.

## A BLUEPRINT FOR COOPERATION

Working constructively with Russia does not mean nominating Putin for the Nobel Peace Prize or inviting him to address a joint session of Congress. Nor is anyone encouraging Russia to join NATO or welcoming it as a great

democratic friend. What Washington must do is work with Russia to advance essential U.S. interests in the same way that the United States works with other important nondemocratic states, such as China, Kazakhstan, and Saudi Arabia. This means avoiding both misplaced affection and the unrealistic sense that the United States can take other countries for granted without consequences. Few deny that such cooperation should be pursued, but Washington's naive and self-serving conventional wisdom holds that the United States can secure Russia's cooperation in areas important to the United States while maintaining complete freedom to ignore Russian priorities. U.S. officials believe that Moscow should uncritically support Washington against Iran and Islamist terrorists on the theory that Russia also considers them threats. However, this argument ignores the fact that Russia views the Iranian threat very differently. Although Russia does not want a nuclear-armed Iran, it does not feel the same sense of urgency over the issue and may be satisfied with intrusive inspections preventing industrial-scale uranium enrichment. Expecting Russia to accommodate the United States on Iran without regard to U.S. policy on other issues is the functional equivalent of expecting Iraqis to welcome the U.S. and coalition troops as liberators in that it fundamentally ignores the other side's perspective on U.S. actions.

With this in mind, the United States should be firm in its relations with Russia and should make clear that Iran, nonproliferation, and terrorism are defining issues in the bilateral relationship. Similarly, Washington should communicate to Moscow that aggression against a NATO member or the unprovoked use of force against any other state would do profound damage to the relationship. The United States should also demonstrate with words and deeds that it will oppose any effort to re-create the Soviet Union. In economic affairs, Washington should signal very clearly that manipulation of the law to seize assets that were legally

acquired by foreign energy companies will have serious consequences, including restrictions on Russian access to U.S. and Western downstream markets and damage to Russia's reputation that would limit not only investment and transfers of technology but also Western companies' support for engagement with Russia. Finally, the United States should not be deterred by Russian objections to placing missile defense systems in the Czech Republic and Poland. Rather, in Henry Kissinger's formulation, Washington should keep the deployments limited to their "stated objective of overcoming rogue state threats" and combine them with an agreement on specific steps designed to reassure Moscow that the program has nothing to do with a hypothetical war against Russia.

The good news is that although Russia is disillusioned with the United States and Europe, it is so far not eager to enter into an alliance against the West. The Russian people do not want to risk their new prosperity -- and Russia's elites are loath to give up their Swiss bank accounts, London mansions, and Mediterranean vacations. Although Russia is seeking greater military cooperation with China, Beijing does not seem eager to start a fight with Washington either. At the moment, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization -- which promotes cooperation among China, Russia, and the Central Asian states -- is a debating club rather than a genuine security alliance.

But if the current U.S.-Russian relationship deteriorates further, it will not bode well for the United States and would be even worse for Russia. The Russian general staff is lobbying to add a military dimension to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and some top officials are beginning to champion the idea of a foreign policy realignment directed against the West. There are also quite a few countries, such as Iran and Venezuela, urging Russia to work with China to play a leading role in balancing the United States economically, politically, and militarily. And post-Soviet

states such as Georgia, which are adept at playing the United States and Russia off against each other, could act in ways that escalate tensions. Putin's stage management of Moscow's succession in order to maintain a dominant role for himself makes a major foreign policy shift in Russia unlikely. But new Russian leaders could have their own ideas -- and their own ambitions -- and political uncertainty or economic problems could tempt them to exploit nationalist sentiments to build legitimacy.

If relations worsen, the UN Security Council may no longer be available -- due to a Russian veto -- even occasionally, to provide legitimacy for U.S. military actions or to impose meaningful sanctions on rogue states. Enemies of the United States could be emboldened by new sources of military hardware in Russia, and political and security protection from Moscow. International terrorists could find new sanctuaries in Russia or the states it protects. And the collapse of U.S.-Russian relations could give China much greater flexibility in dealing with the United States. It would not be a new Cold War, because Russia will not be a global rival and is unlikely to be the prime mover in confronting the United States. But it would provide incentives and cover for others to confront Washington, with potentially catastrophic results.

It would be reckless and shortsighted to push Russia in that direction by repeating the errors of the past, rather than working to avoid the dangerous consequences of a renewed U.S.-Russian confrontation. But ultimately, Moscow will have to make its own decisions. Given the Kremlin's history of poor policy choices, a clash may come whether Washington likes it or not. And should that happen, the United States must approach this rivalry with greater realism and determination than it has displayed in its halfhearted attempts at partnership.

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DIMITRI K. SIMES is President of the Nixon Center and Publisher of The National Interest.

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# Mission to Moscow

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## Why Authoritarian Stability Is a Myth

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*Michael McFaul and Kathryn Stoner-Weiss*

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*Putin visiting the [Tuva Republic](#), Siberia, 2007*

The conventional explanation for Vladimir Putin's popularity is straightforward. In the 1990s, under post-Soviet Russia's first president, Boris Yeltsin, the state did not govern, the economy shrank, and the population suffered. Since 2000, under Putin, order has returned, the economy has flourished, and the average Russian is living better than ever before. As political freedom has decreased, economic growth has increased. Putin may have rolled back democratic gains, the story goes, but these were necessary sacrifices on the altar of stability and growth.

This narrative has a powerful simplicity, and most Russians seem to buy it. Putin's approval rating hovers near 80 percent, and nearly a third of Russians would like to see him become president for life. Putin, emboldened by such adoration, has signaled that he will stay actively involved in ruling Russia in some capacity after stepping down as president this year, perhaps as prime minister to a weak president or even as president once again later on. Authoritarians elsewhere, meanwhile, have held up Putin's popularity and accomplishments in Russia as proof that autocracy has a future -- that, contrary to the end-of-history claims about liberal democracy's inevitable triumph, Putin, like China's Deng Xiaoping did, has forged a model of successful market authoritarianism that can be imitated around the world.

This conventional narrative is wrong, based almost entirely on a spurious correlation between autocracy and growth. The emergence of Russian democracy in the 1990s did indeed coincide with state breakdown and economic decline, but it did not cause either. The reemergence of Russian autocracy under Putin, conversely, has coincided with economic growth but not caused it (high oil prices and recovery from the transition away from communism deserve most of the credit). There is also very little evidence to suggest that Putin's autocratic turn over the last several years has led to more effective governance than the fractious democracy of the 1990s. In fact, the reverse is much closer to the truth: to the extent that Putin's centralization of power has had an influence on governance and economic growth at all, the effects have been negative. Whatever the apparent gains of Russia under Putin, the gains would have been greater if democracy had survived.

## POLITICAL THERMIDOR

The process of democratization started before Russian

independence. In the years leading up to the collapse of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev began to introduce important reforms, including competitive elections for many national and local offices, pluralism in the media (even when still state-owned), and freedom of association for political and civic groups. After 1991, Russia started developing all the basic elements of an electoral democracy. There were competitive elections for parliament and the presidency and mostly competitive elections for regional governors. Political parties of all stripes, including opposition communist and ultranationalist groups, operated freely, as did nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Electronic and print media outlets not controlled by the state multiplied. So vibrant was the political opposition that Yeltsin twice faced possible impeachment by the Communists in the Duma, Russia's lower house of parliament. Deep divisions among national officials, regional governors, oligarchs, and media outlets made the 1999 parliamentary election the most competitive contest in Russian history.

Yeltsin was far from a perfect democrat: he used force to crush the Russian parliament in 1993, bulldozed into place a new constitution that increased presidential power, and barred some parties or individuals from competing in a handful of national and regional elections. He also initiated two wars in Chechnya. The system that Yeltsin handed over to Putin lacked many key attributes of a liberal democracy. Still, whatever its warts, the Russian regime under Yeltsin was unquestionably more democratic than the Russian regime today. Although the formal institutional contours of the Russian political system have not changed markedly under Putin, the actual democratic content has eroded considerably.

Putin's rollback of democracy started with independent media outlets. When he came to power, three television networks had the national reach to really count in Russian politics -- RTR, ORT, and NTV. Putin tamed all three. RTR was already

fully state-owned, so reining it in was easy. He acquired control of ORT, which had the biggest national audience, by running its owner, the billionaire Boris Berezovsky, out of the country. Vladimir Gusinsky, the owner of NTV, tried to fight Putin's effective takeover of his channel, but he ended up losing not only NTV but also the newspaper Segodnya and the magazine Itogi when prosecutors pressed spurious charges against him. In 2005, Anatoly Chubais, the CEO of RAO UES (Unified Energy Systems of Russia) and a leader in the liberal party SPS (Union of Right Forces), was compelled to hand over another, smaller private television company, REN-TV, to Kremlin-friendly oligarchs. Today, the Kremlin controls all the major national television networks.

More recently, the Kremlin has extended its reach to print and online media, which it had previously left alone. Most major Russian national newspapers have been sold in the last several years to individuals or companies loyal to the Kremlin, leaving the Moscow weekly, Novaya Gazeta, the last truly independent national newspaper. On the radio, the station Ekho Moskvyy remains an independent source of news, but even its future is questionable. Meanwhile, Russia now ranks as the third-most-dangerous place in the world to be a journalist, behind only Iraq and Colombia. Reporters Without Borders has counted 21 journalists murdered in Russia since 2000, including Anna Politkovskaya, the country's most courageous investigative journalist, in October 2006.

Putin has also reduced the autonomy of regional governments. He established seven supraregional districts headed primarily by former generals and KGB officers. These seven new super governors were assigned the task of taking control of all the federal agencies in their jurisdictions, many of which had developed affinities with the regional governments during the Yeltsin era. They also began investigating regional leaders as a way of undermining their autonomy and threatening them into subjugation.

Putin emasculated the Federation Council, the upper house of Russia's parliament, by removing elected governors and heads of regional legislatures from the seats they would have automatically taken in this chamber and replacing them with appointed representatives. Regional elections were rigged to punish leaders who resisted Putin's authority. And in September 2004, in a fatal blow to Russian federalism, Putin announced that he would begin appointing governors -- with the rationale that this would make them more accountable and effective. There have been no regional elections for executive office since February 2005.

Putin has also made real progress in weakening the autonomy of the parliament. Starting with the December 2003 parliamentary elections, he has taken advantage of his control of other political resources (such as NTV and the regional governorships) to give the Kremlin's party, United Russia, a strong majority in the Duma: United Russia and its allies now control two-thirds of the seats in parliament. Putin's own popularity may be United Russia's greatest electoral asset, but constant positive coverage of United Russia leaders (and negative coverage of Communist Party officials) on Russia's national television stations, overwhelming financial support from Russia's oligarchs, and near-unanimous endorsement by Russia's regional leaders have also helped. After the December 2003 elections, for the first time ever the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe issued a critical report on Russia's parliamentary elections, which stressed, "The State Duma elections failed to meet many OSCE and Council of Europe commitments for democratic elections." In 2007, the Russian government refused to allow the OSCE to field an observer mission large enough to monitor the December parliamentary elections effectively.

Political parties not aligned with the Kremlin have also suffered. The independent liberal parties, Yabloko and the SPS, as well as the largest independent party on the left, the

Communist Party of the Russian Federation, are all much weaker today and work in a much more constrained political environment than in the 1990s. Other independent parties -- including the Republican Party and the Popular Democratic Union, as well as those of the Other Russia coalition -- have not even been allowed to register for elections. Several independent parties and candidates have been disqualified from participating in local elections for blatantly political reasons. Potential backers of independent parties have been threatened with sanctions. The imprisonment of Mikhail Khodorkovsky, previously Russia's wealthiest man and owner of the oil company Yukos, sent a powerful message to other businesspeople about the costs of being involved in opposition politics. Meanwhile, pro-Kremlin parties -- including United Russia, the largest party in the Duma, and A Just Russia, a Kremlin invention -- have enjoyed frequent television coverage and access to generous resources.

In his second term, Putin decided that NGOs could become a threat to his power. He therefore promulgated a law that gives the state numerous means to harass, weaken, and even close down NGOs considered too political. To force independent groups to the margins, the Kremlin has generously funded NGOs either invented by or fully loyal to the state. Perhaps most incredible, public assembly is no longer tolerated. In the spring of 2007, Other Russia, a coalition of civil-society groups and political parties led by the chess champion Garry Kasparov, tried to organize public meetings in Moscow and St. Petersburg. Both meetings were disrupted by thousands of police officers and special forces, and hundreds of demonstrators were arrested -- repression on a scale unseen in Russia in 20 years.

In his annual address to the Federation Assembly in April 2007, Putin struck a note of paranoid nationalism when he warned of Western plots to undermine Russian sovereignty. "There is a growing influx of foreign cash used directly to

meddle in our domestic affairs," he asserted. "Not everyone likes the stable, gradual rise of our country. Some want to return to the past to rob the people and the state, to plunder natural resources, and deprive our country of its political and economic independence." The Kremlin, accordingly, has tossed out the Peace Corps, closed OSCE missions in Chechnya and then in Moscow, declared persona non grata the AFL-CIO's field representative, raided the offices of the Soros Foundation and the National Democratic Institute, and forced Internews Russia, an NGO dedicated to fostering journalistic professionalism, to close its offices after accusing its director of embezzlement.

While weakening checks on presidential power, Putin and his team have tabled reforms that might have strengthened other branches of the government. The judicial system remains weak, and when major political issues are at stake, the courts serve as yet another tool of presidential power -- as happened during NTV's struggle and during the prosecution of Khodorkovsky. There was even an attempt to disbar one of Khodorkovsky's lawyers, Karinna Moskalenko.

## BIGGER IS NOT BETTER

Many of Putin's defenders, including some Kremlin officials, have given up the pretense of characterizing Russia as a "managed" or "sovereign" democracy. Instead, they contend that Russia's democratic retreat has enhanced the state's ability to provide for its citizens. The myth of Putinism is that Russians are safer, more secure, and generally living better than in the 1990s -- and that Putin himself deserves the credit. In the 2007 parliamentary elections, the first goal of "Putin's Plan" (the main campaign document of United Russia) was to "provide order."

In fact, although the 1990s was a period of instability, economic collapse, and revolutionary change in political and

economic institutions, the state performed roughly as well as it does today, when the country has been relatively "stable" and its economy is growing rapidly. Even in good economic times, autocracy has done no better than democracy at promoting public safety, health, or a secure legal and property-owning environment.

The Russian state under Putin is certainly bigger than it was before. The number of state employees has doubled to roughly 1.5 million. The Russian military has more capacity to fight the war in Chechnya today, and the coercive branches of the government -- the police, the tax authorities, the intelligence services -- have bigger budgets than they did a decade ago. In some spheres, such as paying pensions and government salaries on time, road building, or educational spending, the state is performing better now than during the 1990s. Yet given the growth in its size and resources, what is striking is how poorly the Russian state still performs. In terms of public safety, health, corruption, and the security of property rights, Russians are actually worse off today than they were a decade ago.

Security, the most basic public good a state can provide for its population, is a central element in the myth of Putinism. In fact, the frequency of terrorist attacks in Russia has increased under Putin. The two biggest terrorist attacks in Russia's history -- the Nord-Ost incident at a theater in Moscow in 2002, in which an estimated 300 Russians died, and the Beslan school hostage crisis, in which as many as 500 died -- occurred under Putin's autocracy, not Yeltsin's democracy. The number of deaths of both military personnel and civilians in the second Chechen war -- now in its eighth year -- is substantially higher than during the first Chechen war, which lasted from 1994 to 1996. (Conflict inside Chechnya appears to be subsiding, but conflict in the region is spreading.) The murder rate has also increased under Putin, according to data from Russia's Federal State Statistics Service. In the

"anarchic" years of 1995-99, the average annual number of murders was 30,200; in the "orderly" years of 2000-2004, the number was 32,200. The death rate from fires is around 40 a day in Russia, roughly ten times the average rate in western Europe.

Nor has public health improved in the last eight years. Despite all the money in the Kremlin's coffers, health spending averaged 6 percent of GDP from 2000 to 2005, compared with 6.4 percent from 1996 to 1999. Russia's population has been shrinking since 1990, thanks to decreasing fertility and increasing mortality rates, but the decline has worsened since 1998. Noncommunicable diseases have become the leading cause of death (cardiovascular disease accounts for 52 percent of deaths, three times the figure for the United States), and alcoholism now accounts for 18 percent of deaths for men between the ages of 25 and 54. At the end of the 1990s, annual alcohol consumption per adult was 10.7 liters (compared with 8.6 liters in the United States and 9.7 in the United Kingdom); in 2004, this figure had increased to 14.5 liters. An estimated 0.9 percent of the Russian population is now infected with HIV, and rates of infection in Russia are now the highest of any country outside Africa, at least partly as a result of inadequate or harmful legal and policy responses and a decrepit health-care system. Life expectancy in Russia rose between 1995 and 1998. Since 1999, however, it has declined to 59 years for Russian men and 72 for Russian women.

At the same time that Russian society has become less secure and less healthy under Putin, Russia's international rankings for economic competitiveness, business friendliness, and transparency and corruption all have fallen. The Russian think tank INDEM estimates that corruption has skyrocketed in the last six years. In 2006, Transparency International ranked Russia at an all-time worst of 121st out of 163 countries on corruption, putting it between the Philippines and Rwanda.

Russia ranked 62nd out of 125 on the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Index in 2006, representing a fall of nine places in a year. On the World Bank's 2006 "ease of doing business" index, Russia ranked 96th out of 175, also an all-time worst.

Property rights have also been undermined. Putin and his Kremlin associates have used their unconstrained political powers to redistribute some of Russia's most valuable properties. The seizure and then reselling of Yukos' assets to the state-owned oil company Rosneft was the most egregious case, not only diminishing the value of Russia's most profitable oil company but also slowing investment (both foreign and domestic) and sparking capital flight. State pressure also compelled the owners of the private Russian oil company Sibneft to sell their stakes to the state-owned Gazprom and Royal Dutch/Shell to sell a majority share in its Sakhalin-2 project (in Siberia) to Gazprom. Such transfers have transformed a once private and thriving energy sector into a state-dominated and less efficient part of the Russian economy. The remaining three private oil producers -- Lukoil, TNK-BP, and Surgutneftegaz -- all face varying degrees of pressure to sell out to Putin loyalists. Under the banner of a program called "National Champions," Putin's regime has done the same in the aerospace, automobile, and heavy-machinery industries. The state has further discouraged investment by arbitrarily enforcing environmental regulations against foreign oil investors, shutting out foreign partners in the development of the Shtokman gas field, and denying a visa to the largest portfolio investor in Russia, the British citizen William Browder. Most World Bank governance indicators, on issues such as the rule of law and control of corruption, have been flat or negative under Putin. Those on which Russia has shown some improvement in the last decade, especially regulatory quality and government effectiveness, started to increase well before the Putin era

began.

In short, the data simply do not support the popular notion that by erecting autocracy Putin has built an orderly and highly capable state that is addressing and overcoming Russia's rather formidable development problems. Putin's failures in this regard are all the more striking given the tremendous growth of the Russian economy every year since 1999: even with money coursing through the economy, Putin's government has done no better and sometimes worse of a job of providing basic public goods and services than Yeltsin's government did during the deep economic decline of the 1990s.

#### A EURASIAN TIGER?

The second supposed justification for Putin's autocratic ways is that they have paved the way for Russia's spectacular economic growth. As Putin has consolidated his authority, growth has averaged 6.7 percent -- especially impressive against the backdrop of the depression in the early 1990s. The last eight years have also seen budget surpluses, the eradication of foreign debt and the accumulation of massive hard-currency reserves, and modest inflation. The stock market is booming, and foreign direct investment, although still low compared to in other emerging markets, is growing rapidly. And it is not just the oligarchs who are benefiting from Russia's economic upturn. Since 2000, real disposable income has increased by more than 10 percent a year, consumer spending has skyrocketed, unemployment has fallen from 12 percent in 1999 to 6 percent in 2006, and poverty, according to one measure, has declined from 41 percent in 1999 to 14 percent in 2006. Russians are richer today than ever before.

The correlations between democracy and economic decline in the 1990s and autocracy and economic growth in this decade

provide a seemingly powerful excuse for shutting down independent television stations, canceling gubernatorial elections, and eliminating pesky human rights groups. These correlations, however, are mostly spurious.

The 1990s were indeed a time of incredible economic hardship. After Russia's formal independence in December 1991, GDP contracted over seven years. There is some evidence that the formal measures of this contraction overstated the extent of actual economic depression: for instance, purchases of automobiles and household appliances rose dramatically, electricity use increased, and all of Russia's major cities experienced housing booms during this depression. At the same time, however, investment remained flat, unemployment ballooned, disposable incomes dropped, and poverty levels jumped to more than 40 percent after the August 1998 financial meltdown.

Democracy, however, had only a marginal effect on these economic outcomes and may have helped turn the situation around in 1998. For one thing, the economic decline preceded Russian independence. Indeed, it was a key cause of the Soviet collapse. With the Soviet collapse, the drawing of new borders to create 15 new states in 1991 triggered massive trade disruptions. And for several months after independence, Russia did not even control the printing and distribution of its own currency. Neither a more democratic polity nor a robust dictatorship would have altered the negative economic consequences of these structural forces in any appreciable way.

Economic decline after the end of communism was hardly confined to Russia. It followed communism's collapse in every country throughout the region, no matter what the regime type. In the case of Russia, Yeltsin inherited an economy that was already in the worst nonwartime economic depression ever. Given the dreadful economic conditions, every

postcommunist government was compelled to pursue some degree of price and trade liberalization, macroeconomic stabilization, and, eventually, privatization. The speed and comprehensiveness of economic reform varied, but even those leaders most resistant to capitalism implemented some market reforms. During this transition, the entire region experienced economic recession and then began to recover several years after the adoption of reforms. Russia's economy followed this same general trajectory -- and would have done so under dictatorship or democracy. Russia's economic depression in the 1990s was deeper than the region's average, but that was largely because the socialist economic legacy was worse in Russia than elsewhere.

After the Soviet collapse, Russian leaders did have serious policy choices to make regarding the nature and speed of price and trade liberalization, privatization, and monetary and fiscal reforms. This complex web of policy decisions was subsequently oversimplified as a choice between "shock therapy" (doing all of these things quickly and simultaneously) and "gradual reform" (implementing the same basic menu of policies slowly and in sequence). Between 1992 and 1998, Russian economic policy zigzagged between these two extremes, in large part because Russian elites and Russian society did not share a common view about how to reform the economy.

Because Russia's democratic institutions allowed these ideological debates to play out politically, economic reform was halting, which in turn slowed growth for a time. During Russia's first two years of independence, for example, the constitution gave the Supreme Soviet authority over the Central Bank, an institutional arrangement that produced inflationary monetary policy. The new 1993 constitution fixed this problem by making the bank a more autonomous institution, but the new constitution reaffirmed the parliament's pivotal role in approving the budget, which led

to massive budget deficits throughout the 1990s. The Russian government covered these deficits through government bonds and foreign borrowing, which worked while oil prices were high. But when oil prices collapsed in 1997-98, so, too, did Russia's financial system. In August 1998, the government essentially went bankrupt. It first radically devalued the ruble as a way to reduce domestic debt and then simply defaulted on billions of outstanding loans to both domestic and foreign lenders.

This financial meltdown finally put an end to major debate over economic policy in Russia. Because democratic institutions still mattered, the liberal government responsible for the financial crash had to resign, and the parliament compelled Yeltsin to appoint a left-of-center government headed by Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov. The deputy prime minister in charge of the economy in Primakov's government was a Communist Party leader. Now that they were in power, Primakov and his government had to pursue fiscally responsible policies, especially as no one would lend to the Russian government. So these "socialists" slashed government spending and reduced the state's role in the economy. In combination with currency devaluation, which reduced imports and spurred Russian exports, Russia's new fiscal austerity created the permissive conditions for real economic growth starting in 1999. And so began Russia's economic turnaround -- before Putin came to power and well before autocracy began to take root.

First as prime minister and then as president, Putin stuck to the sound fiscal policies that Primakov had put in place. After competitive elections in December 1999, pro-reform forces in parliament even managed to pass the first balanced budget in post-Soviet Russian history. In cooperation with parliament, Putin's first government dusted off and put into place several liberal reforms drafted years earlier under Yeltsin, including a flat income tax of 13 percent, a new land code (making it

possible to own commercial and residential land), a new legal code, a new regime to prevent money laundering, a new regime for currency liberalization, and a reduced tax on profits (from 35 percent to 24 percent).

Putin's real stroke of luck came in the form of rising world oil prices. Worldwide, prices began to climb in 1998, dipped again slightly from 2000 to 2002, and have continued to increase ever since, approaching \$100 a barrel. Economists debate what fraction of Russia's economic growth is directly attributable to rising commodity prices, but all agree that the effect is extremely large. Growing autocracy inside Russia obviously did not cause the rise in oil and gas prices. If anything, the causality runs in the opposite direction: increased energy revenues allowed for the return to autocracy. With so much money from oil windfalls in the Kremlin's coffers, Putin could crack down on or co-opt independent sources of political power; the Kremlin had less reason to fear the negative economic consequences of seizing a company like Yukos and had ample resources to buy off or repress opponents in the media and civil society.

If there is any causal relationship between authoritarianism and economic growth in Russia, it is negative. Russia's more autocratic system in the last several years has produced more corruption and less secure property rights -- which, as studies by the World Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development demonstrate, tend to hinder growth in the long run. Asset transfers have transformed a thriving private energy sector into one that is effectively state-dominated (private firms accounted for 90 percent of Russian oil production in 2004; they account for around 60 percent today) and less efficient. Renationalization has caused declines in the performance of formerly private companies, destroyed value in Russia's most profitable companies, and slowed investment, both foreign and domestic. Before Khodorkovsky's arrest, Yukos was Russia's most successful

and transparent company, with a market value of \$100 billion in today's terms. The redistribution of Yukos' properties not only reduced the value of these assets by billions of dollars but also dramatically slowed the company's oil production. Sibneft's value and production levels have experienced similar falls since the company became part of Gazprom. Meanwhile, companies, such as Gazprom, that have remained under state control since independence continue to perform below market expectations, with their management driven as much by political objectives as by profit maximization.

Perhaps the most telling evidence that Putin's autocracy has hurt rather than helped Russia's economy is provided by regional comparisons. Strikingly, even with Russia's tremendous energy resources, growth rates under Putin have been below the post-Soviet average. In 2000, the year Putin was elected president, Russia had the second-fastest-growing economy in the post-Soviet region, behind only gas-rich Turkmenistan. By 2005, however, Russia had fallen to 13th in the region, outpacing only Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan, both of which were recovering from "color revolutions." Between 1999 and 2006, Russia ranked ninth out of the 15 post-Soviet countries in terms of average growth. Similarly, investment in Russia, at 18 percent of GDP, although stronger today than ever before, is well below the average for democracies in the region.

One can only wonder how fast Russia would have grown with a more democratic system. The strengthening of institutions of accountability -- a real opposition party, genuinely independent media, a court system not beholden to Kremlin control -- would have helped tame corruption and secure property rights and would thereby have encouraged more investment and growth. The Russian economy is doing well today, but it is doing well in spite of, not because of, autocracy.

## THE ANGOLA MODEL

Kremlin officials and their public-relations operatives frequently evoke China as a model: a seemingly modernizing autocracy that has delivered an annual growth rate over ten percent for three decades. China is also an undisputed global power, another attribute that Russian leaders admire and want to emulate. If China is supposed to be Exhibit A in the case for a new model of successful authoritarianism, the Kremlin wants to make Russia Exhibit B.

Identifying China as a model -- instead of the United States, Germany, or even Portugal -- already sets the development bar much lower than it was just a decade ago. China remains an agrarian-based economy with per capita GDP below \$2,000 (about a third of Russia's and a 15th of Germany's). But the China analogy is also problematic because sustained high growth under autocracy is the exception, not the rule, around the world. For every China, there is an autocratic developmental disaster such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo; for every authoritarian success such as Singapore, there is a resounding failure such as Myanmar; for every South Korea, a North Korea. In the economic-growth race in the developing world, autocracies are both the hares and the snails, whereas democracies are the tortoises -- slower but steadier. On average, autocracies and democracies in the developing world have grown at the same rate for the last several decades.

As Putin and his team devise schemes to avoid a real handover of power later this year, their contortions to maintain themselves at the head of the Russian state seem much more successful than their efforts at improving governance or growing the economy at a faster pace. World energy and raw-material prices make sustained economic growth in Russia likely for the foreseeable future. But sustained autocratic rule will not contribute to this growth

and, because of continued poor governance, is likely to serve as a drag on economic development in the long term. Russians are indeed getting richer, but they could be getting even richer much faster.

The Kremlin talks about creating the next China, but Russia's path is more likely to be something like that of Angola -- an oil-dependent state that is growing now because of high oil prices but has floundered in the past when oil prices were low and whose leaders seem more intent on maintaining themselves in office to control oil revenues and other rents than on providing public goods and services to a beleaguered population. Unfortunately, as Angola's president, José Eduardo dos Santos, has demonstrated by his three decades in power, even poorly performing autocracies can last a long, long time.

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MICHAEL MCFAUL is a Hoover Fellow, Professor of Political Science, and Director of the Center on Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law at Stanford University.  
KATHRYN STONER-WEISS is Associate Director for Research and Senior Research Scholar at the Center on Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law at Stanford University

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# What Has Moscow Done?

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## Rebuilding U.S.-Russian Relations

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*Stephen Sestanovich*



Putin with [Dmitry Medvedev](#), March 2008

This past summer's war in Georgia -- and its aftermath -- delivered a higher-voltage shock to U.S.-Russian relations than any event since the end of the Cold War. It made Russia an unexpected flashpoint in the U.S. presidential campaign and probably won Russia a place at the top of the next administration's agenda. Yet this is hardly the first time in the last two decades that Washington has buzzed with discussion of ominous events in Russia. Before long, the buzzing has usually subsided. Will this crisis prove different? Has Washington's thinking about Russia really changed, and how much?

At first glance, the change seems fundamental. Five years ago, the U.S. ambassador in Moscow, Alexander Vershbow, said that the main difficulty in U.S.-Russian relations was a "values gap." The two sides were cooperating effectively on practical problems, he argued, but were diverging on issues such as the rule of law and the strengthening of democratic institutions. No U.S. official would make such a statement today -- or would have even six months ago. Well before Russian tanks rolled into Georgia in August, the list of issues separating Washington from Moscow had grown long, and, more important, these issues extended well beyond the values gap. Although great powers are widely thought to have stopped viewing security as the core problem in their dealings with one another, that is what most troubles U.S.-Russian relations. Things were bad enough when the U.S. government used to say that then Russian President Vladimir Putin was undermining Russian democracy. Once Putin, now prime minister but apparently still the country's leader, started saying that the United States was undermining Russia's nuclear deterrent, he took tensions to an entirely new level.

Against this backdrop, Russia's invasion of a small neighbor might have seemed to be final confirmation of the view that Russia has become, in the words of the British economist Robert Skidelsky, "the world's foremost revisionist power." And yet, for all the recent references to the Sudetenland and the crushing of the Prague Spring, Western governments have made clear that such parallels will not guide their response. Government officials and pundits alike have been coupling their denunciations of Moscow with assurances that they want to work with it in advancing common interests, whether on nuclear proliferation, terrorism, energy security, drug trafficking, or climate change. The more these issues are invoked, the less one should expect U.S. policy toward Russia to change. Harry Truman, it might be recalled, did not usually speak of his determination to work with Joseph Stalin.

For two decades, the idea that the United States needs Russia for practical reasons has led Washington, even in moments of shock and confusion over Russia's actions, to want to keep relations with Russia from becoming any worse than necessary. Although U.S. policymakers have considered Moscow a high-maintenance partner with whom getting to yes is extremely frustrating and sometimes almost hopeless, they have never been ready to give up on the effort. Even Russia's war with Georgia has not changed this outlook, and for the foreseeable future probably nothing will.

What the war has done, however, is subject the high-stakes and now disappointing U.S.-Russian relationship to a top-to-bottom reassessment -- its first real reconsideration since the Cold War. Suddenly, saying that Washington has to cooperate with Moscow when possible and push back emphatically when necessary no longer seems a fully satisfactory formula. Determining the right balance between cooperating and pushing back -- between selective engagement and selective containment -- has become the main task of U.S. policy toward Russia. This effort will surely last well into the next U.S. administration, providing a key challenge for the new president and his advisers as they refashion the United States' role in the world.

#### IS THIS REALISM'S MOMENT?

Whenever U.S. foreign policy faces a major failure, so-called realist commentators come forward to suggest a way out, usually by recalibrating ends and means and rethinking national priorities. Long before the war in Georgia, the souring of U.S.-Russian relations had been the subject of many such analyses. (Examples include Nikolas Gvosdev's February 2008 paper "Parting With Illusions: Developing a Realistic Approach to Relations With Russia," published by the Cato Institute; Robert Blackwill's January/February 2008 *National Interest* article, "The Three Rs: Rivalry, Russia,

'Ran"; and Dimitri Simes' November/December 2007 Foreign Affairs piece, "Losing Russia.") These realists' argument, which has gained a more respectful hearing since the war, is that Washington has let secondary interests prevent accommodation on issues of overriding importance to U.S. security. If Washington wants Moscow's help on things that really matter, the reasoning goes, then it should back off on policies that provoke Moscow unnecessarily.

For these realists, most of the U.S. moves that have irked Moscow in the past few years -- regularly hectoring Moscow about democracy, recklessly encouraging Georgia and Ukraine to seek membership in NATO, attempting to install ballistic missile defenses in eastern Europe, challenging Russia's energy dominance in Central Asia and the Caucasus, recognizing Kosovo's independence -- are not worth the bad blood, and now the bloodshed, that they have generated with Russia. Washington would better serve U.S. interests by negotiating a series of quid pro quos that focused on getting from Russia the things that the United States truly needs. The details of such proposed understandings vary, of course, but in the most frequently mentioned one, Washington would take care not to encroach on Russia's hoped-for sphere of influence in its neighborhood in exchange for Russia's help in preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons.

This "let's make a deal" approach to diplomacy has a tempting simplicity to it. And (because this is the role realism usually plays in U.S. foreign policy debates) it will surely force U.S. decision-makers to think harder about the ends they seek, by what means they should pursue them, and at what cost. Even so, it is not likely to be the strategy that the next U.S. administration adopts. Diplomats are widely thought to be negotiating such deals all the time, but it is in fact very rare that any large problem is solved because representatives of two great powers trade completely unrelated assets. The "grand bargains" favored by amateur diplomats are almost

never consummated.

The specific deals that some realists propose rest, moreover, on unexamined assumptions about both the flexibility and the leverage of Russian policy. Moscow is no more likely to support a drastic increase in U.S. pressure against Iran, for example, than it did against Iraq in the lead-up to the 2003 war. (At the time, some analysts thought a mini "grand bargain" might bring the United States and Russia together on this issue, but neither side was interested.) And the suggestion that Russian leaders could get Iran to end its quest for nuclear weapons raises doubts about whether this sort of policy thinking should be called "realism" at all. Some realists claim that Moscow has enormous influence over Tehran, but they rarely explain how. In reality, the United States has far more leverage -- military, economic, and diplomatic -- with which to influence Iranian policy.

Important as these reasons are, they are not the most significant grounds for questioning the realist prescription for U.S.-Russian relations. Although realists claim that good relations between Washington and Moscow are impossible if one side annoys the other too much, not long ago Putin himself presided over just such good but somewhat fractious relations. As he awaited a visit from his friend U.S. President George W. Bush in the middle of 2002, Putin could look back over a three-year stretch during which the United States had bombed Serbia and occupied Kosovo, accused Russia of war crimes in Chechnya, abrogated the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, established a military presence in Central Asia, begun to train and equip Georgia's armed forces, and completed the largest-ever expansion of NATO, which included three former Soviet states, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Bush administration officials naturally gushed that U.S.-Russian relations had never been better. What is more, Putin agreed. Some of the U.S. actions that might have seemed to be problems for Russia were nothing of the sort, he said; after

all, strengthening the ability of Russia's neighbors to deal with terrorism strengthened Russia's security, too. Yes, the two sides did not see eye to eye on some issues, but these would not threaten their deepening strategic partnership. After an earlier meeting with Putin, Bush himself had captured this outlook in his customary homey language: "You probably don't agree with your mother on every issue. You still love her, though, don't you?"

Now that U.S.-Russian relations have sunk to a new low, it is essential to recall -- and understand -- their previous high. Why did Putin say things in 2002 that he would never dream of saying in 2008? Was it, as realists might say, weakness? Maybe. But if the Russian economy was less robust six years ago than it is now, it was already on the upswing. And in any event, in the 1990s then Russian President Boris Yeltsin objected far more vocally than Putin did to U.S. policies he disliked, even though during his tenure Russia was far weaker than it was in 2002.

Was Putin expecting a greater payoff from Washington than he actually received, and did he then change course when he did not get it? There is not as much to this explanation as Russian officials and sympathetic Western analysts like to allege. Within a year of the attacks of September 11, 2001, Bush had offered Putin a new strategic arms treaty (which Putin had said he needed for political reasons), shifted U.S. policy on Chechnya from condemnation of Russia to understanding, recognized Russia as a market economy (an important step in easing bilateral trade disputes), supported Russia's accession to the World Trade Organization, agreed to have Russia chair the G-8 (the group of highly industrialized states) for the first time, initiated a multibillion-dollar international version of the Nunn-Lugar program (a U.S. effort launched in 1992 to help dismantle weapons of mass destruction in the former Soviet Union), and upgraded Russia's ties to NATO so that Russia's representatives could

participate on a more equal footing in deliberations on European security.

As payoffs go, this was not bad, and at the time both sides emphasized that it represented more than U.S. President Bill Clinton had ever offered Yeltsin. But what really undergirded the U.S.-Russian relationship in its post-9/11 heyday was not any transactional reward. It was the two sides' shared conviction that the two countries saw major goals and major problems in broadly compatible terms -- and that, more than ever before, they could deal with each other as equals. Washington and Moscow resolved their disagreements not by exchanging payoffs but by choosing not to see differences as expressions of a deeper conflict. Russian arms sales to China did not block cooperation, nor did the U.S. State Department's human rights report. Henry Kissinger has called this kind of understanding between great powers a "moral consensus." Although the term may seem a little grand, it is a useful reminder that enduring strategic cooperation involves more than trading my quids for your quos.

The U.S.-Russian "moral consensus" of 2002 is now a distant memory, and realists are not wrong to emphasize the disagreements that have marked the relationship's downward path. Yet what changed the relationship far more than any disagreements themselves was a shift in the way Russian leaders understood them. Many events played a part in this transformation -- the Iraq war, the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, and soaring energy prices, among others. From them, Putin and his colleagues seem to have drawn very different conclusions from those of 2002 -- namely, that Russia's relations with the United States (and the West in general) were inherently unequal and conflictual and that Russia would better serve its interests if it followed its own course.

As officials in the next U.S. administration examine the

individual pieces of a U.S.-Russian relationship gone bad, they will have many reasons to consider specific changes in policy. On issues ranging from the military balance to democracy promotion to Russia's relations with its neighbors, new U.S. policymakers will review what is working and what is not and try to fashion a new and more productive relationship. The most significant obstacle they will face, however, is not the complexity of the individual issues in dispute -- many of those are, actually, exceedingly simple. It is the fact that Russia's leaders have gone a long way toward reconceiving the relationship. In their view, common interests and strategic compatibility are no longer at its core.

## THE RETURN OF ARMS CONTROL

The impact of Russia's new strategic outlook will be particularly evident when the next U.S. administration reviews U.S. arms control policy. The East-West treaties on nuclear and conventional weapons negotiated at the end of the Cold War have caused a more massive and more dramatic reshaping of military forces than is generally recognized. Since 1990, with little fanfare and virtually no opposition on either side, the number of Russian nuclear warheads on intercontinental ballistic missiles -- which make up the largest part of Russia's nuclear force -- has been cut by almost 70 percent. Also with no controversy, the largest part of the United States' strategic nuclear force -- weapons deployed on submarines -- has been cut by almost 50 percent. Cuts in conventional forces have been even more dramatic: the number of U.S. tanks in Europe has dropped from over 5,000 to 130; Germany has eliminated more than 5,000 tanks of its own; Russia, over 4,000; and the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Ukraine, together almost 8,000 tanks. With all this dismantling going on, the U.S.-Russian military balance gradually became the quietest corner of the relationship.

Now, however, arms control is back at center stage. One

reason is the calendar: the two treaties on U.S.-Russian strategic arms reductions will expire during the next U.S. president's term. But far more important is Moscow's altered view of what is at stake. The former chief of the Russian general staff, Yuri Baluyevsky, declared earlier this year that U.S. nuclear policies reflect a "drive for strategic domination." Ignoring the ongoing decline in military forces across Europe, Putin has charged that other states are taking advantage of Russia's peaceful nature to wage an "arms race" (and on this basis, in December 2007 he suspended Russia's compliance with the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe). Russian officials also insist that the U.S. missile defense system planned for deployment in eastern Europe after 2012 is, despite Washington's denials, designed to neutralize Russia's strategic deterrent. To thwart this, they say, Russia must deploy nuclear forces that restore it to a position of rough equality with the United States. "National security," Putin and his successor as president, Dmitry Medvedev, have taken to saying, "is not based on promises."

Many U.S. foreign policy specialists look at the return of arms control with a mixture of boredom and regret. Most stopped viewing Russia as an interesting security problem years ago. In the U.S. military, Russian issues are no longer where the promotions are. When civilian experts bother with the issue of strategic arms reductions, it is usually not because they think that the U.S.-Russian strategic balance matters but because they want to revive attention to some related issue, such as "loose" nuclear weapons and materials or the need for the United States and Russia to strengthen nonproliferation efforts by making large cuts in their own arsenals. It is telling that the most significant arms control idea of recent years, advanced by the Cold War veterans Kissinger, Sam Nunn, William Perry, and George Shultz, has been nuclear abolition. Mere nuclear parity apparently bores them, too.

Hostility to old-style arms control and inattention to the

growing mismatch between U.S. and Russian thinking on national security clearly led the Bush administration to mishandle these issues with Moscow. Merely dismissing Moscow's charges that the U.S. missile defense plans threaten Russia's security has not stopped the Russians from objecting -- or from winning the sympathy of some U.S. allies. Washington proposed allowing Russian military monitors at the U.S. missile defense sites in the Czech Republic and Poland, but the Czechs and the Poles opposed this plan, giving Moscow one more reason to complain.

To keep military issues from becoming a continuing source of U.S.-Russian discord, the next U.S. president will want to adopt a different approach. He will surely drop his predecessor's resistance to formal and legally binding arms control agreements. Yet both Washington and Moscow will further benefit by preserving some elements of the Bush administration's outlook -- above all, the recognition that the treaties that work best are those that allow each side maximum flexibility in implementation. If both sides can also agree that their military forces do not really threaten each other, they will not have to sweat every detail over limiting them.

On this basis, arms control could once more become the easy part of the U.S.-Russian agenda. Washington and Moscow would face no real obstacles to the quick negotiation of a new strategic arms treaty that preserved the framework of existing treaties while making further (although probably small) cuts. The current impasse over conventional forces might also be resolved, which could result in bringing more states into the treaty, lowering the caps on major weapons systems, and easing the restrictions on deployments within a country's own boundaries (the last a feature that the Russians have long and loudly denounced as "colonial"). On missile defense, an understanding could be easily reached that offered Russia concrete and binding commitments that U.S.

deployment plans would not be fully implemented if the threat from Iran did not grow; for its part, Moscow would not try to block them if the threat did grow.

This should not turn out to be a completely fanciful forecast. Putin quietly laid the groundwork for such an agreement on missile defense in the statement that he and Bush issued in the Black Sea port of Sochi last spring. In it, Putin declared that the conditions Washington had offered to place on the deployment and operation of its radars and interceptors in eastern Europe would, if fully and sincerely put into practice, "assuage" Russia's concerns. Although this language will hardly keep Putin from trying to get still better terms from a new U.S. administration, his approach does suggest that Russia's leaders do not necessarily believe the charges they level against Washington. Resolving outstanding disagreements on nuclear and other security issues would not remove all the contentious issues in U.S.-Russian relations, much less revive the consensus of 2002. But it would achieve what arms control advocates claimed to want in the latter years of the Cold War: a measure of predictability and mutual confidence in the relationship. And for now, that would be progress enough.

Why, then, is it so hard to imagine such a new round of agreements? Many of the major players in Russian domestic politics have benefited from the new atmosphere that Moscow's angry zero-sum rhetoric has created: the military leaders whose budget has grown by almost 500 percent since 2000, the political leaders who have made suspicion of the outside world a kind of ersatz regime ideology, the bureaucrats and businesspeople who say that reviving the defense industry will require continued infusions of state funds. None of these groups will change course except very reluctantly. The balance of power between the United States and Russia may matter to them, but the balance of power within Russian politics matters even more. Until Russia's

domestic situation changes, it may be a long time before military issues again become the quiet corner of U.S.-Russian relations.

## DEMOCRACY AFTER BUSH

The next U.S. president will inevitably review a second issue that has been part of the growing contentiousness of U.S.-Russian relations: democratic reform. Like arms control, this issue played a large role in the international transformation that followed the Cold War. At that time, governments across eastern Europe, Moscow included, saw the embrace of Western ideology and institutions as the path to international acceptance and even self-respect. Few questioned the idea that multilateral forums should define democratic norms and practices, such as the criteria for judging whether elections were free and fair. There was simply no other way for a government to show that it had broken with the past.

Both Bush and Putin have fundamentally altered the role of this issue in U.S.-Russian relations. Bush made it all too easy to portray his "freedom agenda" as a hypocritical tool for advancing narrow U.S. interests. And Putin built his popularity in part on the idea that foreigners have no right to judge Russia's political system. His slogan "sovereign democracy" offered a nationalist cover for arbitrary and centralized rule. Western criticism may have strengthened Putin's appeal and helped him tar his domestic opponents as disloyal and subversive.

No matter how much the next U.S. president deplores Putin's success, he cannot ignore it. Making criticism of Russian democracy a strong theme of U.S. foreign policy no longer enhances respect for either democracy or the United States in Russia. In its waning years, the Bush administration has itself retreated to intermittent and perfunctory treatment of the issue, usually through statements by low-ranking officials. A

new president who hopes for a fresh start in relations with Moscow will get advice from many directions to avoid tough ideological rhetoric. From his own diplomats and analysts, he will hear that Medvedev, whatever the limitations on his power, has been a thoughtful and consistent advocate of the rule of law and other liberal reforms -- and has on occasion (gently) criticized Putin's record. From members of Russia's democratic opposition, he will hear that it is not the job of Washington -- or any other foreign government -- to advance democracy in their country. (All they ask is that Americans not undercut them by suggesting -- or, worse, believing -- that Russia is a democracy.) And from European governments, he will hear that the success of democracy promotion depends on de-Americanizing the brand.

The next U.S. administration, then, will have good reasons to make the issue of democracy a less contentious part of U.S.-Russian relations. There is no surprise in this: the old approach was not working. But will treating Russia more like, say, Kazakhstan -- as a nondemocracy ready for practical cooperation -- actually improve U.S.-Russian relations? Although removing an irritant ought to help matters, it is worth noting that it was not simply U.S. policy that made the issue difficult. From Putin on down, Russian leaders have actually continued to put heavy emphasis on their ideological estrangement from the West even as Americans and Europeans have started to pay less attention to democracy. The reason is simple. Confrontation on this issue has paid enormous political dividends. Russians who think it can keep doing so will not want to drop it just because a new U.S. administration is tempted to give it a rest.

## WHOSE SPHERE OF INFLUENCE?

When Russian tanks rolled across a neighbor's borders this past summer, they forced new choices on U.S. policymakers: how and how much to support a small Western nation with no

chance of resisting a Russian invasion. Yet even if the choices were new, the policy behind them was not. From the moment the Soviet Union collapsed, it was the policy of the United States and its Western allies to give Russia's neighbors, like other postcommunist states, a chance to integrate themselves into the Western world. In the 1990s, states of the former Soviet Union -- unlike Hungary and Poland, or even Bulgaria and Romania -- were not considered good candidates for the ultimate prize: full membership in the European Union and NATO. But they enjoyed many other forms of support from the West: sponsorship of oil and gas pipelines that provided access to international markets, the encouragement of foreign direct investment, mediation efforts to resolve separatist disputes, technical advice to speed accession to the World Trade Organization, training and equipment to combat drug trafficking and nuclear smuggling, cooperation on intelligence and counterterrorism, and funding for nongovernmental election-monitoring groups. All these were the same tools that the United States employed in its relations with Russia, and their goal was also the same: to encourage the emergence of somewhat modern-looking, somewhat European-looking political and economic systems from the post-Soviet rubble.

At first, this U.S. policy did not threaten U.S.-Russian relations. But then, something unexpected happened: Russia's neighbors began to succeed. In the past five years, the economic growth of many former Soviet states has outstripped Russia's own. While Russia became less democratic, several of its neighbors made important political breakthroughs. All of them began to seek ties with the West that would bring them out of Moscow's shadow, and two -- Georgia and Ukraine -- have sought to lay claim to membership in the European Union and NATO.

In part because U.S. policy had not really changed over time, Washington probably underestimated the significance of encouraging such aspirations. It surely underrated the single-

mindedness of Russia's opposition. With its own economy reviving, Moscow sought to block Western pipeline projects and to close off the West's military access to air bases in Central Asia. It accused Western nongovernmental organizations of trying to destabilize Russia's neighbors. And in April, Putin labeled the further enlargement of NATO "a direct threat to the security of our country."

In all this, the United States and Europe misjudged their ability to help Russia's neighbors slip into the Western orbit without a full-blown international crisis. Now that there has been a test of strength, and Russian strength has prevailed, many of the tools of Western policy are severely damaged. Those NATO members that had endorsed eventual membership for Georgia or Ukraine are now divided on the issue. Those former Soviet states that had viewed closer cooperation with NATO (even without membership in the alliance) as a critical lifeline to the outside world now wonder whether this is still a good idea. Energy producers in Central Asia that were considering new pipelines outside the Russian network may see such projects as too risky. Western mediation efforts are on hold along Russia's entire periphery; in Georgia, they are dead.

Yet whatever else Putin has accomplished in his pummeling of Georgia, he has failed at the most important thing. Even as Russian leaders have begun to speak openly about their desire for a sphere of influence, their actions have made Russia's acquisition of such a sphere less, not more, acceptable to the United States and Europe. It is now necessary to consider whether Russia's invasion marks the beginning of a concerted drive by Moscow to restore its influence over other post-Soviet states. In the past, such a revival might have seemed undesirable in the West for sentimental reasons. Today, the reasons are more serious. There can be no doubt that a Russia that dominated an industrial powerhouse such as Ukraine, an energy storehouse

such as Kazakhstan, and the other pieces of the old Soviet Union as well would change the national security calculations of virtually all the world's leading states.

Because the stakes are high, simple prudence will oblige the next U.S. administration to move cautiously. Whatever Washington embarks on now, it must be able to carry through, and that rules out overreaching. To have broader options down the road, U.S. policymakers must offer Georgia, in the short term, effective humanitarian relief; then, support for economic stabilization and reconstruction; and, after that, help in restoring the country's armed forces. As such steps begin to succeed, the question of Georgia's membership in NATO will arise again. Georgia deserves a place in the Western alliance, but nothing will do more harm to Georgia's security than to raise the issue before NATO is ready with an answer.

Rebuilding Georgia -- and rebuilding a policy that gives post-Soviet states a place in the Western world -- must be the first order of business for the next U.S. administration. There is no other way to deal seriously with the wreckage created by Russian aggression. But in making this effort, the United States and its European allies will have to wrestle with a seeming paradox: in the past, the United States was able to do more for Russia's neighbors when its own relations with Moscow were good (and the neighbors' relations with Moscow were at least civil). For the foreseeable future, U.S.-Russian relations will not be good, and that will impose a serious burden on U.S. policy. There is no way to break cleanly out of this box, but to do so at all, the United States needs to regain the diplomatic initiative. It needs ideas and proposals that can blunt Russia's recent strategy while offering Moscow a different path to international influence.

As it happens, the Russians themselves may have put forward the most readily usable idea of this kind. Before the war

against Georgia, in his most substantive foray into foreign policy to date, President Medvedev called for a new conference on European security, explicitly harking back to the diplomacy of the mid-1970s, out of which the Helsinki Final Act emerged. To be sure, his goals seemed a little too much like those of the Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev, who hoped that a conference on "security and cooperation" would bring Western recognition of the division of Europe. For his part, Medvedev wants recognition of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, and other arrangements that link Moscow to a number of post-Soviet states. And like Brezhnev, who lived to see Helsinki become a banner for opponents of the Soviet regime, Medvedev might discover that such a forum, whatever its short-term propaganda value, would give other governments a chance to put Russia's conduct in the spotlight and promote principles that would make the realization of its would-be imperium harder to achieve.

With Georgia still bleeding from defeat, the idea of exploring proposals whose clear aim is to consolidate Russia's gains, devalue and constrain NATO, and close off avenues to the outside world for Russia's neighbors may seem untimely, even defeatist. And yet the United States and its allies should not forget that they have permanent advantages in diplomatic enterprises of this kind. It is not easy to imagine a European security conference, now or in the future, in which Russia would not be isolated by its own behavior. Would anyone but Russia oppose the principle that all states are free to join alliances of their own choosing? Which states could Russia count on to object to a reaffirmation of Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity? Who would support Russia's idea that having waged war against Georgia, its own forces should now assume the mantle of peacekeepers? Who would agree with Putin's view, expressed openly to Bush, that "Ukraine isn't even a state"?

Policymakers in Moscow claim that Russia simply wants to sit at the high table of global diplomacy, to be a rule maker and norm setter for the international order. They seem to believe that a European security conference, even a European security treaty, would strengthen Russia's sphere of influence. They want to show that when they speak, they get a hearing. Such aims and expectations may produce only stalemate. Yet the process would not be a waste of time if it did nothing more than demonstrate that Russia's ideas and conduct are at odds with the opinions of all the other participants. The next U.S. administration should therefore look carefully at Russia's proposals, consult with its friends and allies, hold exploratory conversations, seek clarifications, bracket ideas it does not like, and so forth. Then it should accept Medvedev's idea with pleasure.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

"That's one of the tragedies of this life -- that the men who are most in need of a beating up are always enormous," says one of the characters in the 1942 Preston Sturges film *The Palm Beach Story*. The same is true of the new predicament of U.S. foreign policy. Russia seems to be on an increasingly confrontational course, powered by a bristlier conception of its interests than at any time since the end of the Cold War, by domestic political arrangements that appear to feed on international tension, and by an enhanced ability to stand its ground. Neither Russia's power nor Russia's aims should be exaggerated. Its new strength has a narrow, even precarious base, and its new goals may be reconsidered if the cost of pursuing them gets too high. But in the wake of the war in Georgia, a more disturbing outcome seems likely to prevail. Russia's power may actually keep growing, and carry the country's ambitions with it.

As the United States' involvement in Iraq begins to wind down, U.S. policymakers and U.S. commentators alike have

started to wonder about the array of problems that Washington will have to deal with next. Will it wrestle with new and deferred difficulties against a backdrop of largely cooperative ties with other major powers, or are such relations turning more conflictual? If conflict becomes the new norm, how hard will it be to manage it in ways that serve U.S. interests? Sooner than expected, Russia has given Americans a feel for the answers.

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STEPHEN SESTANOVICH is Kathryn and Shelby Cullom Davis Professor of International Diplomacy at Columbia University and George F. Kennan Senior Fellow for Russian and Eurasian Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations. He was Ambassador-at-Large for the former Soviet Union from 1997 to 2001.

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# Moscow's Modernization Dilemma

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Is Russia Charting a New Foreign Policy?

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*Walter Laqueur*



*Putin in Venezuela, April 2010*

The last year has seen considerable change in the U.S.-Russian relationship -- or at least the desire and promise for change. In Washington, the Obama administration has talked of a "reset," and in Moscow, the unofficial publication of a Foreign Ministry document has prompted mentions of a "seismic shift." But the prospects for U.S.-Russian relations

cannot be discussed in isolation from wider questions: In what direction is Russia moving? What will Russia be like ten or 20 years from now?

Speculation on the future of nations rests both on near certainties and on imponderabilia, which cannot possibly be measured, let alone predicted. Russia's demographics provide some near certainties: over the last two decades, more than 20,000 villages and small towns have ceased to exist, the immigration of Central Asian workers and Chinese traders has continued, and the Russian birthrate of 1.5 children per woman has stayed well below the replacement rate of 2.1 children per woman. A radical reversal of these demographic trends seems quite unlikely. There will be fewer ethnic Russians in the Russia of the future, to be sure. What is less clear is whether Moscow will even be able to hold on to the Russian Far East and all the territories of Russia beyond the Urals.

As for the imponderabilia: if it had not been for Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin, the Soviet system -- although doomed -- might have been able to hang on to power for another decade or two. From 1972 to 2008, the price of oil went up from \$2 a barrel to almost \$150 a barrel (as of the summer of 2010, it was less than half that). In other words, if Russia was still the Soviet Union, the enormous windfall that Moscow has experienced over the last decade would have been ascribed not to Vladimir Putin's wise and energetic leadership but to Leninism and the farsighted successors of the Soviet leader Yuri Andropov.

To a large extent, Russia's prospects still depend on the price of oil. The Kremlin must take kindly, then, to the fact that the West does not seem to have a concerted strategy to lessen its dependence on oil and gas imports. And if the more harrowing predictions of global warming are correct, Russia will soon have access to the considerable quantities of rare

and important raw materials that are now locked under permafrost. Thus, even if the Kremlin's plans for economic modernization fail, Russia will not face a dramatic economic deterioration and a corresponding political crisis.

The belief in a manifest destiny is part of Russian history, visible in the idea of Moscow as a "Third Rome," the mission of world revolution (or the building of "socialism in one country"), and the contemporary doctrines of "the Russian Idea" and neo-Eurasianism. For the last few decades, anti-Americanism has been another mainstay of Russian politics and culture -- and a force with which Washington will have to contend. In his little-known 1836 essay, "John Tanner," Aleksandr Pushkin was scathing about democracy in the United States, and democracy in general. This breed of Russian anti-Americanism was disinterred under Stalin and is remembered even today, when "democrats" and "democracy" have become terms of opprobrium among wide sections of Russian society. But there is an important difference in motivation -- Pushkin despised the egalitarianism that was part of American democracy, whereas present-day antidemocratic feeling in Russia is largely the result of a few well-placed people in Yeltsin's age of democratization and the years thereafter having used their positions to amass great riches. In the late 1990s, "democracy" became a synonym for "kleptocracy" and "oligarchy."

## MODERN TALKING

It took Germany 15 years after World War I to reappear as a major power. Russia took even less time after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. The oil and gas windfall greatly improved the country's economic situation and strengthened the Kremlin, a process that reached its climax in 2006 and 2007 with a series of speeches by then President Putin. He called his domestic opponents jackals funded by the West and accused them of wanting, much like

their sponsors, a weak and chaotic Russia. In Munich in 2007, Putin spoke of the decisive changes in the global balance of power and the decline of the United States and Europe. On another occasion, Putin predicted that by 2020, Russia would be not only among the richest and most powerful states but also one of the most progressive and dynamic. (At present, Russia's GDP equals that of France: \$2.1 trillion.) One of Putin's advisers declared that the whole world would be grateful to Russia for serving as a counterweight to U.S. hegemony.

But the global economic recession, which has affected Russia as much, if not more, than the United States and Europe, has changed the mood in Russia and diminished such expectations. Of late, this rethinking has entered the domain of Russian foreign policy and raised various questions: Perhaps Moscow overrated the prospects of the so-called BRIC alliance, that of Brazil, Russia, India, and China? The internal social and political stresses facing these rapidly developing countries have proved formidable, and China and India, for example, do not share many interests. And how, in fact, would the rise of China and the diminished status of the United States and Europe benefit Russia? Perhaps the drawbacks for Russia could outweigh the gains -- after all, the United States is far and China is close, especially to the Russian Far East and Siberia. Lastly, what will happen to Afghanistan after the U.S. and NATO exodus? Moscow sees Central Asia as part of its "zone of privileged interests" -- and thus part of a zone of responsibility. Islamist groups would immediately threaten the Central Asian republics, even if the Taliban, at present, argue that they have no such intentions. And the growing drug problem originating largely in Afghanistan is, according to Russian officials, an even graver danger to Russia than terrorism.

It seems gradually to have dawned on at least some Russian strategic thinkers that NATO in its present form does not

really present a major threat to Russia or, perhaps, to anyone. (According to Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, NATO is no longer a threat, only a "danger," which is presumably less than a threat.) NATO member states have shelved the idea of offering admission to Georgia and Ukraine. At the same time, Washington, following the European example, has toned down its criticism of Russian violations of human rights and lessened its support for domestic opposition groups in Russia and Western-leaning states such as Georgia, which Moscow regards as hostile threats. From Moscow's perspective, the West has largely accepted Russia's claims to a zone of privileged interests -- whatever the fears of Russia's neighbors, there is little Western countries can do to help.

In short, the West's relative weight is declining, but so is Russia's, making a policy of rapprochement appealing for all sides. For Moscow, this new, conciliatory approach is largely focused on economic and, above all, technological modernization. The emphasis of a position paper prepared by the Russian Foreign Ministry and published by Russian Newsweek in May 2010 was almost entirely such modernization. It outlined how Moscow should improve its relations with more than 60 countries, from Brunei to Mongolia, using measures including state treaties and agreements between research institutes.

The document -- and the new policy -- appears to be based on a compromise between various elements in the Russian leadership. President Dmitry Medvedev's faction, which seems to be behind this statement, is clearly willing to take some more risks; it is also possible that Medvedev's supporters are using the argument of modernization to sell a broader policy of détente to various domestic constituencies. The moderate conservatives, such as Prime Minister Putin; his deputy chief of staff, Vladislav Surkov; his deputy prime minister, Igor Sechin; and his foreign policy adviser, Yuri Ushakov, understand that Russia's dependence on oil and gas

exports must be reduced and that modernization will inevitably involve a political price -- but they are fearful that the price could be too high. Meanwhile, both the right (Russia's ultranationalists) and the left (the Communists) are not, in principle, against modernization but would like it to happen without any political price at all.

The new détente has shown itself in a number of cases: Russia's voting for UN sanctions against Iran, expressing remorse about the Katyn massacre, reaching an agreement with the United States to reduce nuclear weapons, inviting NATO soldiers to march on Red Square on Victory Day, being offered warships from France, proposing a Russian-EU crisis management agreement, and some others. But there are difficulties ahead -- old suspicions and new conflicts of interest will not easily be overcome, and may even derail the new course, just as the détente of the 1970s came to a halt despite goodwill on both sides. In August, Putin said that his anti-Western speech in Munich three years ago had been very useful in retrospect. If so, then how far can the changes in Russia's foreign policy be expected to go?

## STRONG LUNG SYNDROME

From his exile in London in the 1850s, Aleksandr Herzen, the most respected and influential critic of the tsarist regime, wrote that if the tyranny in Russia lasted too long, there was the possibility, indeed the probability, that the backbone of the people would be broken and irreparable damage be done. But he also said on another occasion, "our lungs are stronger" -- meaning that the Russian people would be able to survive repression and dictatorship better than others.

Contemporary Russia is a conservative country. The Russian people have witnessed too much negative change during the last hundred years. Putin, it is said, is a liberal compared with much of the public. According to polls, a majority of Russians

are satisfied with their political leadership (only in recent months have complaints about living conditions increased, and those have been largely directed toward local officials). This has been Putin's strength -- the Russian people prefer stability to democracy. Putin and Medvedev enjoy higher levels of public support than virtually all Western leaders -- and this support would probably be as high even if Russia had free elections, free media, and an independent judiciary. For this reason, it is likely that the Putin and Medvedev tandem (or another duo of the same political orientation) will continue to lead Russia after the 2012 presidential election, with some form of what Russian commentators have taken to calling "tandemocracy" lasting for another decade after that.

Given the likely longevity of the current political regime, it is worth asking what form of modernization the Kremlin wants and what sort of reform is likely to succeed. This subject has been discussed in Russia since the days of Peter the Great. In recent years, countless conferences, speeches, blueprints, and position papers have discussed various ways to achieve reform. There is not much dissent over whether modernization is necessary -- the country's economic and municipal infrastructure is very poor, and its dependence on the export of oil, gas, and other raw materials is undesirable and, in the long run, dangerous. A lack of economic diversification will make it increasingly difficult for Russia to compete in global markets and maintain its status as a great power.

There is yet more debate over how to pursue modernization. Advocates of top-down modernization argue that the state should act as the main agent, with a minimum amount of political change. This form of authoritarian modernization is what the Putinists call "vertical state intervention." Russian proponents of this school are certainly aware that Russia acquired nuclear technology, to give one obvious example, without democratization. As they see it, Russia's traditions

are not those of the West, and in the country's present labile state, more democracy would be harmful, possibly fatal. They argue that even in many Western countries, the state played a central role in the process of modernization, a fact recently mentioned by Surkov, Putin's deputy. This camp is not against transferring technology from the West; indeed, they strongly advocate it. But they argue that new technologies -- such as advanced information technology -- should be introduced first in the army, which they believe is better prepared to absorb them than the private or semi-private sector. As for Western investment, Putin and his followers believe that this will happen anyway, given the precarious state of Western economies and their eager search for profitable ventures. In any case, Western investors want political stability above all, which in Russia is better granted by an authoritarian regime than by democratic chaos.

Furthermore, this conservative, statist camp argues that modernization, however essential, should proceed slowly. As Putin said of reform in September, "We don't need any kind of leaps." In Russia, the potential victims of modernization are many: state bureaucracy, inefficient enterprises and the many who thrive on them, the Russian economy's numerous monopolies, and the sizable part of Russian society that has an instinctive resistance to innovation. This is not to mention the members of the Russian political elite, who have a personal interest in maintaining the status quo. Of course, the situation would be different if Russia were poor in raw materials and had no oil or gas to export, but since a steady income seems assured for years to come without experimenting with modernization, there is no particular urgency for reform.

Most of those in the more ambitious and daring camp, who favor deep modernization (this camp is comprised of management experts and Russia's economic liberals), do not envisage political democratization along the lines of the

European model. But they do want some steps in this general direction: they argue that the modernization of recent years has not worked, partly because it has been limited to certain projects or branches of the economy and carried out without competition. Advanced technology can be bought or borrowed -- or stolen -- but more often than not, Russian industries have been unable to absorb new technologies and make them work. The state bureaucracy is not capable of guiding and directing resources toward innovation, nor have Russian capital markets shown much interest in investing in innovative technologies. In June, Putin told the members of the Russian Academy of Sciences to do more for the modernization of the country; this will not be easy, however, considering that the academy's budget is being cut and many scientists have protested against their dismal working conditions.

This camp argues that a critical mass of foreign investors, meanwhile, will not come to Russia until they feel reasonably confident in and protected by the law. For starters, the Russian courts will have to become politically independent and the security agencies will have to lessen their meddling in commercial activity. More broadly, a comfortable Russian business climate will require the absence of major tensions between Russia and the outside world -- a *détente* of sorts. The Andropov model of top-down bureaucratic reform may have had its uses combating hooliganism in the streets, but it will not promote the kind of creative thinking needed in a modern information society. The Kremlin heralded the planned opening of Skolkovo, a small campus near Moscow that is meant to be Russia's version of Silicon Valley. Roger Kornberg, an American Nobel Prize laureate, and some multinational companies, such as Nokia and Siemens, have expressed a willingness to cooperate -- but so far, Skolkovo has been entirely a state project.

No matter which camp holds sway -- the more conservative

one represented by Putin or the one somewhat more inclined toward reform headed by Medvedev -- modernization is probably inescapable in the long term. But in the short term, its prospects are poor. A change not of policy but of mentality is needed among both rulers and ruled. Such dramatic societal changes do occur, but they usually happen as the result of immediate need and a clear and present danger -- neither of which exists in Russia now. And this leaves Russian policymakers with the temptation to muddle economic modernization with a minimum of political liberalization.

## IDENTITY CRISES

Throughout its history, Russia, much like other countries, has been subject to a variety of mindsets, quite often to different ones at the same time. This is particularly true with regard to its attitude toward the West: Is Russia part of the West, and if not, what is it part of? At present, the belief in a specific Russian way seems to be far stronger than a feeling of solidarity or friendship with the West. Indeed, negative attitudes toward the West go back to the nineteenth century, if not further, first concerning Europe and later the United States. Even 100 years before NATO was founded, more than a few Russians believed that the West would do everything it could to harm Russia. During communist rule, official ideology said that aggressive capitalist robbers were preparing to invade the worker's paradise.

On top of this historical ground lays the specific Russian propensity to believe in conspiracy theories, the more absurd, the more popular. An organization such as the KGB -- in which Putin and other leading figures in contemporary Russia received their training -- tends, by its very nature, to believe in worst-case scenarios concerning the outside world. It is convinced that but for its presence and activities, internal enemies would cause Russia irreparable harm.

Also, to hear Putin tell it, the collapse of the Soviet Union was the greatest catastrophe of the twentieth century, and Russia, as Tsar Alexander III said, has not had and cannot have any true friends and allies except its own infantry and artillery. Exposure to the realities of the outside world may have caused some mellowing on this point; it is difficult to argue at the same time that the West is rapidly declining and that it is the most powerful threat.

The Russian far right has been frantically searching for alternatives to closer cooperation with the West. Many admire China and its economic achievements, but Chinese power also provokes fear among the Russian right. Neither Japan nor India features highly in these calculations (although trade with India does get some attention). Some Russian political thinkers on the far right advocate alliances with some Muslim countries, above all former enemies such as Turkey. They argue that the two sides have not only a common enemy -- the West -- but also cultural and even religious affinities, Islam being closer to the Orthodox Church than Western Christianity. Yet other Russian experts warn of the "Islamization" of Russia, given the presence of a substantial Muslim minority in Russia, not to mention the ongoing violence and turmoil in the Russian North Caucasus. In short, geopolitical games of this kind are not leading to realistic alternatives. Eurasia is a fantasy, and although normal relations with the countries of the Muslim world are desirable, expectations for more than that will lead nowhere -- at best.

## A NEW OVERCOAT

How far will the current foreign policy go, be it a "reset" or a "seismic shift"? Present indications suggest more of the same: greater Sovietization seems unlikely, as does dramatic democratization. Internal discontent may exist, but not to the extent that it will turn into a significant political factor in the

near future. Although the Kremlin wants to strengthen and perhaps expand its sphere of influence in the former Soviet states and eastern Europe, any sort of physical reconquest seems very improbable.

To combine the various aims of the Kremlin will not be easy. On one hand, Moscow realizes that it has certain common interests with the West. Russia prefers to deal with EU countries individually, rather than with the European community as a whole. Russia is also likely to push to join the World Trade Organization and to abolish visas for travel to Europe. For its part, the EU has suggested creating a joint security committee to deal with crisis situations. But past experience with such commissions -- namely, the NATO-Russia Council -- has not been encouraging.

On the other hand, Russia wants to maintain normal ties with the rest of the world and prevent a deterioration in relations with newfound sympathizers such as Venezuela's Hugo Chávez and Iran's Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Despite the oil and gas windfall and its return as a great power, Russia remains a relatively weak country -- to use a cricket metaphor, it is batting on a sticky wicket. But Putin has shown supreme confidence, assuming that Russia has little to fear given current global conditions: Europe is in decline, and the United States is weakened by the financial crisis, preoccupied with domestic problems, and, as the Kremlin sees it, under weak leadership. As far as the threats facing Russia are concerned, Putin (much like the Russian far right) still seems too preoccupied with NATO and largely oblivious to the lengthening shadow of China and the growth of aggressive Islamism. Perhaps these ideas are changing. But, to repeat, it is precisely the weakness of the West that makes détente with the United States and Europe more realistic and attractive. Russia needs Western capital and Western technological know-how.

And what will the United States and Europe gain from helping Russia modernize? Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov has said that such questions of quid pro quos are not appropriate, but they will be asked regardless. A lessening of international tensions is desirable, but the prices of oil and gas will certainly not come down considerably. There has been a certain change in the Russian political climate of late, with fewer anti-Western speeches, articles, books, and movies, but since most people in the West were not even aware of these manifestations of anti-Westernism to begin with, the shift may go unappreciated.

Some voices in Europe argue that although Europe should take an active part in the modernization of Russia, the lead role ought to be played by the United States, which for a variety of reasons is in a better position to do so. Washington should certainly welcome outstretched hands in the interest of world peace. If it does not do so, it will be blamed by critics for decades to come for having missed unique opportunities. It remains to be explored what these opportunities are.

For the moment, far-reaching political democratization in Russia is not in the cards; it may be an impossible desideratum for now given Russian history. Indeed, perhaps the West should not even press for it, given that the majority of the Russian leadership and the Russian people seem not to favor it. But will it be possible, to give just one example, to have fair trials and legal protection only for foreign enterprises -- something much like the concessions to foreigners China made 100 years ago? Russian leaders who believe in authoritarian modernization might be disappointed when they realize that without true competition their new schemes will not work. Foreign capital alone will not help.

Russia's present situation reminds one in some ways of the dilemma of Akaky Akakievich, the hero of "Shinel," or "The Overcoat," a 1842 story by Nikolai Gogol. (The story is one of

the milestones in Russian literature: as Fyodor Dostoyevsky once said, "We have all come out of Gogol's 'Overcoat.' ") Akakievich, the owner of an old and shabby coat that makes him the butt of many jokes, decides to buy a new one, although he can hardly afford it. Almost immediately thereafter, he is robbed of the coat, which leads to countless misfortunes and his early death. Today, most Russians, like Akakievich, seem to agree on the need for a new overcoat but not on its size, length, color, where to buy it, the price to be paid, or the urgency of its acquisition -- immediately, or perhaps at some unspecified date in the future.

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WALTER LAQUEUR was Director of the Wiener Library Institute of Contemporary History, in London, and Chair of the International Research Council at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. He is the author of, among other books, *Long Road to Freedom: Russia and Glasnost* and *The Dream That Failed: Reflections on the Soviet Union*.

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# The Dying Bear

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## Russia's Demographic Disaster

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*Nicholas Eberstadt*



December marks the 20th anniversary of the end of the Soviet dictatorship and the beginning of Russia's postcommunist transition. For Russians, the intervening years have been full of elation and promise but also unexpected trouble and disappointment. Perhaps of all the painful developments in Russian society since the Soviet collapse, the most surprising -- and dismaying -- is the country's demographic decline. Over the past two decades, Russia has been caught in the grip of a devastating and highly anomalous peacetime population crisis. The country's population has been shrinking, its

mortality levels are nothing short of catastrophic, and its human resources appear to be dangerously eroding.

Indeed, the troubles caused by Russia's population trends -- in health, education, family formation, and other spheres -- represent a previously unprecedented phenomenon for an urbanized, literate society not at war. Such demographic problems are far outside the norm for both developed and less developed countries today; what is more, their causes are not entirely understood. There is also little evidence that Russia's political leadership has been able to enact policies that have any long-term hope of correcting this slide. This peacetime population crisis threatens Russia's economic outlook, its ambitions to modernize and develop, and quite possibly its security. In other words, Russia's demographic travails have terrible and outsized implications, both for those inside the country's borders and for those beyond. The humanitarian toll has already been immense, and the continuing economic cost threatens to be huge; no less important, Russia's demographic decline portends ominously for the external behavior of the Kremlin, which will have to confront a far less favorable power balance than it had been banking on.

## TOO MUCH MORTALITY

Even in the Soviet years, Russia was less than a paragon of a healthy society. The syndrome of long-term stagnation and then decline in public health, never before seen in an industrialized country, first emerged during the Brezhnev era and continued to dog Russia until the downfall of the communist system. Still, in the late 1980s, the days of Mikhail Gorbachev's perestroika, Russian births exceeded deaths by an average of more than 800,000 per year. But the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and then of the Soviet Union itself sent a series of demographic shocks reverberating across the Eastern bloc: virtually every former Warsaw Pact country experienced a sharp drop in births and a spike in

deaths, as if beset by a sudden famine, epidemic, or war. Most of these



perturbations were temporary -- but not in Russia, where they proved to be more extreme and more enduring than in virtually any other former communist state.

Post-Soviet Russia has become a net mortality society, steadily registering more deaths than births. Since 1992, according to Rosstat, Russia's federal statistics agency (also known as Goskomstat since Soviet times), about 12.5 million more Russians have been buried than born -- or nearly three funerals for every two live deliveries for the past 20 years. Globally, in the years since World War II, there has been only one more horrific surfeit of deaths over births: in China in 1959-61, as a result of Mao Zedong's catastrophic Great Leap Forward.

Read more at at Foreign Affairs' [Special Report: Global Public Health](#).

As a result of this imbalance, Russia has entered into a process of depopulation. Immigration, mainly from neighboring former Soviet states, has cushioned the fall somewhat but has not been able to prevent it. Since 1992, according to official Russian figures, Russia's population has fallen nearly every year (1993 and 2010 are the exceptions, with the latter experiencing an increase of just 10,000 people). According to these figures, between 1993 and 2010, Russia's population shrank from 148.6 million to 141.9 million people, a drop of nearly five percent. (Russia's 2010 census will eventually adjust the latter total upward by around one million people due to the undercounting of immigrants, but this does not change the overall picture.)

Russia is not alone in its population decline; this is a phenomenon that is increasingly common among modern societies, including affluent democratic ones. Three of the world's G-7 states -- Germany, Japan, and Italy -- are at the cusp of sustained population decline or have already entered into it. Yet there is a fundamental difference between those countries and Russia: Germany, Japan, and Italy are confronting the prospect of population decline at a time of robust and steadily improving levels of public health. Russia, however, is suffering an extraordinary and seemingly unending mortality crisis, in which health conditions are deteriorating and are further fueling high death rates.

The overall magnitude of Russia's downward health spiral is catastrophic. According to estimates from the Human Mortality Database, a research consortium, overall life expectancy at birth in Russia was slightly lower in 2009 (the latest year for which figures are available) than in 1961, almost half a century earlier. The situation is even worse for Russia's adult population: in 2009, life expectancy at age 15 for all Russian adults was more than two years below its level in 1959; life expectancy for young men sank by almost four years over those two generations. Put another way, post-

Soviet Russia has suffered a cumulative "excess mortality" of more than seven million deaths, meaning that if the country could have simply held on to its Gorbachev-era survival rates over the last two decades, seven million deaths could have been averted. This figure is more than three times the death toll World War I inflicted on imperial Russia.

By various measures, Russia's demographic indicators resemble those in many of the world's poorest and least developed societies. In 2009, overall life expectancy at age 15 was estimated to be lower in Russia than in Bangladesh, East Timor, Eritrea, Madagascar, Niger, and Yemen; even worse, Russia's adult male life expectancy was estimated to be lower than Sudan's, Rwanda's, and even AIDS-ravaged Botswana's. Although Russian women fare relatively better than Russian men, the mortality rate for Russian women of working age in 2009 was slightly higher than for working-age women in Bolivia, South America's poorest country; 20 years earlier, Russia's death rate for working-age women was 45 percent lower than Bolivia's.

#### IN SICKNESS AND IN POOR HEALTH

What explains Russia's gruesome deterioration? Although the country's problems with infectious diseases -- most alarming, HIV/AIDS and drug-resistant tuberculosis -- are well known, they account for only a small fraction of the awful gap between Western and Russian survival rates. Most immediately, the country's fateful leap backward in health and survival prospects is due to an explosion in deaths from cardiovascular disease and what epidemiologists call "external causes," such as poisoning, injury, suicide, homicide, traffic fatalities, and other violent accidents. Deaths from cardiovascular disease and injuries account for the overwhelming majority of Russia's spike in mortality levels and for nearly the entire gap separating Russia's mortality levels from those of Western countries. At the moment, death

rates from cardiovascular disease are more than three times as high in Russia as in western Europe, and Russian death rates from injury and violence have been stratospheric, on par with those in African postconflict societies, such as Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Understanding why such death rates are so high in an urbanized and literate society during peacetime, however, is another question altogether. Russia's deadly romance with the vodka bottle certainly has something to do with it; smoking, diet, and poor preventive and curative health care surely exact their toll as well. According to the World Health Organization, as of 2004, daily smokers accounted for a higher fraction of the adult population in Russia -- 36 percent -- than in any other country in Europe. Yet even given all these factors, Russia's health levels are worse and its death levels are higher than Western public health models would predict. The brute fact is that no one understands why Russians are as unhealthy as they are: it could very well be related to attitudes, viewpoints, and attendant patterns of behavior that fall under the rubric of "mental health." Without delving into cultural or psychosocial speculation, however, suffice it to say that Russian lifestyles are extremely hazardous to one's health -- and result in far higher mortality levels than would be expected of a country at such a relatively high income level.

Another cause of Russians' ill health may lie in education, and Russia's educational woes represent a human resource problem as well. On its face, education should be the saving grace of Russian social policy: after all, as many Russians, if not more, attain higher education as do citizens in many affluent Western countries. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the proportion of Russia's adult population with postsecondary training or degrees is higher than in almost any OECD country. And in the Soviet era, Russian scientists and inventors were

renowned for their acumen (albeit mainly in fields with military applications).

But today, Russia's educational system appears to be broken, or at least the country seems unable to derive the expected benefits from it. All around the world, high levels of education generally correspond with better public health, yet Russia bucks this trend: despite boasting a proportion of adults with a postsecondary education that is 30 percentage points higher than the OECD average, Russia nevertheless manages to achieve an overall adult life expectancy that is barely higher than Senegal's. Part of the problem is that although many Russians go to school, college, and university, that schooling is terribly subpar. Standardized international test results reveal that Russian primary and secondary schooling today is at best mediocre. In a 2009 OECD test to measure scholastic performance, Russian students' reading scores were lower than Turkish students', and Turkey itself is near the bottom of the OECD rankings.

Russia's university and higher education system looks even worse. Although Russia today accounts for about six percent of the world's population with a postsecondary education, barely 0.1 percent of the worldwide patents granted by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office over the last decade and a half were awarded to Russians. This is not some U.S. conspiracy against Russian inventors: the records of the UN's World Intellectual Property Organization show that Russia's share of out-of-country patent applications over that same period was less than 0.2 percent of the global total. The picture is hardly better when it comes to the output of scientific papers: the number of articles by Russians in peer-reviewed journals was no higher in 2008 than it had been in 1990, whereas output almost everywhere else in the world rose over those same years. By 2008, Russian authors were publishing far fewer scientific papers than the authors of Russia's BRIC peers: Brazil, China, and India. In effect, Russia

stands as a new and disturbing wonder in today's globalized world: a society characterized by high levels of schooling but low levels of health, knowledge, and education.

Family formation trends are a further cause for concern. Between 1987 and 1993, the number of births in Russia dropped precipitously, from 2.5 million to 1.4 million, and it ultimately fell to 1.2 million in 1999, before commencing a turnaround of sorts. In 2010, Russia celebrated 1.79 million births, the highest national total in 20 years. Even so, this total was 25 percent lower than a quarter century earlier and represented a pattern that, if continued, would average out to a long-term fertility level of just over 1.5 births per woman, which is 27 percent below the level required for long-term population stability. Unsurprisingly, there is much variation from this average among Russia's many ethnic groups and territories. Ethnic Russians have one of the country's lowest fertility rates, whereas Chechens appear to have the highest, with Chechnya reporting an average of 3.3 births per woman. (Chechnya is an anomaly even among Russia's Muslim-majority regions: most of them, including Chechnya's neighbors, Dagestan and Ingushetia, report sub-replacement fertility levels.)

Beyond birthrates, the way Russians form families and raise children has also undergone tremendous change over the past two decades, which raises questions about the human and economic potential of the country's rising generation.

Marriages in today's Russia, for example, are less stable than marriages even in the Soviet era, when the country's divorce rates were already notoriously high. Russia has 56 divorces for every 100 marriages, an imperfect but telling indicator of long-term marriage prospects. Increasing family instability, of course, is a pervasive trend the world over, taking hold in nearly all of Europe and in many other affluent societies. But Russia's single parents must raise their children on far lower income levels than their counterparts in western Europe and

North America.

Unlike Europeans or Americans, they can count on little support from social welfare programs. Although Western economic theory would suggest that having fewer children means that parents can invest more in each child, the opposite seems to be happening in Russia: despite its steep drop in births, the country has seen small but ominous decreases in primary school enrollment ratios and alarming increases in child abandonment. According to official statistics, more than 400,000 Russian children below 18 years of age lived in residential care as of 2004, meaning that almost one child in 70 was in a children's home, an orphanage, or a state-run boarding school. Russia is also home to a large and growing contingent of homeless children, which, according to some nongovernmental and charitable organizations, could very well exceed the number of youth under institutional care.

#### TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE

The Kremlin understands that Russia's adverse demographic patterns are so abnormal and dangerous that they require strong public policies to counteract them. Over the last several years, Moscow has introduced new and ambitious programs aimed at reversing the country's downward demographic spiral. In 2006, then President Vladimir Putin unveiled a program that promised up to \$10,000 in credits and subsidies for mothers who had a second or third child. He also issued a decree endorsing a "Concept for Demographic Policy of the Russian Federation up to 2025," which called for Russia's population to stabilize at about 145 million people by 2025, with overall life expectancy at birth at 75 years (versus 67 then) and total fertility rates at 1.95, up 50 percent from the years before the plan was enacted. After 2015, according to the plan, births would exceed deaths in Russia. At the same time that the Kremlin is trying to increase births, it is also

implementing new public health measures to drive death rates down, including measures that make alcohol more expensive and harder to purchase.

To judge by its public pronouncements, the Kremlin appears optimistic about its new measures. And indeed, since they have gone into effect, births have risen and death totals have come down; in fact, overall life expectancy in Russia in 2009 was almost 69 years, higher than for any year since the Soviet collapse. Yet such a seemingly positive prognosis flies in the face of some obvious and irreversible demographic realities. For starters, Russia's birth slump over the past two decades has left the country with many fewer potential mothers for the years ahead than the country has today. Women between 20 and 29 years of age bear nearly two-thirds of Russia's babies. In 2025, Russia is projected to have just 6.4 million women in their 20s, 45 percent fewer than today -- and there is relatively little mystery in these projections, given that all women who will be between 20 and 29 years in 2025 are already alive. Under such circumstances, simply maintaining current national birth totals would require heroic upsurges in maternity.

At the same time, Russia's population will be rapidly graying. Between 2011 and 2025, according to U.S. Census Bureau projections, the median age in Russia will rise by almost two days every week, from 38.7 years to 42.4 years. The Census Bureau also anticipates that Russians 65 and older, a cohort that now makes up 13 percent of the country's population, will compose almost 19 percent in 2025. As a result of aging alone, per capita mortality in Russia would rise by more than 20 percent if nothing else changed. And given the immense negative momentum in public health among the Russian population today, attaining any long-term improvements in life expectancy promises to be a formidable task. In order to return even to the working-age death rates of 1964, overall mortality levels for Russian men and women would have to

drop by more than 25 percent. Such a reversal would be an impressive achievement to attain by 2025, but even if Russia managed this feat, its working-age mortality levels would be higher than those of Honduras today.

Given these realities, Russia is likely to remain a net mortality society for the foreseeable future. Official Russian statistics anticipate a continuing -- and widening -- gap separating deaths and births between now and 2030. Rosstat envisions a surfeit of 205,000 deaths over births for 2011, rising to more than 725,000 in 2030, with a cumulative total of 9.5 million more deaths than births between 2011 and 2030. Even in Rosstat's most optimistic scenario, the agency projects a mortality surfeit of 2.7 million between 2011 and 2025, reaching 4.7 million by 2030. In these official Russian forecasts, further depopulation can be forestalled only by massive immigration from abroad.

Russia has certainly benefited over the past two decades from a net influx of millions of workers, most of whom hail from former Soviet states in the Caucasus and Central Asia. (The Russian economy has also been helped by its own flow of émigrés overseas, who send billions of dollars of remittances home each year.) But the outlook for future immigration to Russia is clouded: changes in education policy throughout the former Soviet Union mean that today's immigrants from the Caucasus and Central Asia speak less Russian than their parents and thus have more difficulty integrating into Russian society. Meanwhile, the Russian public's attitude toward newcomers from those regions has grown less welcoming.

No less important is domestic migration, especially in terms of the vast expanse of Russia's Far East, a region of over two million square miles and barely six million inhabitants. One-sixth of the population of this harsh and forbidding territory has moved out since 1989, and the exodus continues. Many

Russian analysts and policymakers are worried about what will become of this resource-rich area that adjoins a rising and densely populated China. Some Western scholars, such as Maria Repnikova of the University of Oxford and Harley Balzer of Georgetown University, see great and as yet unexploited opportunities for economic integration between the Russian Far East and its neighbors, especially China. Yet leading Russian demographers have a more dramatic vision: they fear that the region could cease to be part of Russia sometime in the current century, an outcome they see as carrying great geopolitical portent.

#### THE BEAR LASHES OUT?

Above all, Russia's current demographic patterns will have dreadful consequences for Russians' quality of life. Beyond the effect on individual well-being, the country's demographic decline will have grave implications for economic performance. Although Russia may be blessed with vast natural resources, human resources are what ultimately account for national wealth in today's global economy. Natural resources can augment affluence in societies already relatively rich in human capital, as Canada, the Netherlands, and Norway can attest, but they are no substitute for human capital. In modern times, there is not one example of a raw-materials superpower. And for all its energy riches, Russia earns less in export revenues each year than does Belgium. Although President Dmitry Medvedev warns that Russia must not remain a raw-materials economy and champions his modernization campaign, his administration has done little to position Russia as a knowledge-based economy.

Although the Russian government has acknowledged the country's poor demographic trends, it appears to have both grossly underestimated the severity of the crisis and overestimated the ability of current Kremlin policies to counteract whatever negative effects it thinks may be on the

horizon. In 2008, just before the onset of the global economic crisis, the Kremlin unfurled an ambitious economic plan known as Russia 2020. It envisions Russia ascending into the ranks of the top five global economies by 2020 and sets as a goal an average annual economic growth rate of 6.6 percent between 2007 and 2020. Even though Russia's per capita output in 2010 was barely higher than it was in 2007, the Kremlin still embraces the Russia 2020 targets as feasible. But attaining those goals would now require an average growth in labor productivity of more than nine percent per year between 2010 and 2020. Such a tempo of long-term growth in labor productivity was not even reached by China between 1978 and the present day, the greatest period of long-term economic growth ever registered by any country in history.

Rather than focusing on catapulting the Russian economy into the top echelon of global performers, Russian policymakers would be wise to ask what it would take to prevent the Russian economy from shrinking as a share of total global output in the decades ahead. Between 2005 and 2025, according to U.S. Census Bureau projections, Russia's share of the global working-age population is projected to drop from 2.4 percent to 1.6 percent. This implies that Russia's long-term improvements in labor productivity must average two percent more per year than in the rest of the world. Such prospective accomplishments can hardly be taken for granted given Russia's health and educational problems, not to mention the looming pressures of an aging population. If these accomplishments are not met, Russia's share of world economic output, and the country's global economic influence, will diminish in the years ahead. (This is not to say that Russia will grow poorer, but in a progressively richer, healthier, and more educated world, Russia's human resource constraints may mean that the country should expect a smaller share of the future global economic pie.)

Russia's demographic crisis also has implications for its military capabilities and, by extension, for international security. In 2007, former Russian Prime Minister Sergei Stepashin warned that the "reduction in the size of the population and the reduction of population density . . . will create the danger of weakening Russia's political, economic, and military influence in the world." As he recognized, Russia's demographic crisis places inexorable limits on the country's defense potential, especially in terms of military manpower. Maintaining the country's current force structure -- a military of more than a million soldiers, mainly comprising conscripts obliged to serve one-year terms of service -- will not be feasible in the years immediately ahead. Despite plans to transform Russia's armed forces into an all-volunteer service, the Russian military continues to be manned mainly by 18-year-old men. In 1990, slightly more than one million boys were born in Russia; by 1999, however, this number had dropped by 39 percent, to 626,000. Roughly speaking, this means that Russia's pool of prospective recruits is set to fall by almost two-fifths between 2008 and 2017. If Moscow is to prevent this dramatic drop-off in military manpower, it has only two choices: induct fewer qualified conscripts or extend the term of service under the draft beyond the current 12 months. The former is unpalatable because of the need for healthy and educated troops for modern militaries; the latter is politically impossible because of the immense unpopularity of the draft and the penurious wages paid to Russian soldiers.

Russia's brief war with Georgia in August 2008 was taken by many, including some in the Kremlin, as a sign that Russia was once again militarily resurgent after a decade of post-Soviet weakness. But the military contest with Georgia, a tiny neighbor with barely 20,000 soldiers, hardly qualified as a test of great-power capabilities, much less a test of Russia's global reach. Beyond the question of military manpower, Russia's defense potential today is compromised by the

country's crisis in higher education and technical training. The same poor performance in knowledge creation reflected in the number of Russia's international patent awards can also be seen in the defense sector's research and development efforts. Russia's armaments industries have not been knowledge-driven innovators; instead, the defense sector appears largely to be living off the intellectual capital of the Soviet era. Unlike Beijing, which is committed to military modernization in the coming decades, Moscow is in effect preparing to fight this century's wars with last century's technology. In fact, as the Russia analysts Anders Aslund and Andrew Kuchins noted in 2009, as China's military capabilities have improved, Beijing has "reduced its imports of Russian military technology and even exports its own versions to traditional Russian clients such as Angola, Ethiopia and Syria." Russia's dwindling conventional military is on track to become the Polish cavalry of coming generations.

Throughout the Putin and Medvedev eras, the potential security risks to Russia from the ongoing demographic crisis have weighed heavily on the minds of the country's leaders. In his first State of the Nation address, in July 2000, Putin declared that "year by year, we, the citizens of Russia, are getting fewer and fewer. . . . We face the threat of becoming a senile nation." In his 2006 address, he identified demographics as "the most acute problem facing our country today." In Medvedev's May 2009 National Security Strategy, the country's demographic situation was noted as one of the "new security challenges" that Russia must confront in the years ahead. In other words, the potential ramifications of Russia's population trends are not entirely lost on the Kremlin -- and they are hardly just a domestic concern. But how will Russia's bunkered and undemocratic leaders cope with the demographic pressures and unfavorable human resource trends that are undermining their goals? For the international

community, this may be the single most disturbing aspect of Russia's peacetime population crisis: it is possible that Russia's demographic decline could prompt Moscow to become a more unpredictable, even menacing, actor on the world stage.

Most immediately and dramatically, the decline could lead Russia's military leaders, aware of their deficiencies in both manpower and advanced technology, to lower the threshold at which they might consider using nuclear weapons in moments of crisis. Indeed, such thinking was first outlined in Putin's 2000 National Security Concept and was reaffirmed in Medvedev's 2009 National Security Strategy. The official Russian thinking is that nuclear weapons are Russia's trump card: the more threatening the international environment, the more readily Moscow will resort to nuclear diplomacy.

For the moment, the Kremlin evidently still believes that its ambitious long-term socioeconomic plans will not only remedy the country's demographic woes but also propel Russia into the select ranks of the world's economic superpowers. But if Russia's demographic decline and relative economic decline continue over the next few decades, as they most likely will, Moscow's leaders will be unable to sustain that illusion.

Indeed, once the Kremlin finally confronts the true depths of the country's ugly demographic truths, Russia's political leaders could very well become more alarmist, mercurial, and confrontational in their international posture. And in the process, Moscow might become more prone to miscalculation when it comes to relations with both allies and rivals. Meanwhile, Russia is surrounded by countries whose stability and comity in the decades ahead are anything but given: for example, Afghanistan, Iran, North Korea, Pakistan, and the Central Asian republics. If Russia's periphery becomes more unstable and threatening at the same time that Russia's rulers realize their relative power is waning, the Kremlin's behavior

may well become less confident -- and more risky.

Russia's monumental demographic and human resource crisis cannot be remedied without a commensurately monumental nationwide effort by the Russians themselves. Such an effort will require a historic change in Russian mentality, both in the halls of power and among the general population. On the bright side, with hundreds of billions of dollars of foreign exchange in its vaults, Russia probably has the means to finance the education and public health campaigns needed for such a transformation.

Foreign governments and other outside actors can also play a role. To start, the international community should promote technical exchanges and training, joint projects on developing best practices in health and education, and civil-society dialogues to build a domestic Russian constituency for stanching the ongoing hemorrhage of Russian life and talent. And when necessary, foreign policymakers, businesspeople, and officials from nongovernmental organizations should be ready to publicly shame the Russian government for its patent neglect of its people's well-being. After all, a healthy, robust Russia is not just in the interest of the Russian people; it is in the interest of the rest of the world, too.

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NICHOLAS EBERSTADT is Henry Wendt Chair in Political Economy at the American Enterprise Institute and a Senior Adviser at the National Bureau of Asian Research (NBR). This essay is adapted from an NBR report on Russia's peacetime demographic crisis.

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# Managing the New Cold War

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What Moscow and Washington Can Learn From the Last One

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*Robert Legvold*



DENIS SINYAKOV / COURTESY REUTERS

*Red flag: Russian soldiers in Moscow's Red Square, November 2011.*

No one should casually label the current confrontation between Russia and the West a “new Cold War.” After all, the current crisis hardly matches the depth and scale of the contest that dominated the international system in the second half of the twentieth century. And accepting the premise that Russia and the West are locked in such a conflict could lead

policymakers to pursue the wrong, even dangerous strategies. Using such a label is thus a serious matter.

Yet it is important to call things by their names, and the collapse in relations between Russia and the West does indeed deserve to be called a new Cold War. The hard reality is that whatever the outcome of the crisis in Ukraine, Russia's relations with the United States and Europe won't return to business as usual, as they did after the 2008 Russian-Georgian war.

The Obama administration enjoyed some success in lifting the U.S.-Russian relationship from its 2008 nadir, as the two sides forged the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START), agreed on tougher sanctions against Iran, cooperated on supply routes for NATO's war in Afghanistan, and worked together on President Barack Obama's plan to secure nuclear materials around the world. Relations never really moved to the next phase, as further progress was waylaid by frictions over missile defense, NATO's war in Libya, the civil war in Syria, and a host of repressive measures that Russian President Vladimir Putin's regime directed at its own citizens. But even those obstacles never completely dashed the hope that Moscow and Washington might find common ground on a number of critical issues.

That hope is now gone. The crisis in Ukraine has pushed the two sides over a cliff and into a new relationship, one not softened by the ambiguity that defined the last decade of the post-Cold War period, when each party viewed the other as neither friend nor foe. Russia and the West are now adversaries.

Although this new Cold War will be fundamentally different from the original, it will still be immensely damaging. Unlike the original, the new one won't encompass the entire global system. The world is no longer bipolar, and significant regions

and key players, such as China and India, will avoid being drawn in. In addition, the new conflict will not pit one “ism” against another, nor will it likely unfold under the permanent threat of nuclear Armageddon. Yet the new Cold War will affect nearly every important dimension of the international system, and Putin’s emphasis on Russia’s alienation from contemporary Western cultural values will add to the estrangement. Finally, were a security crisis in the center of Europe to escalate, the danger of nuclear war could quickly return.

For both Moscow and Washington, then, the top priority must be to contain the conflict, ensuring that it ends up being as short and as shallow as possible. To achieve that goal, both sides must carefully study the lessons of the original Cold War. During that conflict, the two sides, despite their bitter rivalry, were eventually able to develop a variety of mechanisms for reducing tensions and containing risks. By the 1970s, U.S. and Russian leaders had come to see managing the contest and focusing on areas of cooperation, especially nuclear arms control, as their principal tasks. Without discounting the fundamental differences that set them at odds, leaders on both sides embraced the wisdom of engaging, rather than isolating, the other. Toward the end of the original Cold War, the earnest, albeit fumbling, efforts of U.S. President Ronald Reagan and Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev to understand what drove each other greatly influenced the final outcome. Today, as leaders in Moscow and Washington move in the other direction, they might pause and reflect on how the wisest among their predecessors approached the original Cold War.

## THE BIG CHILL

For all the differences between the two periods, the new Cold War will share many of its predecessor’s features. First, Russian and Western leaders have already begun framing the

standoff in unforgiving terms -- much as their predecessors did at the start of the first Cold War, most famously with Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin's February 1946 preelection speech and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill's Iron Curtain speech a month later. This past March, for example, Putin defended Russia's annexation of Crimea by saying that Washington and its European allies were guided by "the rule of the gun" rather than international law and were convinced that their "exceptionalism" allowed them to unlawfully use force against sovereign states, "building coalitions based on the principle, 'If you are not with us, you are against us.'" In May, Alexander Vershbow, the deputy secretary-general of NATO, asserted that Russia should now be considered "more of an adversary than a partner."

Second, as in the early phases of the original Cold War, each side sees the conflict as a result solely of the actions -- or even the nature -- of the other. Neither pays attention to the complicated interactions that brought relations to their present low. This preoccupation with pinning fault on the other side recalls attitudes during the late 1950s and early 1960s, when each side viewed the other as inherently alien. Only after surviving the perils of the Berlin crisis of 1958-61 and the Cuban missile crisis in 1962 did the Americans and the Soviets step back and consider where their interests converged. Over the next ten years, they negotiated three major arms control agreements: the Limited Test Ban Treaty, the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, and the first Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT I).

Third, as during much of the original Cold War, neither side now expects much from the relationship. Isolated moments of cooperation might emerge when the two sides' interests on specific issues happen to coincide. But neither believes it feasible to pursue cooperation across a broad front with the aim of changing the nature of the relationship overall. Nor does either camp seem willing to take the first step in that

direction.

Fourth, to punish Moscow and to signal the price it will pay for further aggression, Washington has resorted to a series of Cold War-style reprisals. Beginning in March, it put military-to-military activities with Russia on hold and ended missile defense negotiations. The Obama administration has also banned the export to Russia of civilian technology with potential military applications, suspended cooperation with Russia on civilian nuclear energy projects, cut off NASA's contacts with its Russian counterpart, and denied Russian specialists access to the laboratories of the U.S. Department of Energy. Many of these measures will likely remain in place after the Ukraine crisis ends. And even those that are lifted will leave a corrosive residue.

Fifth, and most serious, just as the confrontation over security in the heart of Europe constituted the epicenter of the original Cold War, renewed uncertainty over central and eastern Europe's stability will drive this one as well. Beginning in the 1990s, NATO's expansion into much of eastern Europe, including the Baltic states, moved Europe's political-military border to the edges of the former Soviet Union. NATO enlargement also transformed Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine into the new "lands in between," successors to Poland and the parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire that the great powers fought over, with tragic results, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Today, as Moscow fortifies its Western Military District, a key military command, and NATO refocuses on Russia, the military standoff over continental Europe, which took two decades to dismantle, will swiftly be reconstituted on Europe's eastern edge.

## RED ZONE

Some might assume that the new Cold War, although undesirable, won't matter nearly as much as the last one did,

especially since modern Russia presents a mere shadow of the threat once posed by the Soviet Union. It is true, of course, that the United States enjoys massive material advantages over its adversary: its economy is around eight times as large as Russia's, and its military budget is seven times as large. Moreover, the magnitude of the other challenges Washington faces, from turbulence in the Middle East to rising tensions in the Asia-Pacific, might make a collapse of Russia's relations with the United States and most of Europe seem relatively unimportant.

But to doubt the likelihood or significance of a prolonged confrontation would be deeply misguided. In truth, if Russia and the United States approach each other in starkly adversarial terms, the conflict will badly warp the foreign policies of both countries, damage virtually every important dimension of international politics, and divert attention and resources from the major security challenges of the new century.

Consider Washington's position in the Asia-Pacific, toward which it has for several years now intended to rebalance its diplomatic and military resources. Recent events in Ukraine have already caused Tokyo to fear that Washington's new focus on Europe will diminish its commitment to Asia -- and, more specifically, its commitment to helping Japan ward off a rising China. Japanese leaders even worry that Obama's relatively mild response to Moscow's annexation of Crimea foreshadows how Washington would react if Beijing seized the disputed Senkaku Islands (known in China as the Diaoyu Islands), in the East China Sea. Moreover, a belligerent Russia will have every incentive to hinder, rather than help, the United States' efforts to manage the delicate task of deterring Chinese aggression while widening the sphere of U.S.-Chinese cooperation. Similarly, at a time when Washington needs Russian cooperation to address new sources of global disorder, Moscow will instead step aside,

impairing U.S. efforts to deal with terrorism, climate change, nuclear proliferation, and cyberwarfare.

The pressure to reorient U.S. defense planning to meet what many members of the U.S. Congress and many of Washington's eastern European allies see as a revived Russian military threat will complicate the Pentagon's effort to save money by modernizing and downsizing. The U.S. military, which is currently focused on counterterrorism and securing access to the seas surrounding China, will now have to beef up its capabilities to fight a ground war in Europe.

The new Cold War with the United States and Europe will hurt Russia even more, especially because Moscow is much more dependent on the West than vice versa, in at least one critical respect. To diversify its resource-dependent economy and modernize its aging, Soviet-era infrastructure, Russia has counted on an inflow of Western capital and technology. To the degree that this option is lost, Moscow will be forced to become vastly more dependent either on its relationship with Beijing -- in which it is a distinctly junior partner -- or on scattered partnerships with countries that do not offer anything resembling the resources of the United States and Europe.

Only four years ago, after the global financial crisis had laid bare the weakness of the Russian economy, then Russian President Dmitry Medvedev argued that the country sorely needed "special alliances for modernization" with the United States and the countries of the EU. But now, as the crisis in Russia's relations with those countries deepens, Russia is already feeling the crunch, as capital is fleeing the country, its credit markets are shrinking, and its economy will soon enter a recession.

Such economic hardship may prompt Russian leaders to preemptively clamp down on domestic dissent even harder

than they already have to avert potential social unrest at home, which would mean a level of repression that could backfire and at some point produce the very kind of widespread opposition the Kremlin fears. Meanwhile, Russia's poisoned relations with the United States and its European allies might well lead such Russian partners as Armenia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan -- all of which are crucial to Russia's plans for a Eurasian economic union and a stronger Collective Security Treaty Organization -- to subtly distance themselves from Moscow for fear of tainting their own relationships with the Western powers.

The new confrontation with the West will also force Russia to stretch its military resources thin. That will leave Moscow poorly equipped to handle a host of other security challenges, such as violence in the northern Caucasus and instability in Central Asia, the latter of which is compounded by the unpredictable futures facing Afghanistan and Pakistan. Russia must also defend its vast border with China and prepare for a potential conflict between North and South Korea.

#### PRESSURE POINTS

The collapse of Russia's relations with the West will not only distort U.S., European, and Russian foreign policy but also inflict serious harm on a broad array of international issues. What still remains of the arms control regime that took Russia and the United States years to build will now largely come undone. The new Cold War has eliminated any chance that Moscow and Washington will resolve their differences over missile defense, a Russian precondition for further strategic arms control agreements. Instead, the two sides will likely start developing new and potentially destabilizing technologies, including advanced precision-guided conventional weapons and cyberwarfare tools.

Meanwhile, the European component of the U.S. missile

defense program will now likely take on a specifically anti-Russian character, particularly because the Obama administration reportedly believes that Russia has violated the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. And it is unlikely that Moscow and Washington will be able to agree on how to place limits on the deployment of major weapons systems in Europe. The new Cold War has also dashed any hopes of strengthening other basic agreements, such as the 1992 Treaty on Open Skies, which regulates unarmed aerial surveillance flights.

Geostrategic calculations will now also assume a far more dominant role in U.S.-Russian energy relations. Each side will attempt to use the oil and gas trade to gain leverage over the other and minimize its own vulnerability. In the Arctic, the chances for U.S.-Russian cooperation in developing that region's vast hydrocarbon reserves will surely shrink. More broadly, the new Cold War will set back international efforts to deal with the impact of climate change on the Arctic -- an issue on which U.S.-Russian relations have been surprisingly cooperative.

One of the most successful but underappreciated aspects of recent U.S.-Russian relations has been the progress made by the 20 working groups of the U.S.-Russia Bilateral Presidential Commission, which was established in 2009 to facilitate high-level cooperation on a range of policies, from prison reform and military education to civilian emergencies and counterterrorism. It seems unlikely that such cooperation will continue, much less improve, during the new Cold War. Moscow and Washington will also struggle to align their positions on key matters of global governance, including the much-needed reforms of the UN, the International Monetary Fund, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Washington is now focused on excluding Russia where possible (from the G-8, for example) and circumscribing Russia's role elsewhere. Meanwhile, Moscow

will work harder than before to supplant U.S. and European influence in these institutions.

Finally, should one or more of the long-simmering conflicts in the post-Soviet region again explode, the chances that Russia and the United States would act together to contain the violence seem close to zero. Instead, were Nagorno-Karabakh, in Azerbaijan, or Transnistria, in Moldova, to blow up, Moscow and Washington would both be far more likely to focus on counteracting what they each saw as the malevolent role of the other.

#### DAMAGE CONTROL

The immediate crisis in Ukraine, even if momentarily muffled, has scarcely ended. The presidential election in May could not settle the crisis of legitimacy facing Ukraine's leadership, which lacks the trust of the eastern part of the country. Nor will the modest aid packages currently being cobbled together by the International Monetary Fund and other Western donors resolve the deep structural problems eating away at Ukraine's economy, namely unconstrained corruption and the power exerted by a small number of oligarchic clans. In short, the country has a long slog ahead, filled with political and economic uncertainty.

Yet Ukraine forms only part of a larger and more ominous picture. Europe's stability, which only recently seemed assured, now appears more tenuous. A new fault line has opened up in the heart of the continent, and instability anywhere within it -- not only in Ukraine but in Belarus or Moldova as well -- will likely lead to an escalating confrontation between the East and the West. Leaders in Moscow and Washington need to face up to this reality and to the price they will pay if they blind themselves to the larger consequences of the new Cold War. Understating both the risks and the costs will only lead to underestimating how

much effort will be required to surmount them. The overarching goal of both Moscow and Washington must therefore be to make the new Cold War as quick and as shallow as possible.

This goal can be achieved only if leaders on both sides embrace damage control as their first-order objective. So far, they have not. Rather than understanding the Ukraine crisis in this larger perspective, Russian and Western leaders seem fixated on prevailing in the crisis itself. For Russia, that means toughing it out: taking the pain the West means to inflict through sanctions and forcing Washington and U.S. allies to accept what Russian leaders see as their country's legitimate interests in Ukraine and beyond. For the United States and Europe, winning in Ukraine means stymieing Russia's aggressive behavior and forcing Moscow back onto a more cooperative path. (In some Western circles, winning also entails weakening Putin enough to hasten the end of his regime.)

Committing to limiting the damage done by the new Cold War does not mean that the West should tolerate Russian attempts to control events in Europe's new lands in between by abetting political instability or using military force. If the United States and its European allies cannot find a way to thwart this Russian temptation -- through credible military threats, if necessary -- the new Cold War will only deepen. At the same time, a policy to deal with conflicts over Europe's unsettled center needs to be guided by a larger goal. Everything that Western leaders do to induce Russian restraint must be paired with a compelling vision of an alternative path that, if taken, would lead in a more constructive direction. Both halves of this approach need to be clear and concrete: the redlines must be self-evident and backed by the threat of credible military force, and the opportunities for cooperation must be specific and significant.

## ANGER MANAGEMENT

Minimizing the damage done by the new Cold War will require managing it with the intention of gradually overcoming it. To this end, leaders in Moscow, Washington, and European capitals should heed three lessons from the original Cold War.

First, they need to recognize that during the Cold War, mistrust often distorted each side's perceptions of the other's intentions. As one among many examples, consider Washington's incorrect belief that the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 was an attempt to gain control over the oil in the Persian Gulf -- a misperception rooted in the deep-seated mistrust of Soviet territorial ambitions that U.S. leaders had harbored ever since Stalin seized much of eastern Europe after World War II and then sought to expand Soviet influence in such places as Iran and Korea.

Ever since the first Cold War ended, misperceptions have continued to plague relations between the two sides, constantly disrupting Moscow's and Washington's efforts to build a new partnership and allowing a potentially functional relationship to devolve into an adversarial one. NATO enlargement and U.S. plans for a European missile defense system fed a preexisting Russian disposition to believe such moves were directed against Moscow. And Russia's heavy-handed treatment of its neighbors -- particularly Ukraine -- created a Western perception that Moscow wants not merely influence but also control over old Soviet territory.

Peeling away such mistrust won't be easy. It will require great effort on the part of U.S. and Russian officials and a willingness to take real risks. Leaders on both sides know that their domestic political opponents will characterize any attempts to overcome hostility as weakness. They also worry that any overtures will look feckless if they are not

immediately reciprocated -- or, worse, that such efforts will look like appeasement if the other side responds with further aggression.

Still, it is each side's distorted notions of the other's aims that represent the largest barriers to cooperation. The way to begin unwinding this tangle is for the two sides to talk directly to each other, quietly, at the highest levels, and without preconditions. They must meet with an understanding that every issue is on the table, including the most contentious ones. Such dialogue, of course, is the most difficult precisely when it is also the most necessary, but neither government need abandon its current positions before it starts talking. Probing the sources of each side's deeper concerns, however, is only the first step. Next, talk must lead to action. Each side should specify a modest step or series of steps that, if taken, would convince it to begin rethinking its assumptions about the other.

The two sides should also stop blaming the other side and instead step back and consider what in their own behavior has contributed to the derailment. The original Cold War's second lesson is that it was the interaction between the two sides, rather than the actions of only one side, that created the spiral in tensions. In the Ukraine crisis, at least, there is enough blame to go around. The EU was tone-deaf in dismissing legitimate Russian concerns over the failed association agreement with Ukraine. During the unrest in Kiev in February, the United States too quickly abandoned an agreement reached by diplomats on all sides that offered a potential way out of the crisis, promising new presidential elections and constitutional reform. And throughout, Russia has been all too ready to exploit Ukraine's instability to further its objectives.

The original Cold War's third lesson might be the most important. Events, and not predetermined plans and policies,

usually determined U.S. and Soviet behavior. In the current crisis over Ukraine and in others to follow, the United States and its European allies should therefore focus on influencing Russian choices by shaping events rather than by trying to change the way the Kremlin sees things. In practical terms, this means that Washington, alongside the EU, should commit to giving Ukraine the economic assistance it desperately needs (provided that real steps are taken to fix its corrupt political system), insist that Ukrainian leaders establish a government that can regain legitimacy in the eastern part of the country, and strive to create an environment in which Ukraine can cooperate with Europe and Russia without having to choose between the two. If U.S. policy moves in this direction, Russian choices are likely to be more constructive.

At the moment, emotions are running high in Moscow, Washington, and the capitals of Europe, and the confrontation over Ukraine seems to have taken on a momentum of its own. If somehow the Ukraine crisis fades, the intensity of the new Cold War will weaken, but not end. If the crisis in Ukraine deepens (or a crisis elsewhere arises), so will the new Cold War. In other words, Ukraine is central to the direction the confrontation will take, but not everything depends on what happens there. Just like the original Cold War, the new Cold War will play out on many stages, and it will not even begin to be resolved until both sides recognize the high costs of the course they are on and decide to tackle the difficult steps leading to a different path.

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ROBERT LEGVOLD is Marshall D. Shulman Professor Emeritus at Columbia University.

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# Russia's Perpetual Geopolitics

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## Putin Returns to the Historical Pattern

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*Stephen Kotkin*



BRIDGEMAN IMAGES

*Follow the leader: Peter the Great by Hippolyte (Paul) Delaroche, 1838.*

For half a millennium, [Russian foreign policy](#) has been characterized by soaring ambitions that have exceeded the country's capabilities. Beginning with the reign of Ivan the Terrible in the sixteenth century, Russia managed to expand at an average rate of 50 square miles per day for hundreds of years, eventually covering one-sixth of the earth's landmass. By 1900, it was the world's fourth- or fifth-largest industrial

power and the largest agricultural producer in Europe. But its per capita GDP reached only 20 percent of the United Kingdom's and 40 percent of Germany's. Imperial Russia's average life span at birth was just 30 years—higher than British India's (23) but the same as Qing China's and far below the United Kingdom's (52), Japan's (51), and Germany's (49). Russian literacy in the early twentieth century remained below 33 percent—lower than that of Great Britain in the eighteenth century. These comparisons were all well known by the [Russian political establishment](#), because its members traveled to Europe frequently and measured their country against the world's leaders (something that is true today, as well).

History records three fleeting moments of remarkable Russian ascendancy: Peter the Great's victory over Charles XII and a declining Sweden in the early 1700s, which implanted Russian power on the Baltic Sea and in Europe; Alexander I's victory over a wildly overstretched Napoleon in the second decade of the nineteenth century, which brought Russia to Paris as an arbiter of great-power affairs; and Stalin's victory over the maniacal gambler Adolf Hitler in the 1940s, which gained Russia Berlin, a satellite empire in Eastern Europe, and a central role shaping the global postwar order.

These high-water marks aside, however, Russia has almost always been a relatively weak great power. It lost the Crimean War of 1853–56, a defeat that ended the post-Napoleonic glow and forced a belated emancipation of the serfs. It lost the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–5, the first defeat of a European country by an Asian one in the modern era. It lost World War I, a defeat that caused the collapse of the imperial regime. And it lost the Cold War, a defeat that helped cause the collapse of the imperial regime's Soviet successor.

Throughout, the country has been haunted by its relative backwardness, particularly in the military and industrial spheres. This has led to repeated frenzies of government activity designed to help the country catch up, with a familiar cycle of coercive state-led industrial growth followed by stagnation. Most analysts had assumed that this pattern had ended for good in the 1990s, with the abandonment of Marxism-Leninism and the arrival of competitive elections and a buccaneer capitalist economy. But the impetus behind Russian grand strategy had not changed. And over the last decade, Russian President Vladimir Putin has returned to the trend of relying on the state to manage the gulf between Russia and the more powerful West.

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*Russian foreign policy has long been characterized by soaring ambitions that have exceeded the country's capabilities.*

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With the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991, Moscow lost some two million square miles of sovereign territory—more than the equivalent of the entire European Union (1.7 million square miles) or India (1.3 million). Russia forfeited the share of Germany it had conquered in World War II and its other satellites in Eastern Europe—all of which are now inside the Western military alliance, along with some advanced former regions of the Soviet Union, such as the Baltic states. Other former Soviet possessions, such as Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Ukraine, cooperate closely with the West on security matters. Notwithstanding the [forcible annexation of Crimea](#), the war in eastern Ukraine, and the de facto occupation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Russia has had to retreat from most of Catherine the Great's so-called New Russia, in the southern steppes, and from Transcaucasia. And apart from a few military bases, Russia is out of Central Asia, too.

Russia is still the largest country in the world, but it is much

smaller than it was, and the extent of a country's territory matters less for great-power status these days than economic dynamism and human capital—spheres in which Russia has also declined. Russian dollar-denominated GDP peaked in 2013 at slightly more than \$2 trillion and has now dropped to about \$1.2 trillion thanks to cratering oil prices and ruble exchange rates. To be sure, the contraction measured in purchasing power parity has been far less dramatic. But in comparative dollar-denominated terms, [Russia's economy](#) amounts to a mere 1.5 percent of global GDP and is just one-15th the size of the U.S. economy. Russia also suffers the dubious distinction of being the [most corrupt](#) developed country in the world, and its resource-extracting, rent-seeking economic system has reached a dead end.

The geopolitical environment, meanwhile, has become only more challenging over time, with continuing U.S. global supremacy and the dramatic rise of China. And the spread of radical political Islam poses concerns, as about 15 percent of Russia's 142 million citizens are Muslim and some of the country's predominantly Muslim regions are seething with unrest and lawlessness. For Russian elites who assume that their country's status and even survival depend on matching the West, the limits of the current course should be evident.

### **THE BEAR'S NECESSITIES**

Russians have always had an abiding sense of living in a providential country with a special mission—an attitude often traced to Byzantium, which Russia claims as an inheritance. In truth, most great powers have exhibited similar feelings. Both China and the United States have claimed a heavenly mandated exceptionalism, as did England and France throughout much of their histories. Germany and Japan had their exceptionalism bombed out of them. Russia's is remarkably resilient. It has been expressed differently over time—the Third Rome, the pan-Slavic kingdom, the world headquarters of the Communist International. Today's version

involves [Eurasianism](#), a movement launched among Russian émigrés in 1921 that imagined Russia as neither European nor Asian but a sui generis fusion.

The sense of having a special mission has contributed to Russia's paucity of formal alliances and reluctance to join international bodies except as an exceptional or dominant member. It furnishes Russia's people and leaders with pride, but it also fuels resentment toward the West for supposedly underappreciating Russia's uniqueness and importance. Thus is psychological alienation added to the institutional divergence driven by relative economic backwardness. As a result, Russian governments have generally oscillated between seeking closer ties with the West and recoiling in fury at perceived slights, with neither tendency able to prevail permanently.



EDUARD KORNIYENKO / REUTERS

*Children, wearing red neckerchiefs, a symbol of the Pioneer Organization, attend a ceremony for the inauguration of new members at a school in Stavropol region, Russia, November 2015.*

Yet another factor that has shaped Russia's role in the world has been the country's unique geography. It has no natural borders, except the Pacific Ocean and the Arctic Ocean (the latter of which is now becoming a [contested space](#), too). Buffeted throughout its history by often turbulent developments in East Asia, Europe, and the Middle East, Russia has felt perennially vulnerable and has often displayed a kind of defensive aggressiveness. Whatever the original causes behind early Russian expansionism—much of which was unplanned—many in the country's political class came to believe over time that only further expansion could secure the earlier acquisitions. Russian security has thus traditionally been partly predicated on moving outward, in the name of preempting external attack.

Today, too, smaller countries on Russia's borders are viewed less as potential friends than as potential beachheads for enemies. In fact, this sentiment was strengthened by the Soviet collapse. Unlike Stalin, Putin does not recognize the existence of a Ukrainian nation separate from a Russian one. But like Stalin, he views all nominally independent borderland states, now including Ukraine, as weapons in the hands of Western powers intent on wielding them against Russia.

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*Russia is the most corrupt developed country in the world, and its resource-extracting, rent-seeking economic system has reached a dead end.*

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A final driver of Russian foreign policy has been the country's perennial quest for a strong state. In a dangerous world with few natural defenses, the thinking runs, the only guarantor of Russia's security is a powerful state willing and able to act aggressively in its own interests. A strong state has also been seen as the guarantor of domestic order, and the result has

been a trend captured in the nineteenth-century historian Vasily Klyuchevsky's one-line summation of a millennium of Russian history: "The state grew fat, but the people grew lean."

Paradoxically, however, the efforts to build a strong state have invariably led to subverted institutions and personalistic rule. Peter the Great, the original strong-state builder, emasculated individual initiative, exacerbated inbred distrust among officials, and fortified patron-client tendencies. His coercive modernization brought indispensable new industries, but his project for a strengthened state actually entrenched personal whim. This syndrome characterized the reigns of successive Romanov autocrats and those of Lenin and, especially, Stalin, and it has persisted to this day. Unbridled personalism tends to render decision-making on Russian grand strategy opaque and potentially capricious, for it ends up conflating state interests with the political fortunes of one person.

### **MUST THE PAST BE PROLOGUE?**

Anti-Western resentment and Russian patriotism appear particularly pronounced in Putin's personality and life experiences, but a different Russian government not run by former KGB types would still be confronted with the challenge of weakness vis-à-vis the West and the desire for a special role in the world. Russia's foreign policy orientation, in other words, is as much a condition as a choice. But if Russian elites could somehow redefine their sense of exceptionalism and put aside their unwinnable competition with the West, they could set their country on a less costly, more promising course.

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*Russian governments have generally oscillated between seeking closer ties with the West and recoiling in fury at perceived slights.*

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Superficially, this appeared to be what was happening during the 1990s, before Putin took the helm, and in Russia a powerful “stab in the back” story has taken shape about how it was an arrogant West that spurned Russian overtures over the last couple of decades rather than the reverse. But such a view downplays the dynamic inside Russia. Certainly, Washington exploited Russia’s enfeeblement during the tenure of Russian President Boris Yeltsin and beyond. But it is not necessary to have supported every aspect of Western policy in recent decades to see Putin’s evolving stance less as a reaction to external moves than as the latest example of a deep, recurring pattern driven by internal factors. What precluded post-Soviet Russia from joining Europe as just another country or forming an (inevitably) unequal partnership with the United States was the country’s abiding great-power pride and sense of special mission. Until Russia brings its aspirations into line with its actual capabilities, it cannot become a “normal” country, no matter what the rise in its per capita GDP or other quantitative indicators is.



GLEB GARANICH / REUTERS

*A boy sits on a swing near his building, which was damaged during fighting between the Ukrainian army and pro-Russian separatists, next to a Ukrainian armored personnel carrier, near Donetsk, eastern Ukraine, June 2015.*

Let's be clear: Russia is a remarkable civilization of tremendous depth. It is not the only former absolute monarchy that has had trouble attaining political stability or that retains a statist bent (think of France, for example). And Russia is right in thinking that the post-Cold War settlement was unbalanced, even unfair. But that was not because of any intentional humiliation or betrayal. It was the inevitable result of the West's decisive victory in the contest with the Soviet Union. In a multidimensional global rivalry—political, economic, cultural, technological, and military—the Soviet Union lost across the board. Mikhail Gorbachev's Kremlin chose to bow out gracefully rather than pull the world down along with it, but that extraordinarily benevolent endgame did not change the nature of the outcome or its causes—something that post-Soviet Russia has never really accepted.

The outside world cannot force such a psychological recognition, what the Germans call *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*—"coming to terms with the past." But there is no reason it could not come about organically, among Russians themselves. Eventually, the country could try to follow something like the trajectory of France, which retains a lingering sense of exceptionalism yet has made peace with its loss of its external empire and its special mission in the world, recalibrating its national idea to fit its reduced role and joining with lesser powers and small countries in Europe on terms of equality.

Whether even a transformed Russia would be accepted into and merge well with Europe is an open question. But the start

of the process would need to be a Russian leadership able to get its public to accept permanent retrenchment and agree to embark on an arduous domestic restructuring. Outsiders should be humble as they contemplate how wrenching such an adjustment would be, especially without a hot-war defeat and military occupation.

It took France and the United Kingdom decades to relinquish their own senses of exceptionalism and global responsibility, and some would argue that their elites have still not fully done so. But even they have high GDPs, top-rated universities, financial power, and global languages. Russia has none of that. It does possess a permanent veto in the UN Security Council, as well as one of the world's two foremost doomsday arsenals and world-class cyberwarfare capabilities. These, plus its unique geography, do give it a kind of global reach. And yet, Russia is living proof that hard power is brittle without the other dimensions of great-power status. However much Russia might insist on being acknowledged as an equal to the United States, the European Union, or even China, it is not, and it has no near- or medium-term prospect of becoming one.

#### **AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT**

What are Russia's concrete alternatives to a European-style restructuring and orientation? It has a very long history of being on the Pacific—and failing to become an Asian power. What it can claim is predominance in its region. There is no match for its [conventional military](#) among the other Soviet successor states, and the latter (with the exception of the Baltic states) are also economically dependent on Russia to various degrees. But regional military supremacy and economic leverage in Eurasia cannot underwrite enduring great-power status. Putin has failed to make the [Eurasian Economic Union](#) successful—but even if all potential members joined and worked together, their combined economic capabilities would still be relatively small.

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*Until Russia brings its aspirations into line with its actual capabilities, it cannot become a “normal” country.*

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Russia is a big market, and that can be attractive, but neighboring countries see risks as well as rewards in bilateral trade with the country. Estonia, Georgia, and Ukraine, for example, are generally willing to do business with Russia only provided they have an anchor in the West. Other states that are more economically dependent on Russia, such as Belarus and Kazakhstan, see risks in partnering with a country that not only lacks a model for sustained development but also, in the wake of its annexation of Crimea, might have territorial designs on them. A ballyhooed “strategic partnership” with China, meanwhile, has predictably produced little Chinese financing or investment to compensate for [Western sanctions](#). And all the while, China has openly and vigorously been building its own Greater Eurasia, from the South China Sea through inner Asia to Europe, at Russia’s expense and with its cooperation.

Today’s muscular Russia is actually in structural decline, and Putin’s actions have unwittingly yielded a Ukraine more ethnically homogeneous and more Western-oriented than ever before. Moscow has tense relations with nearly every one of its neighbors and even with its biggest trading partners, including most recently Turkey. Even Germany, Russia’s most important foreign policy counterpart and one of its most important economic partners, has had enough, backing sanctions at a cost to its own domestic situation.

“It looks like the so-called ‘winners’ of the Cold War are determined to have it all and reshape the world into a place that could better serve their interests alone,” Putin [lectured](#) the annual Valdai Discussion Club gathering in October 2014, following his Crimean annexation. But what poses an existential threat to Russia is not NATO or the West but

Russia's own regime. Putin helped rescue the Russian state but has put it back on a trajectory of stagnation and even possible failure. The president and his clique have repeatedly announced the dire necessity of prioritizing economic and human development, yet they shrink from the far-reaching internal restructuring necessary to make that happen, instead pouring resources into military modernization. What Russia really needs to compete effectively and secure a stable place in the international order is transparent, competent, and accountable government; a real civil service; a genuine parliament; a professional and impartial judiciary; free and professional media; and a vigorous, nonpolitical crackdown on corruption.

### **HOW TO AVOID BEARBAITING**

Russia's current leadership continues to make the country bear the burdens of a truculent and independent foreign policy that is beyond the country's means and has produced few positive results. The temporary high afforded by a cunning and ruthless [policy](#) in Syria's civil war should not obscure the severity of Russia's recurrent strategic bind—one in which weakness and grandeur combine to produce an autocrat who tries to leap forward by concentrating power, which results in a worsening of the very strategic dilemma he is supposed to be solving. What are the implications of this for Western policy? How should Washington manage relations with a nuclear- and cyber-armed country whose rulers seek to restore its lost dominance, albeit a lesser version; undercut European unity; and make the country "relevant," come what may?

In this context, it is useful to recognize that there has actually never been a period of sustained good relations between Russia and the United States. (Declassified documents reveal that even the World War II alliance was fraught with deeper distrust and greater cross-purposes than has generally been understood.) This has been due not to misunderstandings,

miscommunication, or hurt feelings but rather to divergent fundamental values and state interests, as each country has defined them. For Russia, the highest value is the state; for the United States, it is individual liberty, private property, and human rights, usually set out in opposition to the state. So expectations should be kept in check. Equally important, the United States should neither exaggerate the Russian threat nor underplay its own many advantages.

Russia today is not a revolutionary power threatening to overthrow the international order. Moscow operates within a familiar great-power school of international relations, one that prioritizes room for maneuver over morality and assumes the inevitability of conflict, the supremacy of hard power, and the cynicism of others' motives. In certain places and on certain issues, Russia has the ability to thwart U.S. interests, but it does not even remotely approach the scale of the threat posed by the Soviet Union, so there is no need to respond to it with a new Cold War.

The real challenge today boils down to Moscow's desire for Western recognition of a Russian sphere of influence in the former Soviet space (with the exception of the Baltic states). This is the price for reaching accommodation with Putin—something advocates of such accommodation do not always acknowledge frankly. It was the sticking point that prevented enduring cooperation after 9/11, and it remains a concession the West should never grant. Neither, however, is the West really able to protect the territorial integrity of the states inside Moscow's desired sphere of influence. And bluffing will not work. So what should be done?

*There has actually never been a period of sustained good relations between Russia and the United States.*

Some invoke George Kennan and call for a revival of

[containment](#), arguing that external pressure will keep Russia at bay until its authoritarian regime liberalizes or [collapses](#). And certainly, many of Kennan's insights remain pertinent, such as his emphasis in the "Long Telegram" that he dispatched from Moscow 70 years ago on the deep insecurity that drove Soviet behavior. Adopting his thinking now would entail maintaining or [intensifying sanctions](#) in response to Russian violations of international law, shoring up Western alliances politically, and upgrading NATO's military readiness. But a new containment could become a trap, re-elevating Russia to the status of rival superpower, Russia's quest for which has helped bring about the current confrontation.

Once again, patient resolve is the key. It is not clear how long Russia can play its weak hand in opposition to the United States and the EU, frightening its neighbors, alienating its most important trading partners, ravaging its own business climate, and hemorrhaging talent. At some point, feelers will be put out for some sort of rapprochement, just as sanctions fatigue will eventually kick in, creating the possibility for some sort of deal. That said, it is also possible that the present standoff might not end anytime soon, since Russia's pursuit of a Eurasian sphere of influence is a matter of national identity not readily susceptible to material cost-benefit calculations.

The trick will be to hold a firm line when necessary—such as refusing to recognize a privileged Russian sphere even when Moscow is able to enact one militarily—while offering negotiations only from a position of strength and avoiding stumbling into unnecessary and counterproductive confrontations on most other issues. Someday, Russia's leaders may come to terms with the glaring limits of standing up to the West and seeking to dominate Eurasia. Until then, Russia will remain not another necessary crusade to be won but a problem to be managed.

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STEPHEN KOTKIN is Professor of History and International Affairs at Princeton University and a Fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University.

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# Putin's Foreign Policy

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## The Quest to Restore Russia's Rightful Place

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*Fyodor Lukyanov*



DIMA TANIN / AFP / GETTY IMAGES

*Bad old days: during an attempted coup against Mikhail Gorbachev, August 1991.*

In February, Moscow and Washington issued a joint statement announcing the terms of a “cessation of hostilities” in [Syria](#)—a truce agreed to by major world powers, regional players, and most of the participants in the [Syrian civil war](#). Given the fierce mutual recriminations that have become typical of [U.S.-Russian relations](#) in recent years, the tone of the statement suggested a surprising degree of common cause. “The United States of America and the Russian Federation . . . [are] seeking to achieve a peaceful settlement of the Syrian crisis with full respect for the fundamental role

of the United Nations,” the statement began. It went on to declare that the two countries are “fully determined to provide their strongest support to end the Syrian conflict.”

What is even more surprising is that the truce has mostly held, according to the [UN](#), even though many experts predicted its rapid failure. Indeed, when Russia declared in March that it would [begin to pull out](#) most of the forces it had deployed to Syria since last fall, the Kremlin intended to signal its belief that the truce will hold even without a significant Russian military presence.

The cease-fire represents the second time that the Russians and the Americans have unexpectedly and successfully [cooperated in Syria](#), where the civil war has pitted Moscow (which acts as the primary protector and patron of [Syrian President Bashar al-Assad](#)) against Washington (which has called for an end to Assad’s rule). In 2013, Russia and the United States agreed on a plan to eliminate Syria’s chemical weapons, with the Assad regime’s assent. Few believed that arrangement would work either, but it did.

These moments of cooperation highlight the fact that, although the world order has changed beyond recognition during the past 25 years and is no longer defined by a rivalry between two competing superpowers, it remains the case that when an acute international crisis breaks out, Russia and the United States are often the only actors able to resolve it. Rising powers, international institutions, and regional organizations frequently cannot do anything—or don’t want to. What is more, despite Moscow’s and Washington’s expressions of hostility and contempt for each other, when it comes to shared interests and common threats, the two powers are still able to work reasonably well together.

And yet, it’s important to note that these types of constructive

interactions on discrete issues have not changed the overall relationship, which remains troubled. Even as it worked with Russia on the truce, the United States continued to enforce the sanctions it had placed on Russia in response to the 2014 [annexation of Crimea](#), and a high-level U.S. Treasury official recently accused Russian President [Vladimir Putin](#) of personal corruption.

The era of bipolar confrontation ended a long time ago. But the unipolar moment of U.S. dominance that began in 1991 is gone, too. A new, multipolar world has brought more uncertainty into international affairs. Both Russia and the United States are struggling to define their proper roles in the world. But one thing that each side feels certain about is that the other side has overstepped. The tension between them stems not merely from events in Syria and Ukraine but also from a continuing disagreement about what the collapse of the Soviet Union meant for the world order. For Americans and other Westerners, the legacy of the Soviet downfall is simple: the United States won the Cold War and has taken its rightful place as the world's sole superpower, whereas post-Soviet Russia has failed to integrate itself as a regional power in the Washington-led postwar liberal international order. Russians, of course, see things differently. In their view, Russia's subordinate position is the illegitimate result of a never-ending U.S. campaign to keep Russia down and prevent it from regaining its proper status.

In his annual address to the Russian legislature in 2005, Putin famously described the disappearance of the Soviet Union as a "[major geopolitical disaster](#)." That phrase accurately captures the sense of loss that many Russians associate with the post-Soviet era. But a less often noted line in that speech conveys the equally crucial belief that the West misinterpreted the end of the Cold War. "Many thought or seemed to think at the time that our young democracy was not a continuation of Russian statehood, but its ultimate

collapse,” Putin said. “They were mistaken.” In other words: the West thought that Russia would forever going forward play a fundamentally diminished role in the world. Putin and many other Russians begged to differ.

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*Russia is in the throes of an identity crisis.*

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In the wake of the 2014 Russian reclamation of Crimea and the launch of Russia’s direct military intervention in Syria last year, Western analysts have frequently derided Russia as a “revisionist” power that seeks to alter the agreed-on post-Cold War consensus. But in Moscow’s view, Russia has merely been responding to temporary revisions that the West itself has tried to make permanent. No genuine world order existed at the end of the twentieth century, and attempts to impose U.S. hegemony have slowly eroded the principles of the previous world order, which was based on the balance of power, respect for sovereignty, noninterference in other states’ internal affairs, and the need to obtain the UN Security Council’s approval before using military force.

By taking action in Ukraine and Syria, Russia has made clear its intention to restore its status as a major international player. What remains unclear is how long it will be able to maintain its recent gains.

### **NEW WORLD ORDER**

In January 1992, a month after the official dissolution of the Soviet Union, U.S. President George H. W. Bush announced in his State of the Union address: “[By the grace of God, America won the Cold War](#).” Bush put as fine a point as possible on it: “The Cold War didn’t ‘end’—it was won.”



MAXIM SHEMETOV / REUTERS

*People hold a giant Russian national flag to mark the second anniversary of Russia's annexation of the Crimea region, in Moscow, March 2016.*

Russian officials have never made so clear a statement about what, exactly, happened from their point of view. Their assessments have ranged from “we won” (the Russian people overcame a repressive communist system) to “we lost” (the Russians allowed a great country to collapse). But Russian leaders have all agreed on one thing: the “new world order” that emerged after 1991 was nothing like the one envisioned by Mikhail Gorbachev and other reform-minded Soviet leaders as a way to prevent the worst possible outcomes of the Cold War. Throughout the late 1980s, Gorbachev and his cohort believed that the best way out of the Cold War would be to agree on new rules for global governance. The end of the arms race, the reunification of Germany, and the adoption of the Charter of Paris for a New Europe aimed to reduce confrontation and forge a partnership between the rival blocs in the East and the West.

But the disintegration of the Soviet Union rendered that paradigm obsolete. A “new world order” no longer meant an arrangement between equals; it meant the triumph of Western principles and influence. And so in the 1990s, the Western powers started an ambitious experiment to bring a considerable part of the world over to what they considered “the right side of history.” The project began in Europe, where the transformations were mainly peaceful and led to the emergence and rapid expansion of the EU. But the U.S.-led 1990–91 Gulf War introduced a new dynamic: without the constraints of superpower rivalry, the Western powers seemed to feel emboldened to use direct military intervention to put pressure on states that resisted the new order, such as Saddam Hussein’s Iraq.

Soon thereafter, NATO expanded eastward, mainly by absorbing countries that had previously formed a buffer zone around Russia. For centuries, Russian security strategy has been built on defense: expanding the space around the core to avoid being caught off-guard. As a country of plains, Russia has experienced devastating invasions more than once; the Kremlin has long seen reinforcing “strategic depth” as the only way to guarantee its survival. But in the midst of economic collapse and political disorder in the immediate post-Soviet era, Russia could do little in response to EU consolidation and NATO expansion.

The West misinterpreted Russia’s inaction. As Ivan Krastev and Mark Leonard observed last year in these pages, Western powers “[mistook Moscow’s failure to block the post-Cold War order as support for it.](#)” Beginning in 1994, long before Putin appeared on the national political stage, Russian President Boris Yeltsin repeatedly expressed deep dissatisfaction with what he and many Russians saw as Western arrogance. Washington, however, viewed such criticism from Russia as little more than a reflexive expression of an outmoded imperial mentality, mostly intended for domestic

consumption.

From the Russian point of view, a critical turning point came when NATO intervened in the Kosovo war in 1999. Many Russians—even strong advocates of liberal reform—were appalled by NATO’s bombing raids against Serbia, a European country with close ties to Moscow, which were intended to force the Serbs to capitulate in their fight against Kosovar separatists. The success of that effort—which also led directly to the downfall of the Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic the following year—seemed to set a new precedent and provide a new template. Since 2001, NATO or its leading member states have initiated military operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya. All three campaigns led to various forms of regime change and, in the case of Iraq and Libya, the deterioration of the state.

In this sense, it is not only NATO’s expansion that has alarmed Russia but also NATO’s transformation. Western arguments that NATO is a purely defensive alliance ring hollow: it is now a fighting group, which it was not during the Cold War.

## **VICTORS AND SPOILS**

As the United States flexed its muscles and NATO became a more formidable organization, Russia found itself in a strange position. It was the successor to a superpower, with almost all of the Soviet Union’s formal attributes, but at the same time, it had to overcome a systemic decline while depending on the mercy (and financial support) of its former foes. For the first dozen or so years of the post-Soviet era, Western leaders assumed that Russia would respond to its predicament by becoming part of what can be referred to as “wider Europe”: a theoretical space that featured the EU and NATO at its core but that also incorporated countries that were not members of those organizations by encouraging them to voluntarily adopt the norms and regulations associated with membership.

In other words, Russia was offered a limited niche inside Europe's expanding architecture. Unlike Gorbachev's concept of a common European home where the Soviet Union would be a co-designer of a new world order, Moscow instead had to give up its global aspirations and agree to obey rules it had played no part in devising. European Commission President Romano Prodi expressed this formula best in 2002: Russia would share with the EU "everything but institutions." In plain terms, this meant that Russia would adopt EU rules and regulations but would not be able to influence their development.

For quite a while, Moscow essentially accepted this proposition, making only minimal efforts to expand its global role. But neither Russian elites nor ordinary Russians ever accepted the image of their country as a mere regional power. And the early years of the Putin era saw the recovery of the Russian economy—driven to a great extent by rising energy prices but also by Putin's success in reestablishing a functioning state—with a consequent increase in Russia's international influence. Suddenly, Russia was no longer a supplicant; it was a critical emerging market and an engine of global growth.

Meanwhile, it became difficult to accept the Western project of building a liberal order as a benign phenomenon when a series of so-called color revolutions in the former Soviet space, cheered on (at the very least) by Washington, undermined governments that had roots in the Soviet era and reasonably good relations with Moscow. In Russia's opinion, the United States and its allies had convinced themselves that they had the right, as moral and political victors, to change not only the world order but also the internal orders of individual countries however they saw fit. The concepts of "democracy promotion" and "transformational diplomacy" pursued by the George W. Bush administration conditioned interstate relations on altering any system of government that

did not match Washington's understanding of democracy.

### **THE IRON FIST**

In the immediate post-9/11 era, the United States was riding high. But in more recent years, the order designed by Washington and its allies in the 1990s has come under severe strain. The many U.S. failures in the Middle East, the 2008 global financial crisis and the subsequent recession, mounting economic and political crises in the EU, and the growing power of China made Russia even more reluctant to fit itself into the Western-led international system. What is more, although the West was experiencing growing difficulties steering its own course, it never lost its desire to expand—pressuring Ukraine, for example, to align itself more closely with the EU even as the union appeared to be on the brink of profound decay. The Russian leadership came to the conclusion that Western expansionism could be reversed only with an “iron fist,” as the Russian political scientist Sergey Karaganov put it in 2011.

The February 2014 ouster of Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich by pro-Western forces was, in a sense, the final straw for Russia. Moscow's operation in Crimea was a response to the EU's and NATO's persistent eastward expansion during the post-Cold War period. Moscow rejected the further extension of Western influence into the former Soviet space in the most decisive way possible—with the use of military force. Russians had always viewed Crimea as the most humiliating loss of all the territories left outside of Russia after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Crimea has long been a symbol of a post-Soviet unwillingness to fight for Russia's proper status. The return of the peninsula righted that perceived historical wrong, and Moscow's ongoing involvement in the crisis in Ukraine has made the already remote prospect of Ukrainian membership in NATO even more unlikely and has made it impossible to imagine Ukraine joining the EU anytime soon.

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*The Kremlin has concluded that in order to defend its interests close to Russia's borders, it must play globally.*

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The Kremlin has clearly concluded that in order to defend its interests close to Russia's borders, it must play globally. So having drawn a line in Ukraine, Russia decided that the next place to put down the iron fist would be Syria. The Syrian intervention was aimed not only at strengthening Assad's position but also at forcing the United States to deal with Moscow on a more equal footing. Putin's decision to begin pulling Russian forces out of Syria in March did not represent a reversal; rather, it was a sign of the strategy's success. Moscow had demonstrated its military prowess and changed the dynamics of the conflict but had avoided being tied down in a Syrian quagmire.

### **IDENTITY CRISIS**

There is no doubt that during the past few years, Moscow has achieved some successes in its quest to regain international stature. But it's difficult to say whether these gains will prove lasting. The Kremlin may have outmaneuvered its Western rivals in some ways during the crises in Ukraine and Syria, but it still faces the more difficult long-term challenge of finding a credible role in the new, multipolar environment. In recent years, Russia has shown considerable skill in exploiting the West's missteps, but Moscow's failure to develop a coherent economic strategy threatens the long-term sustainability of its newly restored status.



THOMAS PETER / REUTERS

*Members of the Kremlin-loyal youth organisation "Young Russia" hold up bricks during an anti-NATO protest in front of the U.S. embassy in Moscow, April 2009.*

As Moscow has struggled to remedy what it considers to be the unfair outcome of the Cold War, the world has changed dramatically. Relations between Russia and the United States no longer top the international agenda, as they did 30 years ago. Russia's attitude toward the European project is not as important as it was in the past. The EU will likely go through painful transformations in the years to come, but mostly not on account of any actions Moscow does or does not take.

Russia has also seen its influence wane on its southern frontier. Historically, Moscow has viewed Central Asia as a chessboard and has seen itself as one of the players in the Great Game for influence. But in recent years, the game has changed. China has poured massive amounts of money into its Silk Road Economic Belt infrastructure project and is emerging as the biggest player in the region. This presents

both a challenge and an opportunity for Moscow, but more than anything, it serves as a reminder that Russia has yet to find its place in what the Kremlin refers to as “wider Eurasia.”

Simply put, when it comes to its role in the world, Russia is in the throes of an identity crisis. It has neither fully integrated into the liberal order nor built its own viable alternative. That explains why the Kremlin has in some ways adopted the Soviet model—eschewing the communist ideology, of course, but embracing a direct challenge to the West, not only in Russia’s core security areas but far afield, as well. To accompany this shift, the Russian leadership has encouraged the idea that the Soviet disintegration was merely the first step in a long Western campaign to achieve total dominance, which went on to encompass the military interventions in Yugoslavia, Iraq, and Libya and the color revolutions in post-Soviet countries—and which will perhaps culminate in a future attempt to pursue regime change in Russia itself. This deep-rooted view is based on the conviction that the West not only seeks to continue geopolitical expansion in its classical form but also wants to make everyone do things its way, by persuasion and example when possible, but by force when necessary.

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*Without a much stronger economic base, the gap between Russian ambitions and Russian capacities will grow.*

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Even if one accepts that view of Western intentions, however, there is not much Moscow can do to counter the trend by military means only. Influence in the globalized world is increasingly determined by economic strength, of which Russia has little, especially now that energy prices are falling. Economic weakness can be cloaked by military power or skillful diplomacy, but only for a short time.

## **ANGRY, OR FOCUSING?**

Putin and most of those who are running the country today believe that the Soviet collapse was hastened by perestroika, the political reform initiated by Gorbachev in the late 1980s. They dread a recurrence of the instability that accompanied that reform and perceive as a threat anything and anyone that might make it harder to govern. But the Kremlin would do well to recall one of the most important lessons of perestroika. Gorbachev had ambitious plans to create a profoundly different relationship with the West and the rest of the world. This agenda, which the Kremlin dubbed “new political thinking,” was initially quite popular domestically and was well received abroad as well. But as Gorbachev struggled and ultimately failed to restart the Soviet economy, “new political thinking” came to be seen as an effort to compensate for—or distract attention from—rapid socioeconomic decline by concentrating on foreign policy. That strategy didn’t work then, and it’s not likely to work now.

It’s doubtful that the Kremlin will make any significant moves on the Russian economy before 2018, when the next presidential election will take place, in order to avoid any problems that could complicate Putin’s expected reelection. Russia’s economy is struggling but hardly in free fall; the country should be able to muddle through for another two years. But the economic agenda will inevitably rise to the fore after the election, because at that point, the existing model will be close to exhausted.

Turbulence will almost certainly continue to roil the international system after the 2018 election, of course, so the Kremlin might still find opportunities to intensify Russia’s activity on the world stage. But without a much stronger economic base, the gap between Russian ambitions and Russian capacities will grow. That could inspire a sharper focus on domestic needs—but it could also provoke even more

risky gambling abroad.

“Russia is not angry; it is focusing.” So goes a frequently repeated Russian aphorism, coined in 1856 by the foreign minister of the Russian empire, Alexander Gorchakov, after Russia had lowered its international profile in the wake of its defeat in the Crimean War. The situation today is in some ways the opposite: Russia has regained Crimea, has enhanced its international status, and feels confident when it comes to foreign affairs. But the need to focus is no less urgent—this time on economic development. Merely getting angry will accomplish little.

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FYODOR LUKYANOV is Editor in Chief of *Russia in Global Affairs*, Chair of the Presidium of the Council on Foreign and Defense Policy, and a Research Professor at the National Research University Higher School of Economics, in Moscow.

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# The Revival of the Russian Military

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## How Moscow Reloaded

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*Dmitri Trenin*



MAXIM SHEMETOV / REUTERS

*Russian President Vladimir Putin at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Moscow, June 2012.*

After the [collapse of the Soviet Union](#), the Russian military rotted away. In one of the most dramatic campaigns of peacetime demilitarization in world history, from 1988 to 1994, Moscow's armed forces shrank from five million to one million personnel. As the Kremlin's defense expenditures plunged from around \$246 billion in 1988 to \$14 billion in 1994, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, the government withdrew some 700,000

servicemen from Afghanistan, Germany, Mongolia, and eastern Europe. So much had the prestige of the military profession evaporated during the 1990s that when the [nuclear submarine Kursk](#) sank in the Barents Sea in 2000, its captain was earning the equivalent of \$200 per month.

From 1991 to 2008, during the presidency of Boris Yeltsin and the first presidential term of [Vladimir Putin](#), Russia used its scaled-down military within the borders of the former Soviet Union, largely to contain, end, or freeze conflicts there. Over the course of the 1990s, Russian units intervened in ethnic conflicts in Georgia and Moldova and in the civil war in Tajikistan—all minor engagements. Even for the operation in Chechnya, where Yeltsin sent the Russian military in 1994 in an attempt to crush a separatist rebellion, the Russian General Staff was able to muster only 65,000 troops out of a force that had, in theory, a million men under arms.

*Russia is back as a serious military force in Eurasia.*

Beyond the borders of the former Soviet Union, Russia acted meekly. It sought a partnership with the United States and at times cooperated with NATO, joining the peacekeeping operation led by that alliance in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1996. To be sure, after realizing in the mid-1990s that NATO membership was off the table, Moscow protested vehemently against the alliance's eastern expansion, its 1999 bombing campaign in Yugoslavia, and the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq, but Russia was too weak to block any of these moves. The Kremlin's top priority for military development remained its nuclear deterrent, which it considered the ultimate guarantor of Russia's security and sovereignty.

Those days of decay and docility are now gone. Beginning in 2008, Putin ushered in [military reforms](#) and a massive increase in defense spending to upgrade Russia's creaky

military. Thanks to that project, Russia has recently evinced a newfound willingness to use force to get what it wants. First, in February 2014, Moscow sent soldiers in unmarked uniforms to wrest control of Crimea from Ukraine, implicitly threatening Kiev with a wider invasion. It then provided weaponry, intelligence, and command-and-control support to the pro-Russian separatists in Ukraine's Donbas region, checking Kiev's attempts to defeat them. And then, in the fall of 2015, Russia ordered its air and naval forces to bomb militants in Syria fighting President Bashar al-Assad, intervening directly in the Middle East for the first time in history.

These recent interventions are a far cry from the massive campaigns the Soviet Union used to undertake. But the fact is, Russia is once again capable of deterring any other great power, defending itself if necessary, and effectively projecting force along its periphery and beyond. After a quarter century of military weakness, Russia is back as a serious military force in Eurasia.

### **GEORGIA ON ITS MIND**

The story of [Russia's military modernization](#) begins with its 2008 war in Georgia. In August of that year, Russian forces routed troops loyal to the pro-Western president, Mikheil Saakashvili, and secured the breakaway republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as Russian protectorates. The five-day campaign was a clear success: Moscow prevented NATO from expanding into a former Soviet state that was flirting with membership, confirmed its strategic supremacy in its immediate southern and western neighborhood, and marked the limits of Western military involvement in the region. By increasing its military footprint in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Russia also bolstered its control of two strategically important areas in Transcaucasia—securing the approach to Sochi, the location of the Russian president's southern residence and Russia's informal third capital, in the former,

and placing Russian forces within striking distance of Tbilisi in the latter.

Yet for all these gains, Russia fought its brief war against Georgia with unreformed, bulky remnants of the Soviet military. Russian soldiers were forced to use outdated weaponry, and Russian officers, overseeing troops who were insufficiently prepared for combat, even had to give orders using civilian cell phones after their military radios failed. By the end of the conflict, Russia had lost five military aircraft, including a strategic bomber. Moscow won the war against a much weaker enemy, but the flaws in its own military were too glaring to ignore.

And so two months after its [war with Georgia](#), the Kremlin embarked on an ambitious program of defense modernization and military restructuring. These efforts, which Russian officials have projected will cost some \$700 billion by 2020, are intended to transform the Russian military from a massive standing force designed for global great-power war into a lighter, more mobile force suited for local and regional conflicts. Moscow has pledged to streamline its command-and-control system, improve the combat readiness of its troops, and reform procurement. And in a radical break from a model that had been in place since the 1870s, Russia adopted a flexible force structure that will allow it to quickly deploy troops along the country's periphery without undertaking mass mobilization.

Russia's defense industry, meanwhile, began to provide this changing force with modern weapons systems and equipment. In 2009, after a hiatus of about two decades, during which the Kremlin cut off funding for all but company- or battalion-level exercises, Russian forces began to undertake large-scale military exercises, often without prior warning, to improve their combat readiness. Perhaps most important, Russian soldiers, sailors, and airmen came to be paid more or less

decently. By the time the Ukraine crisis broke out, Russia's military was far stronger than the disorganized and poorly equipped force that had lumbered into Georgia just five and a half years before.

## **EUROPE GOES BIPOLAR**

The Russian military executed the Crimea operation brilliantly, rapidly seizing the peninsula with minimal casualties. Blueprints for the takeover must have existed for years, at least since Ukraine expressed interest in joining NATO in 2008. But it took a reformed military, plus a remarkable degree of coordination among Russia's various services and agencies, to pull it off.

The operation in Crimea was not a shooting war, but actual fighting followed a few weeks later in the Donbas. Instead of ordering a massive cross-border invasion of eastern Ukraine, which Moscow had implicitly threatened and Kiev feared, the Putin government resorted to a tactic known in the West as "hybrid warfare": providing logistical and intelligence support for the pro-Russian separatists in the Donbas while undertaking military exercises near the Ukrainian border to keep Kiev off balance. Moscow did send active-duty Russian officers to eastern Ukraine, some of whom were ostensibly on leave. But the bulk of the Russian-provided manpower in the country was made up of volunteers, and regular Russian units operated there only intermittently.

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*The story of Russia's military modernization begins with its 2008 war in Georgia.*

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At the same time, Russia put NATO countries on notice: stay out of the conflict, or it may affect you, too. Russian warplanes—which in 2007 had resumed Cold War-era patrols around the world—skirted the borders of the United Kingdom, the United States, and several Scandinavian countries and got

close to Western planes over the Baltic and Black Seas. Putin later admitted on Russian television that he had even considered putting Russia's nuclear forces on high alert to defend its interests in Ukraine.

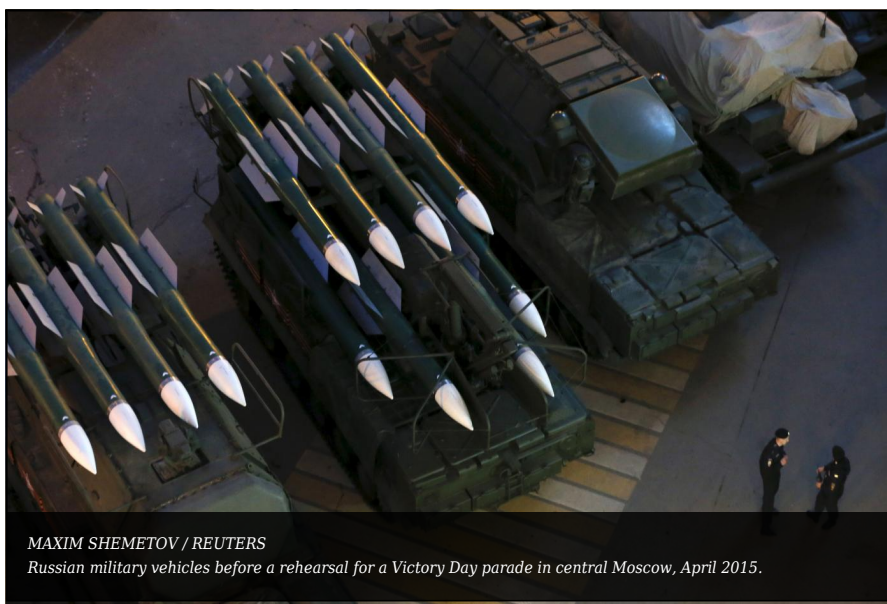
Russia benefited from its Ukraine campaign in several ways. The gambit allowed Moscow to incorporate Crimea, and it kept Kiev fearful of a full-scale invasion, which made the new Ukrainian leadership abandon the idea of using all of the country's available forces to suppress the separatist rebellion in the Donbas. It also directly challenged U.S. dominance in the region, terrifying some of Russia's neighbors, especially the Baltic states, which feared that Moscow might pull off similar operations in support of their own minority Russian populations. By provoking even deeper hostility toward Russia not only among Ukraine's elites but also among its broader population, however, Russia's military actions in Ukraine have also had a major downside.

Moscow's use of force to change borders and annex territory did not so much mark the reappearance of realpolitik in Europe—the Balkans and the Caucasus saw that strategic logic in spades in the 1990s and the early years of this century—as indicate Russia's willingness and capacity to compete militarily with NATO. The year 2014 was when European security again became bipolar.

### **PUTIN BREAKS THE MOLD**

For all its novelties, the [Russian offensive in Ukraine](#) did not end Moscow's tendency to project force only within the borders of the former Soviet Union. Russia broke that trend last year, when it dove into Syria's civil war. It dispatched several dozen aircraft to Syria to strike the self-proclaimed Islamic State (also known as ISIS) and other anti-Assad forces, established advanced air defense systems within Syria, sent strategic bombers on sorties over the country from bases in central Russia, and ordered the Russian navy to fire

missiles at Syrian targets from positions in the Caspian and Mediterranean Seas. By doing so, Russia undermined the de facto monopoly on the global use of force that the United States has held since the collapse of the Soviet Union.



Moscow's immediate military objective in Syria has been to prevent the defeat of Assad's army and a subsequent takeover of Damascus by ISIS, a goal it has sought to achieve primarily through the empowerment of Syrian government forces and their Hezbollah and Iranian allies. Its political objective, meanwhile, has been to engineer a peace settlement that protects Russian interests in the country and the wider region—above all, by ensuring that Syria's postwar, post-Assad government remains friendly to Russia; that Moscow is able to retain a military presence in Syria; and that Russia's wartime partnerships with Iran, Iraq, and Kurdish forces produce lasting political and economic ties.

Even more important, Putin seeks to confirm Russia's status as a great power, in part by working alongside the United States as a main cosponsor of a diplomatic process to end the

war and as a guarantor of the ensuing settlement. Putin's historic mission, as he sees it, is to keep Russia in one piece and return it to its rightful place among the world's powers; Russia's intervention in Syria has demonstrated the importance of military force in reaching that goal. By acting boldly despite its limited resources, Russia has helped shift the strategic balance in Syria and staged a spectacular comeback in a region where its relevance was written off 25 years ago.

The operation in Syria has had its disadvantages for Moscow. In November 2015, a Turkish fighter jet downed a Russian bomber near the Syrian-Turkish border, the first such incident between Russia and a NATO country in more than half a century. Russia refrained from military retaliation, but its relations with Turkey, a major economic partner, suffered a crushing blow when Moscow imposed sanctions that could cost the Turkish economy billions of dollars. By siding with the Shiite regimes in Iran, Iraq, and Syria, Russia could also alienate its own population of some 16 million Muslims, most of whom are Sunni. Faced with this risk, Moscow has attempted to improve ties with some of the Middle East's Sunni players, such as Egypt; it has also wagered that keeping Assad's military afloat will ensure that the thousands of Russian and Central Asian jihadists fighting for ISIS in Iraq and Syria will never return to stir up trouble at home. Thus, Moscow's war in support of Assad and against ISIS has also been an effort to kill individuals who might threaten Russia's own stability.

### **NOT IN MY BACKYARD**

Where will the Russian military go next? Moscow is looking to the Arctic, where the hastening retreat of sea ice is exposing rich energy deposits and making commercial navigation more viable. The Arctic littoral countries, all of which are NATO members except for Russia, are competing for access to resources there; Russia, for its part, hopes to extend its

exclusive economic zone in the Arctic Ocean so that it can lay claim to valuable mineral deposits and protect the Northern Sea Route, a passage for maritime traffic between Europe and Asia that winds along the Siberian coast. To bolster its position in the High North, Russia is reactivating some of the military bases there that were abandoned after the collapse of the Soviet Union. It is also building six new military installations in the region. Tensions in the Arctic remain mild, but that could change if there is a major standoff between NATO and Russia elsewhere or if Finland and Sweden, the two historically neutral Nordic countries, apply for [NATO membership](#).

*In the coming years, Russia's military will continue to focus on the country's vast neighborhood in greater Eurasia.*

More likely, Russia will take military action near its southern border, particularly if ISIS, which has established a [foothold in Afghanistan](#), manages to expand into the Central Asian states, all of which are relatively fragile. The countries with the region's largest economies, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, will soon face leadership transitions as their septuagenarian presidents step down or die. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, where Russia keeps small army and air force garrisons, will not prove stable in the long term; like Turkmenistan, they are home to high unemployment, official corruption, ethnic tension, and religious radicalism—the same sort of problems that triggered the Arab Spring.

The memory of the Soviet quagmire in Afghanistan is still too fresh for the Kremlin to seriously contemplate invading the country again to put down ISIS there; instead, it will continue to support the Afghan government and the Taliban's efforts to take on the group. But that is not the case in Central Asia, which Russia considers a vital security buffer. If the

government of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, or Tajikistan faces a major challenge from Islamist extremists, Russia will likely intervene politically and militarily, perhaps under the mandate of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, an alliance to which all four states belong.

In the coming years, then, Russia's military will continue to focus on the country's vast neighborhood in greater Eurasia, where Moscow believes using force constitutes strategic defense. If Russia's venture in Syria fails to achieve Moscow's political objectives there, or if Russia's economy significantly deteriorates, that instance of intervention beyond the country's near abroad may prove to be an exception. If not, Russia might learn to efficiently use its military force around the world, backing up its claim to be one of the world's great powers, alongside China and the United States.

### **A NEW STANDOFF?**

Even as Moscow has reformed its military to deal with new threats, Russian defense planning has remained consistently focused on the United States and NATO, which the Kremlin still considers its primary challenges. Russia's National Security Strategy for 2016 describes U.S. policy toward Russia as containment; it also makes clear that Russia considers the buildup of NATO's military capabilities a threat, as it does the development of U.S. ballistic missile defenses and the Pentagon's ongoing project to gain the ability to strike anywhere on earth with conventional weapons within an hour. To counter these moves, Russia is modernizing its nuclear arsenal and its own air and missile defenses. Moscow is also revising the deployment pattern of its forces, particularly along Russia's western border, and it will likely deepen its military footprint in the Baltic exclave of Kaliningrad. Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland are safe, however, even if [they do not feel that way](#): the Kremlin has no interest in risking nuclear war by attacking a NATO member state, and the sphere of Russian control to which Putin

aspires certainly excludes these countries.

At the same time that Russia is rebuilding its military, NATO is ramping up its own military presence in eastern Europe. The result will likely be a new and open-ended military standoff. Unlike during the Cold War, however, there is little prospect for arms control agreements between Russia and the West anytime soon because of the many disparities in their conventional military capabilities. Indeed, the Russian armed forces are unlikely to become as powerful as the U.S. military or threaten a NATO member state with a massive invasion even in the long term. Although Moscow seeks to remain a major player on the international stage, Russian leaders have abandoned Soviet-era ambitions of global domination and retain bad memories of the Cold War-era arms race, which fatally weakened the Soviet Union.

What is more, Russia's resources are far more limited than those of the United States: its struggling economy is nowhere near the size of the U.S. economy, and its aging population is less than half as large as the U.S. population. The Russian defense industry, having barely survived two decades of neglect and decay, faces a shrinking work force, weaknesses in key areas such as electronics, and the loss of traditional suppliers such as Ukraine. Although Russia's military expenditures equaled 4.2 percent of GDP in 2015, the country cannot bear such high costs much longer without cutting back on essential domestic needs, particularly in the absence of robust economic growth. For now, even under the constraints of low energy prices and Western sanctions, Russian officials have pledged to continue the military modernization, albeit at a slightly slower pace than was originally planned.

Putin and other Russian officials understand that Russia's future, and their own, depends mostly on how ordinary citizens feel. Just as the annexation of Crimea was an exercise in historic justice for most of the Russian public, high defense

spending will be popular so long as Russian citizens believe that it is warranted by their country's international position. So far, that seems to be the case. The modernization program could become a problem, however, if it demands major cuts to social spending and produces a sharp drop in living standards. The Russian people are famously resilient, but unless the Kremlin finds a way to rebuild the economy and provide better governance in the next four or five years, the social contract at the foundation of the country's political system could unravel. Public sentiment is not a trivial matter in this respect: Russia is an autocracy, but it is an autocracy with the consent of the governed.

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DMITRI TRENIN is Director of the Carnegie Moscow Center. Follow him on Twitter [@DmitriTrenin](https://twitter.com/DmitriTrenin).

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# Why Putin Took Crimea

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## The Gambler in the Kremlin

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*Daniel Treisman*



DAVID MDZINARISHVILI

*Nothing to see here: a Russian serviceman in Crimea, March 2014.*

Russian President Vladimir Putin's [seizure of the Crimean Peninsula](#) from Ukraine in early 2014 was the most consequential decision of his 16 years in power. By annexing a neighboring country's territory by force, Putin overturned in a single stroke the assumptions on which the [post-Cold War European order](#) had rested.

The question of why Putin took this step is of more than historical interest. Understanding his motives for occupying

and annexing Crimea is crucial to assessing whether he will make similar choices in the future—for example, sending troops to “liberate” ethnic Russians in the Baltic states—just as it is key to determining what measures the West might take to deter such actions.

Three plausible interpretations of Putin’s move have emerged. The first—call it “Putin as defender”—is that the Crimean operation was a response to the [threat of NATO’s further expansion](#) along Russia’s western border. By this logic, Putin seized the peninsula to prevent two dangerous possibilities: first, that Ukraine’s new government might join NATO, and second, that Kiev might evict Russia’s Black Sea Fleet from its long-standing base in Sevastopol.

A second interpretation—call it “[Putin as imperialist](#)”—casts the annexation of Crimea as part of a Russian project to gradually recapture the former territories of the Soviet Union. Putin never accepted the loss of Russian prestige that followed the end of the Cold War, this argument suggests, and he is determined to restore it, in part by expanding Russia’s borders.

A third explanation—“Putin as improviser”—rejects such broader designs and presents the annexation as a hastily conceived response to the unforeseen fall of Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich. The occupation and annexation of Crimea, in this view, was an impulsive decision that Putin stumbled into rather than the careful move of a strategist with geopolitical ambitions.

Over the past two years, Putin has appeared to lend support to all three interpretations. He has suggested that Ukraine’s accession to NATO would have been intolerable and has also claimed that Crimea’s history had made the region “an inseparable part of Russia,” “plundered” from the country after the Soviet Union’s disintegration. Yet Putin also told me,

at a reception in Sochi in October 2015, that the operation to seize the peninsula was “spontaneous” and was “not at all” planned long in advance. (Putin’s other explanations for the intervention—that he ordered it to protect Crimea’s Russian population from Ukrainian nationalists and to respect Crimeans’ right to self-determination—should be taken less seriously, since the nationalist threat in Crimea was largely invented and since Putin had shown little interest in self-determination for the peninsula for most of his previous 14 years in power.)

So what was the annexation—a reaction to NATO’s expansion, an act of imperial aggression, or an impromptu response to an unexpected crisis? The truth might involve elements of more than one theory, and some of the details remain unknown. Nevertheless, information that has surfaced over the past two years and insights from recent interviews in Moscow suggest some important conclusions: Putin’s seizure of Crimea appears to have been an improvised gambit, developed under pressure, that was triggered by the fear of losing Russia’s strategically important naval base in Sevastopol.

NATO’s enlargement remains a sore point for Russian leaders, and some in the Kremlin certainly dream of restoring Russia’s lost grandeur. Yet the chaotic manner in which the operation in Crimea unfolded belies any concerted plan for territorial revanche. Although this might at first seem reassuring, it in fact presents a formidable challenge to Western officials: in Putin, they must confront a leader who is increasingly prone to risky gambles and to grabbing short-run tactical advantages with little apparent concern for long-term strategy.



## NATO NYET!

Consider first the notion that Putin ordered the seizure of Crimea to prevent Russia's military encirclement by NATO. It is clear that enlarging NATO without making more than token attempts to integrate Russia helped poison the relationship between Moscow and the West over the past two decades, just as it is well known that Russia's leaders are determined to prevent Ukraine from becoming a NATO member. But that does not mean that resisting NATO's expansion was what motivated Putin in this case.

The biggest problem with the theory that Putin seized Crimea to stop Ukraine from joining NATO is that Ukraine was not heading toward [NATO membership](#) when Putin struck. In 2010, in large part to improve relations with Russia, the Yanukovych government had passed a law barring Ukraine from participation in any military bloc. In subsequent years, Kiev settled instead for partnership with the alliance, participating in some of its military exercises and contributing a ship to NATO antipiracy operations—an outcome that Russia seemed to accept. Indeed, when Putin, justifying the

intervention in March 2014, claimed that he had “heard declarations from Kiev about Ukraine soon joining NATO,” he excluded an important detail: all the recent public statements to that effect by Ukrainian politicians had come only after Russian troops had already appeared in Crimea.

Even if Ukrainian officials had wanted to join NATO after Yanukovych’s ouster, the alliance was not about to let the country in. Putin had already won that battle at a NATO summit in 2008, when the alliance had chosen not to move forward on Ukrainian or Georgian membership. British, French, and German officials had argued that the two countries remained too unstable to be put on a path to joining the alliance and that doing so would also unnecessarily antagonize Moscow. Although NATO did not rule out Ukraine’s eventual accession, German Chancellor Angela Merkel remained opposed to practical steps in that direction, and U.S. President Barack Obama, unlike his predecessor, George W. Bush, took no action to advance Kiev’s membership. What is more, in October 2013, just months before Russia’s annexation of Crimea, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, NATO’s secretary-general, announced unequivocally that Ukraine would not join the alliance in 2014. There was little reason to expect that to change anytime soon.

*Putin’s seizure of Crimea appears to have been an improvised gambit, developed under pressure.*

Of course, Putin might have believed otherwise. If that were the case, however, he would probably have raised the issue with Western leaders. He seems not to have done so, at least not with Obama, according to Michael McFaul, who served as the president’s special assistant on Russia from 2009 to 2012 and as the U.S. ambassador in Moscow from 2012 to early 2014. During that period, McFaul was present for all but one

of the meetings between Obama and Putin or Dmitry Medvedev, who served as Russia's president from 2008 to 2012; while he was serving in Washington, McFaul also listened in on all the phone conversations Obama had with either Russian leader. In a speech last year, McFaul said he couldn't "recall once that the issue of NATO expansion came up" during any of those exchanges.

If Putin's goal was to prevent Russia's military encirclement, his aggression in Ukraine has been a tremendous failure, since it has produced exactly the opposite outcome. Largely to deter what it perceives as an increased Russian threat, NATO has deepened its presence in eastern Europe since Moscow's intervention, creating a rapid-reaction force of 4,000 troops that will rotate among Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Romania and stationing four warships in the Black Sea. In February, the White House revealed plans to more than quadruple U.S. military spending in Europe.

Last January, I asked a source close to Oleg Belaventsev, the commander of Russia's military operation in Crimea, if Russian officials had been worried about Ukraine joining NATO in the months preceding the intervention. "They weren't afraid of Ukraine joining NATO," the source replied. "But they were definitely worried that the Ukrainians would cancel the [Russian] lease on [the naval base in] Sevastopol and kick out the Black Sea Fleet."

This seems plausible, since the Black Sea Fleet is crucial to Russia's ability to project force into the Black and Mediterranean Seas and since many of Ukraine's opposition leaders had criticized Yanukovich for extending Moscow's lease on the base. Yet if securing the base was Putin's main concern, as seems likely, the puzzle is why he chose such a risky strategy. With a contingent of around 20,000 well-armed troops in Crimea and a mostly pro-Russian population on the peninsula, it would have been difficult for Ukraine to evict

Russia from Sevastopol, and in the past, Moscow had always found ways to protect its interests in the region without using force. Annexing the territory—at the cost of international isolation, economic sanctions, the reinvigoration of NATO, and the alienation of most of the Ukrainian population—seems like an extreme reaction to a manageable threat. Before the operation in Crimea, Putin's decisions could generally be rationalized in terms of costs and benefits, but since then, his foreign policy calculus has been harder to decipher.

### **IMPERIAL DELUSIONS?**

For those who see Putin as an imperialist, Russia's moves in Crimea are easy to explain. After all, Putin has notoriously characterized the collapse of the Soviet Union as "the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century," has claimed that "Ukraine is not even a state," and has a history of meddling in countries on Russia's periphery. In 2008, the same year that Russian tanks rolled into Georgia to protect the separatist enclaves of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Russian officials were reportedly distributing Russian passports to Crimean residents, creating an apparent pretext for an invasion in their defense.

Other, more specific signs also seem to show that Moscow was preparing to seize Crimea in the six months before Yanukovych's fall. Vladislav Surkov, a senior Putin adviser, repeatedly visited Kiev and Simferopol, the Crimean capital, in the fall and winter of 2013-14, in part to promote the construction of a bridge across the Kerch Strait to connect southern Russia and Crimea—an essential transportation link in case of annexation. Around the same time, teams of Russian police and secret service officers were seen in Kiev.

Meanwhile, Vladimir Konstantinov, the chair of the Crimean parliament, was making frequent trips to Moscow. On one such visit, in December 2013, according to the Russian journalist Mikhail Zygar, he met with Nikolai Patrushev, the

secretary of Russia's Security Council and the Kremlin's top security official. According to Zygar's report, Patrushev was "pleasantly surprised" to learn from Konstantinov that Crimea would be ready to "go to Russia" if Yanukovych were overthrown. Just before Russia's intervention, Konstantinov was back in Moscow, meeting with senior officials.



SERGEI ILNITSKY / POOL / REUTERS

*Russian President Vladimir Putin, Crimean Prime Minister Sergei Aksyonov, Vladimir Konstantinov, and Sevastopol Mayor Alexei Chaliy at a treaty-signing ceremony in Moscow, March 2014.*

Other evidence also suggests a long-standing Russian plot to acquire the peninsula. In February 2014, according to the newspaper *Novaya Gazeta*, a memo circulated in Russia's executive branch proposing the annexation of Crimea and other parts of eastern Ukraine if Yanukovych fell. With Yanukovych gone, the memo suggested, Ukraine would split into western and eastern parts, and the EU would swallow up the west. Moscow would need to quickly promote

referendums on the issue of Russian annexation in the pro-Russian regions in the country's east.

Yet on closer examination, the theory that Putin had long intended to take Crimea doesn't quite hold up. Consider Surkov's frequent trips to the peninsula. What the Putin adviser discussed with local leaders on these visits remains unknown. If Surkov was preparing for the region's annexation, however, Putin's next move seems bizarre. Instead of sending Surkov to Simferopol to oversee Russia's intervention, Putin took him off the case in late February; Surkov apparently spent most of March in Moscow, with enough free time to attend a gallery opening and even take a vacation in Sweden with his wife. Zygarsky has suggested that Surkov's real assignment in Ukraine had been not to prepare for the annexation of Crimea but to keep Yanukovich in power—a task at which he failed, much to Putin's displeasure. As for the police and secret service teams seen around Kiev, their role was likely to advise Yanukovich's staff on how to crush antigovernment protests in the capital; had they been planning for an operation in Crimea, they would have been sent there instead.

Indeed, many details that at first seem to indicate careful Russian preparation actually point to the absence of any long-held plan. For example, if Moscow had really been scheming to annex Crimea, it would not have merely discussed a bridge over the Kerch Strait with Ukrainian officials; it would have built one. Instead, the negotiations had crept along for more than ten years, and between 2010, when Yanukovich and Medvedev agreed to build the bridge, and 2014, Russia did not even manage to complete a feasibility study for the project.

*If Moscow had really been scheming to annex Crimea, it would not have merely discussed a bridge over the*

*Kerch Strait; it would have built one.*

That a document as speculative as the pro-annexation memo revealed by Novaya Gazeta was circulating less than a month before the operation, meanwhile, suggests that Putin had not adopted a concrete plan by February 2014. And why was Patrushev, a senior official and reportedly one of the strongest backers of intervention in Ukraine, “surprised” to hear that the Crimean elite would approve of annexation? If the Kremlin had been contemplating an occupation, Patrushev would have seen intelligence reports to that effect by the time of his meeting with Konstantinov in December 2013.

In fact, until shortly before it happened, it appears that Putin did not expect Yanukovych to fall from power. If he had, he likely would have found some pretext to postpone the disbursement of a \$3 billion loan that Russia had promised the Yanukovych government in December 2013. He didn’t, of course, and Ukraine’s new government defaulted on the loan in December 2015. As the political consultant and former Kremlin official Aleksei Chesnakov told me, “It’s not Putin’s style to make such presents.”

## **WINGING IT**

The clearest evidence against a consistent plan for territorial expansion is the chaotic way in which the Crimean intervention unfolded. Although the military component of the operation ran smoothly, its political aspects at times revealed an almost farcical lack of preparation.

Putin has said that he first instructed aides to “start working on returning Crimea to Russia” on the morning of February 23, after Yanukovych fled Kiev. In fact, according to the source close to Belaventsev, the commander of the Crimean operation, Moscow put Russian special forces in the southern port city of Novorossiysk and at the Black Sea Fleet’s base in

Sevastopol on alert on February 18, as violence flared up between police and antigovernment protesters in Kiev. Two days later, on February 20, Russian troops received an order from Putin to blockade Ukrainian military installations in Crimea and prevent bloodshed between pro-Russian and pro-Kiev groups protesting on the peninsula. But they did not begin to do so until February 23, two days after [Yanukovych left Kiev](#). The earliest steps in the operation, in other words, appear to have been tentative: Putin could have called off the mission if the agreement that Yanukovych signed with opposition leaders and EU foreign ministers on February 21 to hold early elections had stuck.

Belaventsev arrived in Crimea on February 22, according to the source. A longtime aide to Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu, Belaventsev was unfamiliar with Crimea's political scene, and after consulting locals, he persuaded the incumbent prime minister, an unpopular Yanukovych appointee, to step down. To replace him, Belaventsev chose an elderly Communist, Leonid Grach, who had been known in Moscow since the Soviet era.

What Belaventsev didn't know was that Grach had alienated most of Crimea's power brokers over the years—an oversight that Konstantinov, the leader of the Crimean parliament, made clear to Belaventsev after he had already offered Grach the position. To his embarrassment, Belaventsev had to call Grach to rescind the offer of the premiership only a day after he had made it. To head the regional government, Belaventsev then turned to Sergei Aksyonov, a local pro-Russian businessman and former boxer known to locals by the underworld nickname "Goblin."

Even more surprising, in the days that followed, the Kremlin appeared not to know what it wanted to do with Crimea. On February 27, the region's parliament voted to hold a referendum on May 25 to ask residents whether they agreed

that Crimea was “a self-sufficient state and . . . is part of Ukraine on the basis of treaties and agreements”—in other words, whether they thought that the region should have greater autonomy but remain in Ukraine. A week after the beginning of the operation, Putin had not yet decided on annexation.

On March 1, Crimea’s parliament rescheduled the referendum from May 25 to March 30. Then, on March 6, the deputies advanced the date by another two weeks, and this time they rewrote the referendum question to ask whether residents supported the unification of Crimea with Russia instead of whether they supported autonomy within Ukraine.

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*If Putin’s goal was to prevent Russia’s military encirclement, his aggression in Ukraine has been a tremendous failure.*

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Why did Putin raise the referendum’s stakes from autonomy to annexation? One reason was pressure from pro-Russian Crimean leaders, including Konstantinov, who feared ending up in a semi-recognized statelet like [Abkhazia or South Ossetia](#), shunned by Ukraine and the West and too small to thrive economically. More important, having deployed Russian forces throughout the peninsula, Putin found himself trapped. To simply withdraw, allowing Ukrainian troops to retake Crimea and prosecute Moscow’s supporters there, would have made him look intolerably weak, and after the return of Ukrainian control, Kiev might well have canceled Russia’s lease on the naval base in Sevastopol. The only way Russia could have safely pulled out of Crimea would have been if the West had recognized an eventual vote for Crimean autonomy as legitimate and persuaded the Ukrainian government to respect it. Western leaders, outraged by Russia’s invasion, had made clear that they would do nothing of the sort.

For Moscow to back mere autonomy for the peninsula without Western support would have been dangerous, since Russia would have had to defend Crimea's pro-Russian government against any attempt by Kiev to use the 22,000 Ukrainian troops stationed there to restore order. If, by contrast, Russia had chosen to expel the Ukrainian forces and defend the region against a counteroffensive, it would have aroused nearly as much hostility in the West as it would if it took control of the territory outright. By March 4, unable to find a viable exit strategy, the Kremlin had decided on annexation.

### **ON S'ENGAGE, ET PUIS . . .**

All this improvisation makes it hard to see Russia's intervention in Crimea as part of a systematic expansionist project. Any halfway competent imperialist would have known whom to appoint as the local satrap after the invasion and would already have chosen whether to offer residents a referendum on autonomy or annexation. And a resolute revanchist would have made sure to build a bridge to the target territory, rather than squandering ten years in fruitless discussions.

This is not to say there are not factions in the Kremlin with imperial appetites. Putin himself may share such impulses. It is likewise true that Russia's leaders detest NATO's enlargement and exploit it as a rhetorical rallying point. Yet such appetites and concerns had not jelled into any coherent plan for an invasion of Crimea. Until shortly before Putin's commandos struck, the Kremlin had been preoccupied with [events in Kiev](#).

If Putin's main concern was Moscow's hold on Sevastopol, this suggests several important points. First, the disastrous turn in relations between Russia and the West over the past two years might have been avoided had Ukrainian officials, as well as opposition leaders and their Western backers, consistently promised to respect the agreement that extended

Russia's lease on the base until the 2040s. To be sure, this agreement was highly unpopular in Ukraine. But had Ukrainians known that the alternative would be the loss of Crimea and a bloody war in the country's east, they might have settled for the indignity of hosting a foreign power's forces.

Next, it suggests that Putin has become willing in recent years to take major strategic risks to counter seemingly limited and manageable threats to Russian interests. By deploying special forces in Crimea without planning for the region's political future, Putin showed that he is not just an improviser but also a gambler. Indeed, encouraged by the high domestic approval ratings his venture secured, Putin has continued to roll the dice, supporting the pro-Russian separatists in Donetsk and Luhansk, bombing antigovernment rebels in Syria, and escalating a confrontation with Turkey over the downing of a Russian warplane in November.

The importance of Sevastopol in the case of Russia's intervention in Crimea demonstrates the need to accurately identify Russia's key strategic assets, as seen by Putin, if the West is to anticipate his moves in future crises. The Baltic states contain no Russian bases that might invite a similar intervention. In Syria, the [port of Tartus](#)—Russia's only naval outpost in the Mediterranean—is probably too small and poorly equipped to matter much, although the Russian military might have plans to expand it. A greater threat could arise were Turkey to attempt to close the Turkish Straits, which connect the Black and Mediterranean Seas, to Russian ships. Under the 1936 Montreux Convention, Turkey has the right to deny passage through these straits to military vessels from countries with which it is at war or in imminent danger of conflict. Were Ankara to take this step, it would make it much harder for Russia to provide naval support to military operations in the Mediterranean and the Middle East, such as its recent intervention in Syria, and that might provoke a

furious and possibly disproportionate Russian response. That both Putin and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan need to appear strong internationally for domestic political reasons renders the antagonism between them alarming, so Western leaders should make clear to Ankara that they would not support closing the straits if [Russian-Turkish tensions](#) rose further.

Putin's recent penchant for high-stakes wagers may prove even harder for Western leaders to handle than a policy of consistent expansionism. A rational imperialist can be contained, but the appropriate response to a gambler who makes snap decisions based on short-term factors is less clear. In both Crimea and Syria, Putin has sought to exploit surprise, moving fast to change facts on the ground before the West could stop him. By reacting boldly to crises, he creates new ones for Russia and the world.

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DANIEL TREISMAN is Professor of Political Science at the University of California, Los Angeles, and Director of the Russia Political Insight project. Follow him on Twitter [@dstreisman](#).

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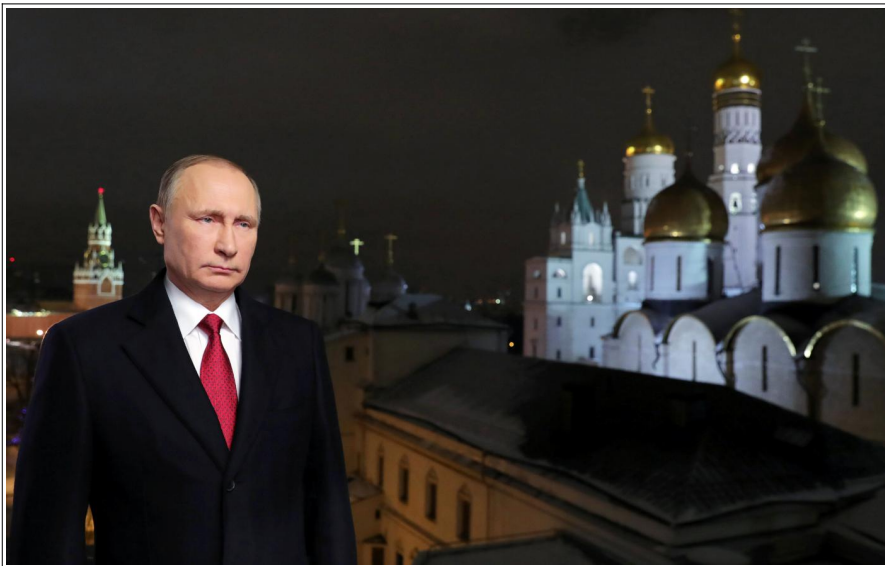
# Trump and Russia

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## The Right Way to Manage Relations

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*Eugene B. Rumer, Richard Sokolsky, and  
Andrew S. Weiss*



SPUTNIK PHOTO AGENCY / REUTERS

*Ally or adversary? Putin delivering his New Year's address in Moscow, December 31, 2016*

Relations between the United States and Russia are broken, and each side has a vastly different assessment of what went wrong. U.S. officials point to the Kremlin's [annexation of Crimea](#) and the bloody [covert war](#) Russian forces are waging in eastern Ukraine. They note the Kremlin's suppression of civil society at home, its reckless brandishing of nuclear weapons, and its military provocations toward U.S. allies and

partners in Europe. They highlight Russia's [military intervention](#) in Syria aimed at propping up Bashar al-Assad's brutal dictatorship. And they call attention to an unprecedented [attempt](#) through a Kremlin-backed hacking and disinformation campaign to interfere with the U.S. presidential election last November.

Russian President Vladimir Putin and his circle [view things differently](#). In Ukraine, Moscow sees itself as merely [pushing back](#) against the relentless geopolitical expansion of the United States, NATO, and the EU. They point out that Washington and its allies have deployed troops right up to the Russian border. They claim that the United States has repeatedly intervened in Russian domestic politics and contend, falsely, that former U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton even incited antigovernment protests in Moscow in December 2011. And they maintain that the United States is meddling in Syria to overthrow a legitimate government, in just the latest example of its unilateral attempts to topple regimes it doesn't like.

The gap between these two narratives is dangerous. Not only do heightened tensions raise the risk of a military accident or confrontation in Europe and beyond; they are also largely a reflection of deeply entrenched resentments within the Russian national security establishment that are likely to persist well beyond the Putin era. The differences between the United States and Russia run deep, and they are not amenable to easy solutions.

The challenge facing the Trump administration is to skillfully manage, rather than permanently resolve, these tensions with Moscow. Trying to appease Putin, perhaps by making unilateral concessions, would only convince him that he is winning and encourage him to continue wrong-footing the United States and the West. But a more confrontational approach would risk generating a provocative and dangerous

response from Russia. So Washington will need to chart a middle path. That means both seeking ways to cooperate with Moscow and pushing back against it without sleepwalking into a collision.

Of course, that advice presupposes a U.S. administration that views Russia the same way previous ones have: as a problematic yet important partner on discrete issues that also poses a significant national security threat. U.S. President Donald Trump, however, appears eager to jettison established bipartisan approaches to dealing with Moscow. As he [wrote](#) on Twitter in January, “Having a good relationship with Russia is a good thing, not a bad thing. Only ‘stupid’ people, or fools, would think that it is bad!” And for months, he mocked the U.S. intelligence community’s warnings about Russian cyberattacks aimed at interfering with the U.S. democratic process and repeatedly praised Putin’s leadership.

Such antics suggest that Trump may attempt an abrupt reconciliation with Russia that would dramatically reverse the policies of President Barack Obama. It is hard to overstate the lasting damage that such a move would do to the U.S. relationship with Europe, to the security of the continent, and to an already fraying international order.

*Trying to appease Putin, perhaps by making unilateral concessions, would only convince him that he is winning.*

## PUTIN’S GAME

Any consideration of U.S. policy toward Russia must start with a recognition of that country’s manifold weaknesses. The Russian economy may not be “in tatters,” as Obama once remarked, but the boom that allowed Putin, during his first two terms in office, to deliver steady increases in prosperity in exchange for political passivity is a [distant memory](#). Absent

major structural reforms, which Putin has refused to undertake for fear of losing control, the economy is doomed to “eternal stagnation,” as Ksenia Yudaeva, a senior Russian central bank official, put it last year.

Following Putin’s return to the presidency in 2012, the regime has retooled the sources of its legitimacy. It has fostered a fortress mentality, mobilizing the public to defend Russia against foreign adversaries and mounting an unrelenting search for Western-backed fifth columnists. The apparent spur-of-the-moment decision to annex Crimea transformed the Russian domestic political landscape overnight, propelling Putin to unprecedented levels of popularity. And in Syria, the Kremlin has capitalized on its intervention to highlight Russia’s return to global prominence.



KEVIN LAMARQUE / REUTERS

*Obama and Putin at the G8 Summit in Enniskillen, Northern Ireland June, 2013*

Unfortunately, tighter economic constraints are not likely to

dissuade Putin from engaging in future foreign policy adventures. The collapse of oil prices that began in 2014 hit the Russian economy hard, as did the sanctions the West applied in response to Russian aggression in Ukraine that same year. Yet Putin has shown little restraint in the international arena since. His defiant approach appears to have strong support from the Russian elite, which faithfully rallies to the cause of standing up to the United States and reasserting Russia's great-power status.

Indeed, Russia has always been much more than a mere "regional power," as Obama once dismissed it; the country figures prominently in important issues across the globe, from the Iran nuclear program to the security of the entire transatlantic community. That will not change. But even if one accepts that Russia is a declining power, history shows that such states can cause considerable damage on their way down. And if there is one thing that can be said for certain about Putin, it is that he is a skilled and opportunistic risk taker capable of forcing others to deal with him on his own terms.

The United States must also reckon with another fundamental characteristic of Russia's foreign policy: its desire for de facto control over its neighbors' security, economic, and political orientation. Both Democratic and Republican administrations have long considered this unacceptable. Yet it constitutes one of the Russian regime's core requirements for security.

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*Russia has always been much more than a mere "regional power."*

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Absent an abrupt change in these fundamental realities, it will be hard to significantly improve U.S. relations with Russia. The country's intervention in Ukraine has demolished much of the post-Cold War security order and, along with it, any

semblance of trust on either side. And it would be irresponsible for Washington to turn a blind eye to the Kremlin's reliance on hacking, disinformation, and Cold War-style subversion in its efforts to undermine the United States' international reputation and to meddle in democratic processes in Europe and beyond. The best course of action is for the United States to stand firm when its vital interests are threatened, to expose and counter Moscow's penchant for irregular tactics, and to carefully manage the rivalry that lies at the heart of the bilateral relationship.

## THE BIG PICTURE

In recent years, Russia and the West have been heading toward something that looks a lot like a second Cold War. This confrontation may lack the geo-political and ideological scope of the first, but it still carries a high risk of actual conflict. The close encounters that NATO aircraft and warships have had with Russian jets are no accident; they are part of a deliberate Kremlin strategy to intimidate Moscow's adversaries.



US NAVY

*A Russian attack aircraft making a low pass close to the U.S. guided missile destroyer USS Donald Cook in the Baltic Sea, April, 2016.*

For now, the Kremlin is likely to try to downplay sources of tension, setting the stage for friendly initial encounters with the new U.S. president and his team. Assuming Moscow follows that course, Washington will have to proceed with caution as Putin, the consummate deal-maker, seeks to shape the terms of a new relationship. In negotiating those terms, the Trump administration should adhere to five overarching principles.

First, it must make clear that the United States' commitment to defend its NATO allies is absolute and unconditional. To do so, the United States should bolster deterrence through an ongoing series of defense improvements and increased military deployments on the alliance's eastern flank. It should also ramp up the pressure on fellow NATO members to spend more on defense.

Second, the United States needs to steadfastly uphold the principles enshrined in the 1975 Helsinki Final Act and the 1990 Charter of Paris for a New Europe—both of which commit Moscow to recognize existing borders and the right of all countries to choose their own allies. It may be hard to imagine a feasible scenario for returning Crimea to Ukraine, but the annexation remains a flagrant violation of international law that no country should recognize or reward. That means keeping in place the U.S. and EU sanctions that ban transactions and economic cooperation with Russian-occupied Crimea.

Third, as Washington reengages with Moscow, it must not run roughshod over Russia's neighbors. Appeasing Russia on Ukraine or caving in to its demand for a sphere of influence in its neighborhood would set a terrible precedent and undermine U.S. standing in the world. The inherent fragility of Russia's neighbors will create many openings for future Russian meddling, so the United States and its allies will need to remain vigilant and become more deeply engaged in such a complex region.

Fourth, Washington and its partners in the EU should commit themselves to supporting Ukrainian political and economic reform through skillful diplomacy and a generous flow of resources. It will probably take a generation or longer to turn this pivotal country into a prosperous, European-style state, not least because of Russia's undisguised desire for Ukraine's reformist experiment to fail. If Ukraine receives steady Western support based on clear and achievable conditions, its success will have a lasting positive impact on Russia's trajectory by demonstrating a viable alternative to the Kremlin's top-down approach to governance.

Fifth, as the United States attempts to support democracy in Russia and other former Soviet states, it should make a sober-minded assessment of local demand for it and the best use of

limited resources. Russia's democratic deficit will hinder better relations with the West for as long as it persists. The same problem will continue to complicate U.S. ties with many of Russia's neighbors. But too often, Washington has overestimated its ability to transform these societies into functioning democracies.

In applying these principles, the United States needs to remain mindful of the risks of overreaching. That will mean making sharp distinctions between what is essential, what is desirable, and what is realistic.

## NEEDS AND WANTS

Improved communication belongs in the first category. In response to Russia's moves in Ukraine, the Obama administration suspended most routine channels of communication and cooperation with the Russian government and encouraged U.S. allies to follow suit. As the crisis has dragged on, it has become harder to address differences, avoid misunderstandings, and identify points of cooperation in the absence of regular interactions at various levels. The Trump administration should entertain the possibility of resuming a wide-ranging dialogue, even though the Russians may well prove as unwilling to engage in a serious give-and-take as they did during the George W. Bush and Obama administrations, or may choose to use the talks solely to score political points. But even if the Kremlin isn't ready to engage forthrightly, the Trump administration should put four essential priorities above all else in its early discussions with the Russian government.

First, the Trump administration should respond to Russian meddling in the U.S. presidential election in ways that get the Russians' attention. As a parting shot, Obama imposed sanctions on Russian entities involved in the hacking and ejected 35 Russian diplomats from the United States. Yet

much more needs to be done. A carefully calibrated covert response in cyberspace would send the message that the United States is prepared to pay back the Kremlin and its proxies for their unacceptable actions. Trump should also work to protect the large swaths of government and private-sector networks and infrastructure in the United States that remain highly vulnerable to cyberattacks. The lack of a concerted response to Russia's meddling would send precisely the wrong signal, inviting further Kremlin exploits in France and Germany, which are holding their own elections this year. In the meantime, the U.S. government should explore whether it can work with major actors in the cyber-realm, such as China and Russia, to develop new rules of the road that might limit some of the most destabilizing kinds of offensive operations.

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*In recent years, Russia and the West have been heading toward something that looks a lot like a second Cold War.*

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Second, the Trump administration should ensure that military-to-military channels are open and productive. Russia's provocations carry the very real risk of a military confrontation arising from a miscalculation. Washington should prioritize getting Russia to respect previously agreed-on codes of conduct for peacetime military operations, however difficult that might be. The situation is especially dangerous in the skies over Syria, where Russian pilots frequently flout a set of procedures agreed to in 2015 to avoid in-air collisions with U.S. and other jets.

Third, in Ukraine, Trump should focus on using diplomatic tools to de-escalate the military side of the conflict and breathe new life into the Minsk accords, a loose framework of security and political steps that both sides have refused to fully embrace. The existing package of U.S. and EU sanctions represents an important source of leverage over Moscow, and

so it should not be reversed or scaled back in the absence of a major change in Russian behavior in Ukraine. At the same time, the United States and its EU allies must work to keep Ukraine on a reformist path by imposing strict conditions on future aid disbursements to encourage its government to fight high-level corruption and respond to the needs of the Ukrainian people.

The fourth and final priority for the Trump administration is to remain realistic about the prospects of promoting transformational change in Russia. As the last 25 years have shown again and again, Russia resists outside efforts at modernization. In other words, the United States should not treat Russia as a project for political, social, or economic engineering.

Then there are goals that, although not essential, remain desirable. In this category should go issues on which Washington and Moscow have a good track record of cooperation thanks to overlapping, if not identical, interests. These include cooperation on preventing nuclear proliferation, reducing the threat of nuclear terrorism, and protecting the fragile environment in the Arctic. Because these issues are largely technical in nature, they do not require the time and attention of senior officials. A great deal of progress can be made at lower levels.

On more ambitious arms control efforts, however, progress will require high-level decisions that neither side is eager to make. Such is the case with resolving the impasse over the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, which the United States claims Russia has violated, and securing further reductions in the size of both countries' strategic and tactical nuclear arsenals.

Even so, the Trump administration should keep the door open to further progress on arms control. The U.S.-Russian arms

control edifice is in danger of collapsing: the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe are no longer in force, the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty may soon fall apart, and the New START treaty is due to expire in 2021. Neither Russia nor the United States is ready for a new arms control agreement, primarily because of conflicting agendas. Moscow wants to constrain U.S. deployments of missile defense systems and high-tech conventional weapons, while Washington wants to further reduce the number of Russian strategic and tactical nuclear weapons. But neither would be served by abandoning arms control completely. At a minimum, both would benefit from more conversations about their force structures and nuclear doctrines, with an eye toward ensuring stability, especially in crises.



STEVO VASILJEVIC / REUTERS

*Pedestrians cross the street behind a billboard showing pictures of Trump and Putin in Danilovgrad, Montenegro, November 16 2016.*

## FACT AND FANTASY

Of course, Washington's ability to achieve what is essential and what is desirable will be limited by what is realistic. In a perfect world, Trump would focus on keeping relations from deteriorating further. Instead, he and his team appear to be fanning expectations of a big breakthrough and a grand bargain.

Indeed, much of what Trump says he believes about Russia appears unrealistic, to put it mildly. For starters, he has made the mystifying choice to ridicule the U.S. intelligence community's finding that it was Russia that was behind the hacking of e-mails from the Democratic National Committee and the Clinton campaign. If Trump's and his advisers' statements are to be believed, even a brazen attempt originating at the highest levels of the Russian government to undermine Americans' confidence in their country's democratic process is less important than the poor cyber-security practices of the Democratic National Committee and Clinton's inner circle.

Trump appears to hold an equally unrealistic view of the Ukrainian crisis, saying of Putin during the campaign, "He's not going to go into Ukraine, all right?"—even as thousands of Russian troops were already there. When asked by The New York Times on the eve of the election about Putin's behavior in Ukraine and Syria and the ongoing crackdown against Putin's political opponents, Michael Flynn, Trump's pick for national security adviser, called these issues "besides the point." He added, "We can't do what we want to do unless we work with Russia, period."

But as Trump will likely discover, reality has a way of

interfering with attempts to transform relations with Moscow. Every U.S. president from Bill Clinton on has entered office attempting to do precisely that, and each has seen his effort fail. Clinton's endeavor to ease tensions fell apart over NATO expansion, the Balkan wars, and Russian intervention in Chechnya; George W. Bush's collapsed after the 2008 Russian-Georgian war; and Obama's ran aground in Ukraine. Each administration encountered the same obstacles: Russia's transactional approach to foreign policy, its claim to a sphere of influence, its deep insecurities about a yawning power gap between it and the United States, and its opposition to what it saw as Western encroachment. Finding common ground on these issues will be difficult.

It appears that at the core of Trump's vision for improved relations is a coalition with Russia against the Islamic State—to, in his words, “knock the hell out of ISIS.” Yet such cooperation is unlikely to materialize. The Russians have shown no interest in beating back ISIS in Syria, choosing instead to attack the main opposition forces arrayed against the Assad regime. Russia's and Iran's support for Assad may have fundamentally changed the course of the civil war in Syria, but their crude methods and disregard for civilian casualties have probably only emboldened the radical jihadists. Help from the Russian military would be a mixed blessing, at best, for the U.S.-led coalition against ISIS, given the pervasive lack of trust on both sides and the very real risk that sensitive intelligence and targeting information would find its way into the hands of Moscow's allies in Damascus and Tehran.

*As Trump will likely discover, reality has a way of interfering with attempts to transform relations with Moscow.*

Trump has also expressed interest in developing stronger

economic ties with Russia as a foundation for improved diplomatic relations, at least according to the Kremlin's summary of Putin's congratulatory call to Trump after the election. Here, too, he is likely to be disappointed. Clinton, Bush, and Obama all placed high hopes on trade as an engine of better relations with Russia. All were frustrated by the fact that the two countries are, for the most part, not natural trading partners, to say nothing of the effects of Russia's crony capitalism, weak rule of law, and predatory investment climate.

#### PROCEED WITH CAUTION

Trump inherited a ruptured U.S.-Russian relationship, the culmination of more than 25 years of alternating hopes and disappointments. As both a candidate and president-elect, he repeatedly called for a new approach. "Why not get along with Russia?" he has asked. The answer is that at the heart of the breakdown lie disagreements over issues that each country views as fundamental to its interests. They cannot be easily overcome with the passage of time or a summit meeting or two. Thus, the challenge for the new administration is to manage this relationship skillfully and to keep it from getting worse.

Should Trump instead attempt to cozy up to Moscow, the most likely outcome would be that Putin would pocket Washington's unilateral concessions and pursue new adventures or make demands in other areas. The resulting damage to U.S. influence and credibility in Europe and beyond would prove considerable. Already, the rules-based international order that the United States has upheld since the end of World War II is in danger of unraveling, and there is mounting concern throughout Europe, Asia, and beyond that Trump does not consider it worth preserving. What's more, there's no telling how Trump will respond if and when he has his first showdown with Putin, although his behavior

toward those who cross him suggests that things would not end well.

Reduced tensions with Russia would no doubt help further many of the United States' political and security priorities. But policymakers must keep in mind that the abiding goal should be to advance U.S. interests, support U.S. allies across the world, and uphold U.S. principles—not to improve relations with Russia for their own sake. Indeed, it's possible to stand up for American interests and principles while pursuing a less volatile relationship with Russia. The Nixon administration sowed mines in a harbor in North Vietnam, a Soviet ally, while seeking détente with Moscow. The Reagan administration aggressively challenged Soviet-backed regimes and groups in Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America at the same time as it signed arms control agreements with Moscow.

Likewise, the Trump administration can, for example, counter Russian aggression in Ukraine while looking for ways to cooperate on efforts to keep weapons of mass destruction out of the wrong hands. Such an approach has a far greater chance of success than pure confrontation or pure concession. Russian leaders have long expressed their preference for *realpolitik*; they will respect a country that stays true to its principles, knows its interests, and understands power.

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EUGENE B. RUMER is a Senior Fellow in and Director of the Russia and Eurasia Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

RICHARD SOKOLSKY is a Senior Fellow in the Carnegie Endowment's Russia and Eurasia Program.

ANDREW S. WEISS is Vice President for Studies at the Carnegie Endowment.

This article draws from a longer study they undertook for a joint task force of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and the Chicago Council on Global Affairs.



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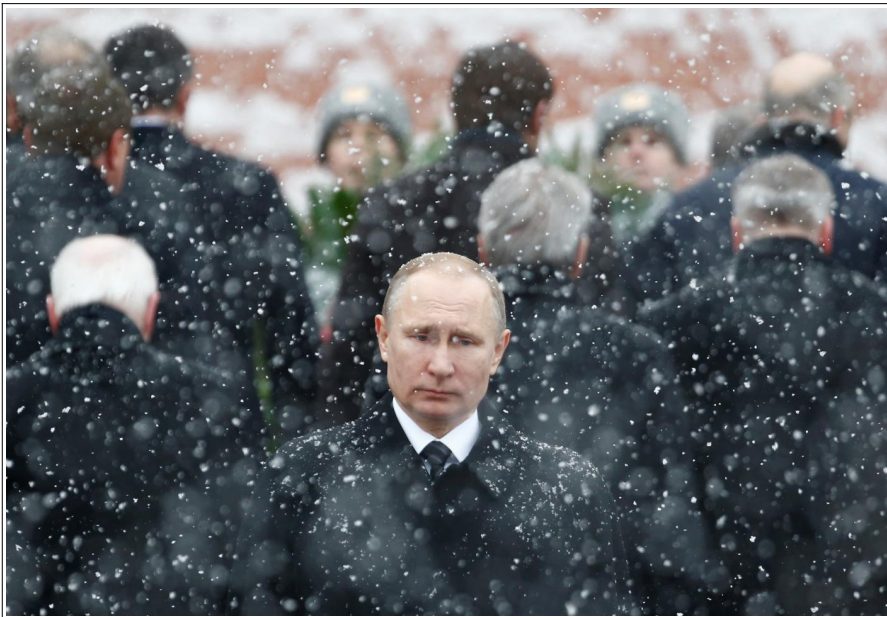
# Why New Russia Sanctions Won't Change Moscow's Behavior

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Washington's Approach Lacks Clear Goals

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*Emma Ashford*



SERGEI KARPUKIN / REUTERS

*Russian President Vladimir Putin attends a wreath laying ceremony to mark the Defender of the Fatherland Day at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier by the Kremlin wall in Moscow, February 2017.*

On October 31, 25 days after the deadline set by Congress, the administration of U.S. President [Donald Trump](#) finally released guidance about the implementation of [new sanctions on Russia](#). These new measures will add to existing sanctions

on Russian businesses and individuals dating back to the 2014 seizure of Crimea. Unfortunately, the previous restrictions have been only mildly successful in their economic impact and have produced no substantive policy changes from Moscow. It is unlikely that the new penalties will prove any different. Their central contribution is to tie Trump's hands, preventing the president from removing many of the sanctions against Russia without congressional approval. In many ways, the legislation is merely a reflection of the broader problems with formulating any coherent U.S. policy toward Russia: confrontation remains the path of least resistance, policy is focused as much on domestic political needs as on foreign policy needs, and sanctions offer [no real incentive](#) to improve the status quo.

## THE LIMITS OF SANCTIONS

Russia's meddling in the 2016 U.S. election is only the most recent impetus for new sanctions legislation. The United States has long had some form of sanctions imposed on Russia. The [2012 Magnitsky sanctions](#), for example, target individuals tied to human rights violations. The Magnitsky Act was itself connected to the repeal of the [Jackson-Vanik amendment](#), a Cold War-era sanctions bill dating back to 1974 that denied Russia the most favored nation status in trade so long as the emigration rights of Soviet Jews were denied. Jackson-Vanik impeded Russia's accession into the World Trade Organization long into the post-Cold War period.

It was only in 2014, after Russia invaded Crimea and Ukrainian separatists downed Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 using Russian anti-aircraft weapons, that sanctions became the defining feature of the U.S.-Russian relationship. Over a period of six months, as the conflict in Ukraine deepened, the Obama administration put in place [a wide-ranging and ambitious set of sanctions](#) that penalized energy companies, arms manufacturers, and banks, with the ultimate aim of

undermining the Russian state's revenue stream and ending its aggressive behavior.

Unfortunately, the episode has been an object lesson in the [limitations of sanctions](#) as a policy tool. As academic research has long shown, sanctions are [often ineffective](#), particularly those focused on national security issues. Exceptions, such as the Iranian sanctions preceding the negotiation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), are typically multinational, economically effectual, and explicit in stating the criteria and circumstances under which policy change would yield sanctions removal.

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*Sanctions are often ineffective, particularly those focused on national security issues.*

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That U.S. and European sanctions on Russia have been far less successful should not come as a surprise. To be sure, they have caused some economic pain: the [International Monetary Fund \(IMF\)](#) assessed in 2015 that sanctions would likely be responsible for about a 1.5 percent loss per year in Russia's GDP. Nonetheless, low oil prices, not sanctions, explain the majority of Russia's economic decline in recent years. Recent oil price increases have allowed the Russian economy to return to [modest, if anemic, growth](#) in 2017.

Meanwhile, the sanctions have produced no concrete policy gains. The Kremlin retains its foothold in Crimea, and the war in eastern Ukraine grinds on. It's possible that sanctions encouraged Russia not to seek further territorial gains in Ukraine, but the counterfactual nature of this claim is impossible to assess. At the same time, Russia has engaged in several substantial and aggressive ventures since 2014, from its bloody intervention in the Syrian civil war in 2015 to its meddling in the U.S. election in 2016. It's hard not to conclude that U.S. sanctions have done little to improve

Russian behavior in the three years they've been in place.

## A MUDDLED STRATEGY

The October 31 announcement is the culmination of a process that began last December. As evidence of Russian meddling in the electoral process began to emerge, [the Obama administration sanctioned](#) individuals, companies, and Russia's two intelligence agencies, the Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU) and the Federal Security Service (FSB), for their involvement in "malicious cyber-enabled activities." The administration also expelled a number of Russian diplomats and seized two diplomatic compounds suspected of use in Russian intelligence gathering.

Since coming into office, the Trump administration has taken alternately conventional and controversial approaches to these sanctions. In June, the Treasury Department quietly [added a number of Russians](#) to existing sanctions lists. Yet the president has also argued against further restrictions, and repeatedly suggested that he might consider [returning](#), in December, the compounds that he had previously confiscated.

In response, Congress passed [a new sanctions bill](#) in July that effectively nullifies the president's power on sanctions policy, traditionally an area of executive discretion. In addition to new mandatory sanctions, Congress also codified the existing sanctions put in place by the Obama administration and added requirements preventing the president from lifting them without congressional review.

Again, a comparison to Iran is instructive here. To comply with the JCPOA, Obama issued an [executive order waiving the sanctions](#), allowing the nuclear deal to enter into force without explicit congressional action to lift them. With the Russia sanctions bill, Congress has removed this loophole, implicitly acknowledging that it simply doesn't trust Trump's

judgment on this issue.

The bill also adds a number of new, draconian restrictions, such as sanctions against foreign firms engaged in joint ventures with Russian energy companies on the development of shale or other unconventional oil and gas projects, and against companies and countries that purchase Russian arms. These provisions have raised serious concerns among U.S. [allies such as Turkey](#) and Saudi Arabia, as they buy Russian armaments.

The new sanctions' energy restrictions were watered down after [European countries](#) lobbied against them, fearing that the limitations would impact pipeline projects that involve cooperating with Russian firms. Companies could avoid penalties by keeping the Russian stake in any given project under one-third or quibbling about the definition of shale production. The guidance finally released by the State Department on October 31 also suggests that the Trump administration will take a fairly loose interpretation of these requirements, [given his recent statement](#) that “any implementation of Section 232 sanctions would seek to avoid harming the energy security of our partners or endangering public health and safety.”

Nonetheless, the restrictions are concerning, as they have the potential to alienate U.S. allies in Europe. The Nord Stream II pipeline between Russia and Germany, in particular, could face serious barriers to obtaining future funding under the new sanctions. [Senior German politicians](#) such as Foreign Ministry Spokesman Martin Schaefer have even questioned whether the congressional sanctions are in fact a tool of “U.S. industrial policy,” aiming to increase U.S. energy exports to Europe by limiting Russian supplies.

The new sanctions are also no more likely to produce policy change than their predecessors. In fact, they may be less

likely to do so if only because they have no clear goals. The Obama administration's Crimea- and Ukraine-related sanctions were at least nominally focused on ending Russian aggression in Ukraine, but the new sanctions are far less specific and more open-ended. Congress seems more focused on punishing Russia for its actions in the 2016 elections, and perhaps in weakening the country over the long-term, than on any concrete policy goals.

As a result, it's hard to see when and how the United States will end these sanctions, leaving little incentive for the Kremlin to change its behavior. The sanctions may even be beneficial for Russian President Vladimir Putin, [allowing](#) him to portray his country's economic problems as Western-imposed rather than the result of his own poor mismanagement. Putin is facing a presidential election in March, and although no one expects that it will be free or fair, sanctions may boost his popularity and reduce the perception that the election is rigged.

## WILL POLICY PARALYSIS CONTINUE?

The sanctions are also emblematic of a larger problem in U.S.-Russian relations. Everyone acknowledges that the relationship is at its worst point since the Cold War, but few have any idea of how to improve it. A series of poor decisions over the last 20 years by policymakers on both sides—particularly Russian aggression in its near abroad and growing domestic repression, but also Western expansion of NATO—have undermined the potential for anything like a working partnership. With the [world's largest arsenal of nuclear weapons](#), Russia remains the only country capable of utterly destroying the United States, but is a vital interlocutor on issues such as nonproliferation and the global arms trade.

Russian interference in the 2016 election, whatever its true impact, only adds to this policy paralysis. By tying Trump's

hands on sanctions, Congress has made clear that it does not trust this president to manage the United States' ties with Russia. It will not be possible for the administration to advance a new approach to Russia while hamstrung by allegations of collusion. In this politically charged environment, new sanctions—and confrontation more generally—have become the path of least resistance in the U.S.-Russia relationship.

Yet in limiting the president's ability to repeal the sanctions, Congress has also tied the hands of future administrations, and set the United States up for disagreements with its European allies in the long term. Just as the Jackson-Vanik amendment poisoned U.S.-Russian relations long after the Cold War ended, this sanctions bill reduces future flexibility in negotiations with Russia and inhibits the ability to cooperate in key areas, whether on arms control or conflicts in Syria, Ukraine, and elsewhere.

Congress' decision to punish Russia for its actions—and to constrain Trump's abilities to reverse that punishment—is understandable, but it locks U.S.-Russian relations into a path of confrontation and offers no off-ramp from rising tensions. As a result, things may get worse before they get better.

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EMMA ASHFORD is a Research Fellow at the Cato Institute.

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# The Kremlin's Latest Crackdown on Independent Media

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Russia's New Foreign Agent Law in Context

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*Alina Polyakova*



VASILY FEDOSENKO / REUTERS

*Russian President Vladimir Putin arrives for a meeting of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) heads of state in Minsk, Belarus, November 2017.*

On November 25, Russian President [Vladimir Putin](#) signed into law legislation allowing the Russian government to designate media organizations that receive funding from abroad as “foreign agents.” Russia’s Justice Ministry, the agency tasked with identifying the specific media outlets to

be targeted, has already notified Voice of America (VOA) and Radio Free/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), both funded by the U.S. government, that they must register as foreign agents. The new law, however, is not limited to government-funded media: any organization receiving foreign funding or based outside of Russia could fall under the “foreign agent” classification. The New York Times, CNN, and European outlets could [be targeted](#) in the near future. The law also grants the [Russian authorities](#) an expansive mandate to block online content, including social media websites, whose activities are [deemed](#) “undesirable” or “extremist.”

Russia has framed the law as reciprocal retaliation for the U.S. Department of Justice’s requirement that RT America (formerly Russia Today), a Kremlin-funded and controlled TV channel and website operating in the United States, register under the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA). (The requirement came after RT was singled out in a January 2017 unclassified U.S. intelligence report on Russian interference as the “Kremlin’s principal international propaganda outlet.”) Yet this narrative is blatantly false. In reality, the law is part of a long-standing Kremlin project to muzzle independent media and civil society.

## A DISTURBING PATTERN

Regardless of what RT or the Russian government may say, the Russian media law is in no way a proportionate response to RT’s registration under FARA. The United States’ legislation does not limit the activities of RT. Rather, it is a disclosure statute that requires the registered agent to reveal income from the foreign principal and allow the DOJ to inspect its business records when asked. RT is still free to continue publishing and disseminating content in the United States. There is no First Amendment conflict with FARA: RT has not and will not be censored, its website will not be blocked, and it will continue to broadcast its propaganda on

American cable channels. (The network may, however, lose certain privileges afforded to actual journalistic organizations: the Executive Committee of the Congressional Radio & Television Correspondents' Galleries, for example, [withdrew](#) RT's congressional news credentials after its registration.)

In contrast, the newest Russian restrictions on international media are part of a more than decadelong effort by Putin's regime to repress independent media, civil society, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in Russia. The new law fits neatly into an established pattern in which the Kremlin selectively applies legal mechanisms to tighten the screws on political rights and freedoms while expanding its own mandate to control information.

The recently signed legislation is actually an amendment to a [2006 law](#) that puts limits on access to information by so-called undesirable foreign NGOs, as well as an expansion of a 2012 law that requires NGOs receiving any foreign funding to register as foreign agents. A [2015 legal extension](#) allows the Kremlin to ban any NGO it considers undesirable. They must also disclose their funding sources and label all published material (both online and print) as products of a foreign agent. Put together, these measures and their subsequent countless amendments have set up a complex legal web of repression. They have also granted the Russian government the power to block access to information that it designates extremist or undesirable, including any distributed information appealing for public protest.

The Kremlin applies official labels such as "foreign agent," "undesirable," or "extremist" to any organization that challenges the government line. The foreign agent classification greatly limits an organization's ability to operate in Russia. Groups and outlets registered as such become targets for [government raids](#), randomly applied [suspensions](#),

and [criminal prosecution](#). Employees face harassment by the security services at work and at home. In the face of such harassment—which now includes [potential fines](#) of up to 5 million rubles (or \$85,000) for media outlets—[many organizations](#) refuse to register, de facto forcing them to shut down their operations.

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*The Kremlin applies official labels such as “foreign agent,” “undesirable,” or “extremist” to any organization that challenges the government line.*

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The Russian human-rights NGO Committee for the Prevention of Torture, for example, [filed for bankruptcy](#) after receiving 900,000 rubles (approximately \$15,300) in fines. Well known international NGOs such as the MacArthur Foundation, the National Endowment for Democracy, Open Society Foundation, and the International Republican Institute all closed their operations in Russia after being classified as undesirable foreign agents. And independent domestic NGOs, particularly those promoting democracy, human rights, electoral transparency, and even environmental issues, have been fined, audited, and raided after refusing to register or “failing” to prove that they are not foreign agents. Examples include the [Levada Center](#), the only independent Russian polling organization; [GOLOS](#), an independent election-monitoring organization; and [Memorial](#), one of Russia’s oldest NGOs, devoted to remembering the victims of communism. What’s more, the government continues to push the law to new levels of absurdity to justify shutting down legitimate dissent: on December 1, the Justice Ministry [branded](#) a long-haul truckers’ group, which has been protesting road taxes for two years, a foreign agent.

## MORE CENSORSHIP TO COME?

It is not yet clear how the new expansion of the foreign agent

law will affect the ability of Western media to work in Russia. The government has [already moved](#) to ban all U.S. media from access to the Russian parliament after RT's news credentials were rescinded in the United States. The new law will certainly not make independent journalistic activities easier, but the reality for independent media outlets operating in Russia has long been depressing. VOA and RFE/RL have been banned from broadcasting in the country since [2014](#) and [2012](#), respectively. (The United States did not retaliate at the time.) Their correspondents in Russia are consistently harassed. Some have even been [severely beaten](#) and [jailed](#), while the number of journalists who have been attacked or killed for exposing the regime's wrongdoing continues to grow. In October, Tatyana Felgenhauer, deputy editor of Ekho Moskvyy, an independent Russian radio station, was stabbed by a man who broke into the office. Felgenhauer survived the attack, but barely. The journalist Nikolai Andrushchenko died after a severe beating in April 2017; Dmitry Popkov, an anti-corruption reporter, was [found dead](#) from gunshot wounds in May 2017; and, of course, Anna Politkovskaya, the well-known investigative journalist who reported on the war in Chechnya, was killed in 2006.

At the time of writing, no Western news outlets besides VOA and RFE/RL had been notified that they had been declared a foreign agent. Yet censorship is worsening. Roskomnadzor, the Russian media regulator, [announced](#) that it had established a procedure for banning the distribution of foreign print media in Russia, as mandated by the new law. Three days after the law was signed, Andrew Roth, the Russia correspondent for The Washington Post, [tweeted](#), "You literally can't find a major foreign newspaper in Moscow."

In a country where laws are applied at the whims of the authorities, the consequences of this latest measure are difficult to predict. But with the Russian presidential elections scheduled for March 2018, it is clear that the Kremlin will

seek to use all the means at its disposal to censor dissent, repress independent voices, and stifle non-state media. Although this coming crackdown will make Western journalists' work more difficult, it is the Russian independent media that will suffer the most.

CORRECTION APPENED (December 11, 2017): An earlier version of this article misstated the body that had stripped RT of its congressional news credentials. It was the Executive Committee of the Congressional Radio & Television Correspondents' Galleries, not the U.S. Congress. We regret the error.

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ALINA POLYAKOVA is a David M. Rubenstein Fellow for Foreign Policy at the Center on the United States and Europe at the Brookings Institution.

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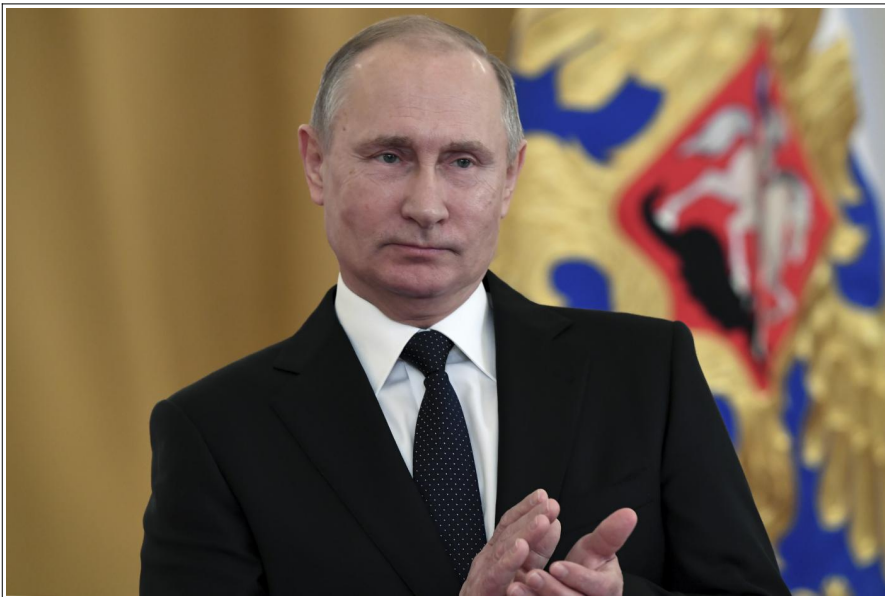
# Containing Russia, Again

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An Adversary Attacked the United States—It's Time to Respond

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*Robert D. Blackwill and Philip H. Gordon*



KIRILL KUDRYAVTSEV / REUTERS

*Russian President Vladimir Putin attends a state awards ceremony at the Kremlin in Moscow, Russia, December 28, 2017.*

With each passing week, the evidence of [Russia's interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential election](#)—and in U.S. politics and society more generally—grows. Since at least 2014, in an effort to influence the election and undermine confidence in U.S. democracy, [Russia has hacked private American citizens' and organizations' computers](#) to steal information; released that information in ways designed to affect electoral outcomes and divide Americans; planted and disseminated

disinformation in U.S. social media, through its own state-funded and -controlled media networks and by deploying tens of thousands of bloggers and bots; cooperated with Americans, possibly including members of Donald Trump's campaign, to discredit Trump's opponent in the election; and probed election-related computer systems in multiple states. We will never know for certain whether Russia's intervention changed the outcome of the 2016 election. The point is that it tried.

Today, the Kremlin's unprecedented efforts to sow and exacerbate divisions among Americans, using many of the same tools, continue. Whereas physical attacks on the U.S. homeland, such as Pearl Harbor or 9/11, have brought Americans together in a common cause and led them to bolster defenses, an assault on the American sense of national unity could [weaken the institutions and shared beliefs](#) that are critical to enduring security and success. Growing domestic strife and diminishing trust in national institutions represent as great a threat to the United States as any traditional national security concern, with the exception of a nuclear attack.

Russia's geopolitical challenge to the United States is also growing. Since Vladimir Putin returned to the presidency in 2012, [Moscow has invaded and annexed Crimea](#); occupied parts of eastern Ukraine; deployed substantial military forces and undertaken a ruthless [bombing campaign in Syria](#) to prop up President Bashar al-Assad; significantly expanded its armed forces; run military exercises designed to intimidate eastern European governments; interfered in eastern European political systems; and threatened to cut off gas to the most energy-dependent European states. Putin is a career intelligence officer who is deeply hostile to democratic change anywhere near Russia, paranoid about what he believes to be U.S. efforts to oust him, and resentful of American domination of the post-Cold War world. He seems

to have made it a personal priority to weaken the United States and counter American influence wherever he can.

In the face of such a comprehensive challenge, strong new measures are needed to protect U.S. society from further intervention and punish Russia for attacking the United States. This response should not be confined to measures guarding against further election meddling. Moscow will cease and desist only if it concludes that it is paying a major price in matters important to it, including in the area of European security.

Having worked since the end of the Cold War to build more constructive U.S.-Russian relations (Blackwill in the George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush administrations, Gordon in the Bill Clinton and Barack Obama administrations), we come only reluctantly to the conclusion that the United States needs to confront Russia more forcefully. As it did during the Cold War, Washington should continue to interact with Moscow and to cooperate with it whenever cooperation is in the U.S. interest. But the United States cannot stand by when an adversary not only adopts an agenda of countering U.S. influence throughout the world but also strikes directly at the heart of American democracy.

## DROPPING THE BALL

Considering the gravity and consequences of the Russian intervention, the U.S. response has been grossly inadequate. The Obama administration was slow to realize the full extent of the Russian operation and, when it did, was reluctant to react, announcing only a limited set of retaliatory measures (primarily sanctions on selected Russian operatives) after the election was over. Before Election Day, President Barack Obama worried that public accusations of interference would be perceived as an attempt to discredit the Trump candidacy (an accusation Trump made anyway) and that retaliation

could set off a devastating cyber-escalation—which would disproportionately hurt the United States, given its greater openness and reliance on technology. These concerns led the administration to avoid retaliating in a manner proportionate to the intervention or even publicly highlighting its seriousness to the degree warranted.

The Trump administration has done even less. Far from responding to Russia's intervention, Trump has refused even to acknowledge that it happened, repeatedly calling the allegations a "hoax." Throughout his campaign and presidency, for reasons difficult to explain, Trump has demonstrated a curious affinity for Russia in general and Putin in particular, often praising him and rarely challenging his policy positions. Whereas Trump's default attitude toward virtually every other country in the world is highly critical, he has consistently shown sympathy for Russian perspectives.

Given the administration's inaction, Congress has had to take the lead. In July 2017, it passed the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act of 2017 (CAATSA), which codified into law sanctions imposed by previous administrations, blocking Trump from lifting them without congressional consent. CAATSA also authorized new sanctions for use in response to cyber-intrusions; extended restrictions on Russian energy firms; added to the list of sanctionable sectors of the Russian economy; and mandated sanctions against those helping Russia undermine the cybersecurity of any democratic institution. Unfortunately, the administration hasn't used these potentially effective new tools.

## CONTAINING THE THREAT

Without a more vigorous and comprehensive response, the Kremlin's meddling will continue—and even get worse—while other adversaries might also conclude they can attack the

United States with relative impunity. Washington needs to impose real costs on Moscow, while also enhancing defenses against future attacks and bolstering its military commitment to European allies most threatened by Moscow's aggressive posture.

[Read the authors' Council Special Report, "[Containing Russia](#)", [here](#).]

The minimal sanctions applied thus far have failed to send a sufficiently strong message. The administration has the tools to change that: using the authorities provided in CAATSA, it should work closely with European partners to impose asset freezes and visa bans on additional Kremlin officials now known to be involved in election interference and extend similar sanctions on Russian organizations active in election interference, including "troll farms" and their funders. Last October, the Treasury Department identified entities subject to those sanctions, including the Russian aircraft manufacturer Sukhoi, the state arms exporter Rosoboronexport, and the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service. The mere existence of this list will be costly to Russia, because foreign companies will not want to risk sanctions by making "significant investments," but the administration should not hesitate to selectively impose sanctions if Russian activities continue. Congress has also mandated that the Treasury Department identify corrupt Russian officials and oligarchs close to Putin by January 29 and that it report on the impact of expanding sanctions to include Russian sovereign debt; these steps should be promptly and comprehensively implemented.

The U.S. government also needs to strengthen its defenses against future attacks, starting with the cybersecurity of federal networks and critical infrastructure. At the state and local levels, election boards should keep paper backups of ballots and voter registration records and limit access to

election systems to qualified vendors. Meanwhile, campaign finance laws need to be updated to cover a broader range of online activity, enhance transparency requirements, and prevent political spending by foreign nationals. New laws should also require digital platforms such as Facebook to create a public database of political ads and provide users access to information about who paid for the political ads and whom they targeted. And regulations similar to the Foreign Agents Registration Act, which requires transparency in lobbying, should also apply to online or media activities. Americans advancing a foreign political influence campaign through vehicles such as RT should be treated no differently from those being paid directly by foreign governments.

Nongovernmental efforts will also have to be part of the solution. Major social media platforms should sign on to a voluntary code of conduct that commits them to more actively policing their networks for disinformation, false news stories, botnets, and false-flag advertising—identifying, labeling, and, where appropriate, blocking them. They have taken some steps in the right direction: Facebook created a portal to help people identify ads from Russia’s Internet Research Agency, and Twitter banned advertising from RT and Sputnik. These platforms should not try to regulate “truth,” but they can find ways to indicate when “news” sources are confined to a very narrow group of self-referring sources—a hallmark of disinformation—so that users are aware that what they are reading may be suspect. Bipartisan institutions—such as the German Marshall Fund’s Alliance for Securing Democracy, which tracks Russian propaganda efforts—can also help identify and combat disinformation. Selective declassification of evidence of Russian interference could bolster such efforts.

Finally, the administration itself needs to make deterrence of future attacks a priority. An authoritative administration official—CIA Director Mike Pompeo, for example—should privately convey to Moscow Washington’s readiness to

release the financial information of Russian government leaders involved in hacking and other embarrassing information about Putin and his cronies. Credibly threatening such releases would give Putin an incentive and opportunity to refrain from future interventions in U.S. elections. At the same time, U.S. officials should emphasize that all these measures are defensive and not designed to change the Russian regime—a fear Putin has harbored for years. Washington should make clear that it will continue to support free and fair elections, freedom of speech, and the rule of law in Russia, as it does around the world. But it will respect Russia's sovereign right to hold those elections free of outside manipulation with illicit means—just as it expects Russia to respect the United States' right to do the same.

#### REINFORCING THE FRONTLINE

An effective response also requires transatlantic cooperation to bolster NATO's defense and deterrence posture. That means maintaining at least the current level of U.S. forces—approximately 60,000 active-duty personnel—currently deployed in Europe, but also going further. An additional U.S. armored combat brigade should be permanently stationed in Poland, along with multinational battalions in the Baltic states and the prepositioning of more equipment closer to NATO's eastern flank. NATO should also continue implementing the European Phased Adaptive Approach to missile defense, which involves the stationing of U.S. personnel in eastern Europe.

On Ukraine, if Russia does not fully implement the February 2015 Minsk II cease-fire agreement or any successor to it, the United States should expand sanctions to cover additional Russian officials and specific firms and further limit Russian access to Western loans and technology. These sanctions should target the defense, mining, and energy sectors, as specifically authorized in CAATSA. If Russia refuses to

compromise, the United States should further limit access to Western loans and financial services, cancel investments in existing projects, impose sanctions on mining and machinery, and press allies to embargo all Russian military sales and military imports from Russia. Washington should also provide additional defensive support to Ukraine, including counterbattery radars, reconnaissance drones, secure communications, and armored vehicles. Ukraine should not be encouraged to seek a military victory over Russia, which it cannot achieve, but with more help, it can increase the costs of occupation for Russia.

Finally, to reduce European reliance on Russian energy, the administration and Congress should continue to remove restrictions on U.S. oil and gas exports and encourage the construction of gas pipelines that avoid Russia (such as from Turkmenistan through Azerbaijan and Turkey to Europe). And it should urge NATO allies and other EU member states to pursue alternatives to the Nord Stream 2 pipeline from Russia, including by facilitating purchases of liquefied natural gas from other sources.

## THE NEW COLD WAR

If this package of measures sounds like a prescription for a new Cold War with Russia, it is. In launching a major attack on the pillars of U.S. democracy, seeking to undermine social peace in the United States and Europe, and opposing U.S. policies around the world, Russia has demonstrated that it will not be a partner, strategically or tactically, in the foreseeable future. Putin has apparently concluded that a larger Russian regional and global role requires the weakening of American power.

The United States needs to rise to the challenge. Trump's own National Security Strategy concludes that "actors such as Russia are using information tools in an attempt to undermine

the legitimacy of democracies” and that “Russia challenge[s] American power, influence, and interests.” Those conclusions are beyond dispute. It is past time for the administration to act accordingly.

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ROBERT D. BLACKWILL is a Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations and was the Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Planning in the George W. Bush administration. PHILIP H. GORDON is the Mary and David Boies Senior Fellow in U.S. Foreign Policy at the Council on Foreign Relations and was a Special Assistant to the President and Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs in the Obama administration.

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# Putin's Past Explains Russia's Future

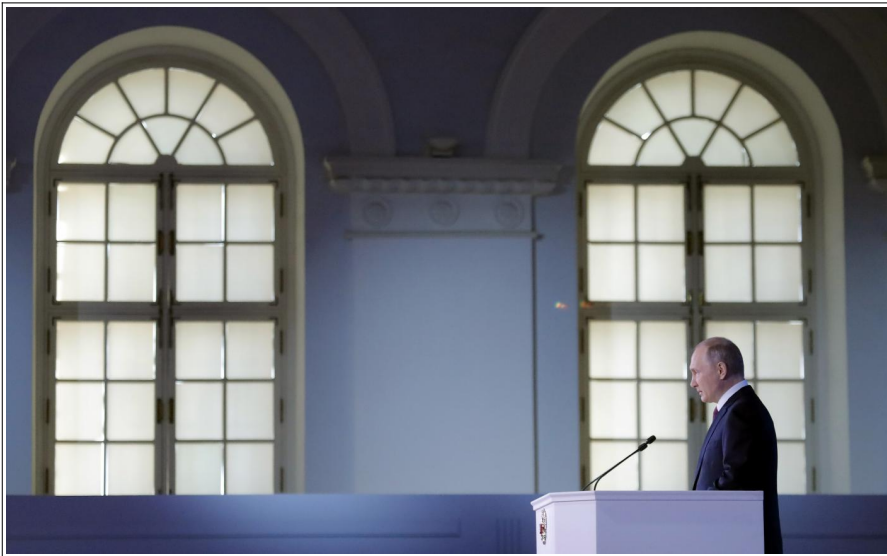
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## What to Expect After the Election

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*Gregory Feifer*

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MAXIM SHEMETOV / REUTERS

*Russian President Vladimir Putin addresses the Federal Assembly, including the State Duma parliamentarians, members of the Federation Council, regional governors and other high-ranking officials, in Moscow, March 2018.*

For anyone observing [Russia](#)'s current political trajectory, a sudden shift in the country's consumer food preferences two decades ago is surprisingly revealing. Among the products burgeoning on the once barren shelves of Russian grocery stores in the late 1990s appeared a new brand of butter. Called Doyarushka, or "Little Dairy Maid," it was purported to be made according to a traditional Russian recipe. In fact, the butter wasn't at all Russian but exported from faraway New

Zealand—which made the branding seem counterintuitive, if not outright bizarre. After all, Russians had stampeded to buy foreign goods since the Soviet collapse opened the floodgates only a few years earlier.

But market researchers had stumbled on a new trend. Their focus groups were revealing that Russian consumers believed homemade products to be superior and better tasting, and to have more natural ingredients, than imported ones. It soon became clear that the trend ran deeper than the choice of what to put on the breakfast table. After years of wrenching westernization had wiped out Russians' savings together with their certainties, and shaken almost every other aspect of their lives, they were now increasingly looking inward and to their own past.

Yury Luzhkov, Moscow's then mayor, was among the first of the country's leading politicians to exploit the growing penchant for tradition. He took to dressing up on holidays in a costume portraying himself as Yuri Dolgoruky, believed to be the city's twelfth-century founder. But Luzhkov didn't discriminate among historical periods in his efforts to boost his own popularity: banners also went up on central city buildings depicting Soviet military medals, when glorification of anything associated with communism was still largely taboo. Other politicians soon joined the effort to cobble together a new identity from a pastiche of clashing symbols from tsarist as well as Soviet history.

It was an early indication that rather than successfully reform, [Russia](#) would eventually take its place at the vanguard of right-wing authoritarianism. With Moscow's malign global influence now quickly mounting, revisiting the circumstances of how that path began helps clarify the nature of the [Kremlin's threat](#) to the liberal international order. Russian President Vladimir Putin is all but certain to be reelected to a new six-year term on March 18, and how he

will act in the years to come will have much to do with how he came to power.

## A CHANCE LEADER

Back at the height of then President Boris Yeltsin's 1990s, signs were still growing that the country's new market economy had possibly turned a corner, boosting hopes for social stability and Russia's integration into the international community of democracies. Then came the financial crisis of 1998, which brought the reform era to an abrupt end. The political watershed triggered a grass-roots rejection of the West. It exploded on the streets of Moscow, ostensibly in response to NATO's bombing of Serbia in the spring of 1999, when rowdy crowds protesting in front of the American embassy released their bottled-up anger in the form of eggs, paint, and other projectiles hurled at the building's thick yellow walls. Putin, then the little-known head of the Federal Security Service, was doubtless paying close attention.

Tapped to be prime minister that summer, Putin immediately set about leveraging his surprise appointment by playing on Russians' deep envy of the West, their sense of betrayal over a promised prosperity that never materialized, and their growing nostalgia for the Soviet superpower past. Putin offered Russians a third way: authoritarianism with personal freedoms (although some restrictions later reappeared), nationalism without political ideology. The unending, uncertain slog toward the West was soon abandoned with the simple assertion that Russian civilization had its own, different path (a short jump from today's claims that those ways are better).

Moscow's propaganda machine and support for various Western right-wing nationalists have helped reshape global affairs since Putin assumed office. But in the Kremlin's conception of the world and politics, and in many other ways,

Russia remains stuck in 1999—informed by the anti-Western sensibilities that brought him to power nearly two decades ago.

## THE UNPREDICTABLE PAST

In a country where the future is said to be clear—it's the past that's unpredictable, according to the old saying—whose version of history you're talking about matters greatly. For Americans considering past Russian blunders, the Soviet Union typically looms largest. Russians tend to think of the 1990s, however, when deprivation seemed for many even worse because it was also personally humiliating. It's one thing if you have no choice but to queue for toilet paper along with everyone else. It's quite another if your neighbor goes out for sushi when you're stuck home eating boiled potatoes.

The belief that it was Putin who brought about economic recovery and reined in the chaos of the 1990s enabled him to get away with murder. But it's often overlooked these days that the economy was already reviving when Putin took over, paradoxically thanks to the 1998 crisis and the massive inflation it triggered. Newly competitive owing to the weak ruble, some of the country's emerging domestic producers began booming. When oil and gas prices, the economy's main drivers, also started to rise, there was no looking back—but that had little or nothing to do with Putin's involvement.

Many at home and abroad believed Yeltsin's original sins had included his ties to the so-called oligarchs, the handful of powerful bankers and industrialists who reaped huge riches in return for political support. But Putin, far from ridding Russia of the corruption he railed against—promising to institute a “dictatorship of the law”—oversaw its exponential expansion, ensuring only that the Kremlin now rules the mafia roost. His real innovation had to do with his use of corruption for instituting a feudal kind of top-down administrative

control over politics and the economy. As long as regional governors and leading tycoons paid the Kremlin in fealty and cash, they were free to profit from their fiefs at will. Putin used strong-arm methods and intimidation to effectively renationalize the oil industry. And he installed a loyal bureaucrat, Alexey Miller, to head the state gas monopoly Gazprom in 2001. The company was previously run by an independent-minded boss who often acted against the Kremlin's interests. Now it could be safely used to [launder](#) considerable sums of money.

Putin has continued to use that top-down system to maintain his grip on power in the years since and is now modifying it to suit the times. Recently, he has begun to replace his crony circle's now mega-rich stakeholders with weak young bureaucrats who owe their loyalty solely to him. The hope is that they will help preserve his highly personalized system of rule, the only one they know.



REUTERS

*Russia's newly elected President Vladimir Putin is congratulated on his victory by*

*former president Boris Yeltsin during their meeting at Yeltsin's country house in Gorky-9 just outside Moscow, March 2000.*

## CULTIVATING A STRONGMAN IMAGE

In the long term, there are many reasons to doubt the sustainability of Putin's kleptocracy, which has isolated the country, eviscerated its institutions, and robbed its natural resources economy. For now, however, Putin's 1999 agenda continues to inform the Kremlin's inner logic. At the top of the list is the inexorable tightening of his grip on power, legitimized by finessing his image as national leader, fighter pilot, bare-chested equestrian, and the kind of father figure communism compelled Soviets to idolize. That was an existential imperative after his appointment as Yeltsin's chosen heir, a political neophyte with no power base, ridiculed as a last-gasp bid to keep the clamoring opposition from power.

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*Putin's 1999 agenda continues to inform the Kremlin's inner logic.*

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As with most of his behavior since taking office, Putin's use of violence and threats in cultivating a strongman image has been remarkably consistent. Even before he became president, he rallied support by launching a second war in Chechnya as the brand-new prime minister in 1999, his tough-guy persona a salve for a humiliated population. The first war had ended in failure in 1996 after Chechen rebels ground down the government's poorly trained, ill-equipped, and often drunken troops. Back then, when Russia was seen as powerless even to put down rebellion inside its own borders, most predicted a giant folly, underestimating Putin's unflinching willingness to slaughter civilians.

His resolve was surely boosted by a telling incident just

before he took office, when a symbolic contingent of Russian troops serving as peacekeepers in Bosnia—part of the Western effort to engage Moscow—responded to NATO’s campaign against Serbia by abandoning their posts and racing to seize the airport in Kosovo’s capital, Pristina. That resonated with the ordinary Russians back home expressing newfound solidarity with their fellow Orthodox Slavs in the Balkans. Although the soldiers depended for food on the British forces they blocked from the complex, most Russians applauded the gambit as a bold victory over a Western military alliance they now saw as an adversary. Months later, the war in Chechnya provided another signal that Moscow would no longer bend to foreign disapproval.

Putin’s image-building project has since continued to rely on conflict, his rule now indelibly associated with the invasions of Georgia and Ukraine and the military campaign in Syria. Those were not inevitable responses to the expansion of NATO when Moscow was too weak to respond, as some argue. The Kremlin never considered the expansion a serious [threat](#), just as it doesn’t really believe the United States will stage a nuclear first strike today, as Putin insinuated this month. Casting the United States as an existential threat, however, has enabled him to rally his people despite the corruption, authoritarianism, and isolation he has brought upon them. His main platform in what has passed for the presidential campaign has been to threaten the West with the development of a new generation of nuclear weapons, most notably an “invincible” intercontinental cruise missile and a nuclear torpedo he promised would outsmart any U.S. defense. His presentation during a State of the Nation address in February notably included videos depicting warheads aimed at Florida, where President Donald Trump’s Mar-a-Lago resort would presumably perish along with the rest of the state.

Putin has sought to legitimize his aggression by couching it as

part of his advocacy for a “multipolar world”—in other words, greater influence for Russia at the expense of the U.S.-led world order. A decade ago, the appeal was sugarcoated as a Kremlin [proposal](#) to work with Western countries to institute the European Security Treaty, a new security architecture that would supersede NATO and other multinational organizations. Most Western politicians dismissed the idea. But by the time Russia went to war in Georgia in 2008 to squelch Tbilisi’s NATO aspirations, the Kremlin had dropped any pretense of cooperation, prepared to fully break with the West.

This month’s attempted murder on British soil of Sergei Skripal—a former Russian military intelligence colonel—and his daughter is the latest example of Putin’s use of shock tactics to challenge long-held international rules. As an agent freed in a spy swap, Skripal was supposed to be off-limits. Instead, the Kremlin appears to have also targeted other members of his family in a brutal spree of vengeance that’s a bold new gauntlet to the West. The characteristically weak Western response to the first offensive use of a nerve agent in Europe since World War II is another signal to the Kremlin that such attacks work.

#### WILL IT LAST?

A decade of economic uncertainty since the start of the global financial crisis in 2008 hasn’t convinced Russians to turn their backs on the former KGB officer who supposedly rescued them from the abyss of the 1990s. Still, it is challenging to gauge genuine public opinion in a country where criticizing the president is bad for job security.

A recent [survey](#) by the country’s only independent polling agency, Levada Center, conducted with the Carnegie Moscow Center, provides anecdotal evidence of Russians’ support for Putin. Although most respondents said they desire some form

of change in the country, they couldn't envision anyone besides Putin to enact it. His reputation for being above politics plays a role (he refuses to run as a member of the United Russia party, whose sole platform is support of the president), enabling him to blame the government's shortcomings on officials periodically purged during corruption scandals. In the latest case, former Economy Minister Alexey Ulyukaev was sentenced in December to eight years in prison for bribery. The highest-ranking government official to be arrested since the Stalin era, Ulyukaev maintains he was framed.

Another Levada Center [survey](#) showed that many believe Putin's annexation of Crimea forced the West to respect Russia, with more than 70 percent of Russians now saying their country has achieved superpower status. Russia observers have been talking for years about hopes for grass-roots democratization among young Russians. But the mostly youthful protesters who sometimes take to the streets remain part of a tiny minority, while most young Russians appear as hooked as everyone else on Putin's platform.

The president's highly personalized system of rule makes prospects for its survival after his exit unlikely. But with no apparent cracks in public support for now, and with the Kremlin finely tuned to the slightest criticism, Putinism may well last until that moment or an external shock brings it down. Putin's direct control of the security apparatus also makes any foreseeable change highly unlikely, while prospects for a Kremlin coup or other unforeseen crisis appear equally dim. Dealing with Moscow will therefore require more long-term strategic thinking and larger investments in democracy building and aid to civil society in Russia's neighbors. But ultimately, the West's answer to Putinism must be based on the understanding that although the stakes have risen since 1999, the Russian president's logic remains the same.

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GREGORY FEIFER is Executive Director of the [Institute of Current World Affairs](#) and the author of *Russians: The People Behind the Power*.

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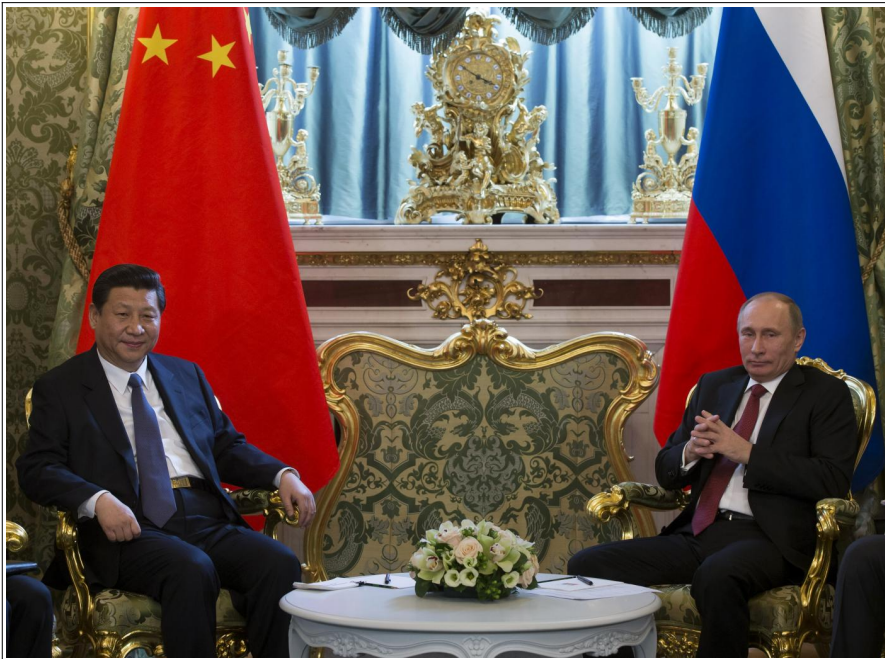
# Has a New Cold War Really Begun?

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Why the Term Shouldn't Apply to Today's Great-Power Tensions

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*Odd Arne Westad*



ALEXANDER ZEMLIANICHENKO / REUTERS

*Russian President Vladimir Putin meets with his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping at the Kremlin in Moscow, March 2013.*

For about four years now, since Russia's occupation of [Crimea](#) and China's launch of the [Belt and Road Initiative](#), there has been much speculation about whether another Cold War between East and West is coming. In the last month

alone, headlines have proclaimed that “[The New Cold War Is Here](#),” heralded “[Putin’s New Cold War](#),” and warned that “[Trump Is Preparing for a New Cold War](#).” But are we really returning to the past? Contemporary politics is full of false analogies, and the return of the Cold War seems to be one of them.

At its peak, the Cold War was a global system of countries centered on the United States and the Soviet Union. It did not determine everything that was going on in the world of international affairs, but it influenced most things. At its core was an ideological contest between capitalism and socialism that had been going on throughout the twentieth century, with each side fervently dedicated to its system of economics and governance. It was a bipolar system of total victory or total defeat, in which neither of the main protagonists could envisage a lasting compromise with the other. The Cold War was intense, categorical, and highly dangerous: strategic nuclear weapons systems were intended to destroy the superpower opponent, even at a cost of devastating half the world.

Today’s international affairs are in large part murky and challenging, but they are a far cry from Cold War absolutes. Calling twenty-first-century great-power tensions a new Cold War therefore obscures more than it reveals. It is a kind of terminological laziness that equates the conflicts of yesteryear, which most analysts happen to know well, with what takes place today. Although many echoes and remnants of the Cold War are still with us, the determinants and conduct of international affairs have changed.

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*Although many echoes and remnants of the Cold War are still with us, the determinants and conduct of international affairs have changed.*

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Russia's truculent and obstructionist foreign policy under President Vladimir Putin comes from a sense of having lost the Cold War in the 1980s and having suffered the consequences of the defeat in the 1990s. Many Russians hold the West responsible for the chaos and decay that befell their country under Boris Yeltsin's presidency. They miss the respect that the Soviet Union got as the other superpower (even though few miss the dreariness of the Soviet state itself). They cherish a strong president who, they believe, has given Russia its self-respect back by sticking it to the West as often as possible, just as they welcome the inner stability that they believe Putin has given Russia.

China, on the other hand, believes that its unprecedented economic growth has given it the status of a predominant power in the region—it is no longer a pawn for others as it was during the Cold War. If the Cold War was holding China back, then the post-Cold War era has set China free to act on its own behalf, as many Chinese believe. Meanwhile, Communist Party leaders are obsessively studying how the Soviet Union collapsed, in order to avoid a similar fate for their country. China (and everyone else) has inherited the North Korea imbroglio from the Cold War, as well as a deep resentment of what most Chinese see as U.S. global hegemony.

On the U.S. side, the main echo of the Cold War is a sense—very prominent among President Donald Trump's voters, but also apparent elsewhere—that Washington has been taken advantage of by others. As the argument goes, throughout the Cold War, the United States delivered security on the cheap for the rest of the capitalist world while American allies helped themselves to U.S. money and jobs, giving little in return. Many U.S. voters feel that their country, having won the Cold War, gained next to nothing as a result. The current administration is thus shedding systemic responsibilities in favor of much narrower U.S. interests.

These are aspects of how the Cold War created the world we live in now. But today's international affairs have moved beyond the Cold War.

Bipolarity is gone. If there is any direction in international politics today, it is toward multipolarity. The United States is getting less powerful in international affairs. China is getting more powerful. Europe is stagnant. Russia is a dissatisfied scavenger on the fringes of the current order. But other big countries such as India and Brazil are growing increasingly influential within their regions.

Ideology is no longer the main determinant. China, Europe, India, Russia, and the United States disagree on many things, but not on the value of capitalism and markets. China and Russia are both authoritarian states that pretend to have representative governments. But neither is out to peddle their system to faraway places, as they did during the Cold War. Even the United States, the master promoter of political values, seems less likely to do so under Trump's "America first" agenda.

Nationalism is also on the rise. Having had a hard time reasserting itself after the ravages of two nationalist-fueled world wars and a Cold War that emphasized non-national ideologies, all great powers are now stressing identity and national interest as main features of international affairs. Cold War internationalists claimed that the national category would matter less and less. The post-Cold War era has proven them wrong. Nationalists have thrived on the wreckage of ideology-infused grand schemes for the betterment of humankind.

Whatever international system is being created at the moment, it is not a Cold War. It may turn out to be conflict-ridden and confrontational, but using "Cold War" as common denominator for everything we don't like makes no sense.

Instead, we should try to understand how perceived lessons from the past influences thinking about the present. If we want to apply history to policymaking, we must learn to be as alert to differences as we are to analogies.

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ODD ARNE WESTAD is the S. T. Lee Professor of U.S.-Asia Relations at Harvard University.

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