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A REAGAN SOVIET POLICY

Richard Pipes

National Security Council

Helping China became modern society, linked to the West - culturally & non-provocative

May 1981

SECRET

SUMMARY

This paper outlines a Reagan policy toward the Soviet Union and the communist bloc. It advances four central propositions:

-- Communism is inherently expansionist: its expansionism will subside only when the system either collapses or at least is thoroughly reformed.

-- The Stalinist model on which Soviet communism, the linchpin of worldwide communism, is based, confronts at present a profound crisis caused by a continuation of economic failures and difficulties ~~created~~ brought about by overexpansion.

-- The successors of Brezhnev and his Stalinist associates are likely to split into "conservative" and "reformist" factions, the latter of which will press for moderate economic and political democratization.

-- It is in the interest of the United States to promote the reformist tendencies in the USSR by a double-pronged strategy: assisting pro-reform forces inside the USSR and raising for the Soviet Union the costs of its imperialism elsewhere. ~~by a very determined strategy~~.

SECRET

INTRODUCTION

Previous American Policies Toward the Soviet Union

Since 1917, United States policy toward the Soviet Union has passed through five major phases:

1. From 1917 to 1933 we officially ignored the Soviet regime in the belief that it was illegitimate and doomed to disappear.

2. In 1933, after the new regime had demonstrated its ~~validity~~ viability, we extended to it diplomatic recognition and engaged with it in a variety of relations which during World War II blossomed into a virtual alliance; it was our hope that this good relationship would carry into peacetime.

3. This hope was shattered by Stalin's post-war aggressiveness in reaction to which in 1948 we adopted a "containment" policy which posited that an unflagging effort to stop Communist expansion wherever it occurred would, in time, induce Moscow to give up aggression.

4. A combination of factors -- the shift in 1956 of Soviet strategy to "peaceful coexistence", the acquisition by Moscow of a nuclear arsenal, and the frustrations of the Vietnam war -- have caused us in the early 1970s to give up containment in favor of detente, a policy designed to bring the Soviet Union into the community of nations by means of various inducements, mainly economic in nature.

5. Repeated Soviet violations of the spirit and rules of detente caused this policy to become discredited in the United States; the invasion of Afghanistan drove the last nail into its coffin.

For all the dramatic swings that have characterized our policies toward the Soviet Union during the past six decades, they had one feature in common: all involved attempts to moderate the external behavior of the Soviet regime externally. This objective was pursued now by toughness and punishments, now by

gentleness and rewards. What has not been attempted so far is modification of the Soviet government's external behavior from within, ~~that is,~~ by encouraging current and/or ~~making~~ association ~~common cause~~ with forces and processes present inside the Soviet state that are inherently anti-expansionist and reform-minded. We have ~~assumed~~ accepted, as it were, the political legitimacy of the Soviet elite, its right to speak and act on behalf of a people which, in fact, has never given ~~them~~ the elite the license to do so. This state-to-state relationship has not worked to our advantage because our government is decentralized and constitutionally limited in its freedom of action, whereas the Soviet state is centralized and quite unrestrained either by constitutions or representative bodies. On the other hand, however, while the elected U.S. Government is solidly based on internal support, its adversary finds itself in a condition of permanent tension with its own citizenry. For this reason, it makes perfect strategic sense to exert maximum possible internal pressure on the Soviet regime, i.e., to supplement external deterrents with a major effort aimed at stimulating anti-expansionist, reformist forces inside the Communist bloc.

Premises of this Study

An effective United States policy toward the Soviet Union and the Communist Bloc must meet several requirements:

-- It has to be in harmony with the aspirations and values of the American people, for only then can it obtain public support;
-- It must rest on a dispassionate assessment of the nature and trends of the Communist system rather than on mirror-imaging and wishful thinking;
-- It must be assertive and positive rather than reactive and negative, making best use of the strengths inherent in our society and exploiting vulnerabilities of the Communist one;
-- It must be designed as a long-term grand strategy rather than as a pragmatic short-term tactic.

Our way of life is being directly challenged. In October 1917 the new rulers of Russia issued a declaration of war on democratic, free enterprise societies. They and their successors regard us as ~~leftovers from~~ relics of a bygone era, doomed to disappear. They will keep on pressing outward by any and all means until that ~~assessment~~ prediction comes true. This challenge can be met in three ways:

-- by gracefully capitulating in the hope that non-resistance will secure us tolerable terms;
-- by responding militarily, that is, by risking general war;
-- by frustrating our adversary's strategy and turning it against him.

Clearly, the third response is the most attractive. Capitulation carried out in the name of "better red than dead" is not only dishonorable but unrealistic: as the Cambodian people have learned, going red does not guarantee staying alive. War, under modern conditions, is a most undesirable alternative, given the well-known destructive capacity of nuclear weapons. It is of necessity, therefore, that one must have recourse to an imaginative, realistic, sustainable counter-strategy which neutralizes the aggressive designs of one's adversary.

This objective cannot be attained by military means alone. In the first post-World War II decade the United States enjoyed a virtual monopoly on nuclear weapons as well as superiority in the air and on the seas, and it still was not able to prevent a continuing Communist offensive against itself and its allies. Adequate military capability is a necessary but insufficient instrument of global policy. This paper takes it for granted that the United States will build up its military defenses to the point where it cannot be threatened with military blackmail: unless this is done, no effective foreign policy is possible. ~~Its~~ Our attention will center on the political, economic, and ideological aspects of the rivalry between West and East.

The paper consists of two parts. Part One discusses the nature of the Soviet system and the crisis which it faces owing to economic failures and contradictions engendered by its imperialism. Part Two outlines the strategy and tactics for coping with the Communist threat. The argument assumes that the Soviet Union is not unalterably set on its course but faces alternatives, some of which are more acceptable to the rest of the world than others, and that the West need not be a passive observer as these choices are made.

PART ONE

THE SOVIET SYSTEM

CAUSES OF SOVIET IMPERIALISM

Russia has always been an exceptionally expansionist country. Its imperialism can be explained by two related causes:

-- It is a poor country: with its extreme northern location which makes for brief and unreliable agricultural seasons, vast distances, and remoteness from the main international trade routes, it has never been able to support a population of great density, as a consequence of which its natural population growth has driven it to colonize and conquer neighboring lands;

-- The Soviet ruling elite can claim no other justification for its dictatorial authority and privileges than (a) the alleged threat of "capitalist encirclement" and (b) the "historic mission" of communism: its psychological base of support, therefore, rests on xenophobic nationalism which impels it to engage in an unceasing forward movement. a/

Poverty and dictatorial authority stimulate expansion while expansion perpetuates poverty and dictatorship inasmuch as expansion requires immense expenditures on the military which could be more productively invested in agriculture and industry and engenders unremitting foreign policy tensions. Unless and until this vicious circle is broken, Russia will be its own worst enemy and a constant menace to the rest of the world. There thus exists an intimate relationship between the internal condition of the Soviet Union -- its economy and its political system -- and its foreign policy. It is not possible effectively to cope with the latter while ignoring the former.

Expansionism is inherent to the communist system as it was to National Socialism and Fascism, with both of which it shares in common deep historic roots. A communist system committed in

stability is a contradiction in terms, because to accept the international status quo would be tantamount to rejecting the principle of class struggle as well as undercutting the legitimacy of communist governments in their own domains. International stability will be attained only if and when the communist system as embodied by the Soviet Union either collapses or is so profoundly reformed that it remains communist only in name (as has happened in Poland and may happen in China). Of themselves, neither a "hard line" stance by the West ("containment") nor a "soft line" ("detente") can deter the imperialist thrust of the Soviet Union. This fact has been amply demonstrated by the experience of the past 35 years during which both methods had been tried. In the final analysis, the principal source of international instability and the risk of war lies in Russian communism and its internal contradictions.

THE SOVIET UNION AS A STALINIST STATE

The Soviet system today can best be characterized as a bureaucratically administered state capitalism, whose principal objective is the preservation of the authority and privileged status of a relatively small ruling elite. This elite may be defined as consisting of some 300,000 individuals whose names appear on the so-called basic nomenklatura lists, from which are drawn all appointees to executive positions in the country's party, state, economic, military, and propaganda apparatus. "Each of these 300,000" writes a German expert, "has won the right to be a lifelong co-proprietor of the Soviet Union. It is as if 300,000 shares of different face value were distributed, giving their holders title to the monopoly that runs the Soviet Union."* Institutionally, the Soviet state represents a throwback to the late medieval Russian state in that now as then the ruling class of Russia has a monopoly on political decisions as well as on the country's labor and economic resources.

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* Günther Wagenlehner, Wem gehört die Sowjetunion (Köln, 1980), p. 12.

The system as it now stands was put in place half a century ago by Stalin. The group presently ruling the Soviet Union consists of older men all of whom have made their careers under Stalin and owe their survival to complete identification with Stalin. Despite their use of radical socialist slogans they are among the world's most conservative elitists, unable to conceive of acceptable alternatives to the status quo and frightened of any change especially one that would make for greater democracy. They have a natural affinity for power brokers abroad: dictators, millionaire industrialists and bankers. Their greatest fear is of trade unionists, democratic socialists, small, self-made businessmen, and independent intellectuals.

The essential elements of the Stalinist system may be subsumed under four headings:

-- Politically, complete atomization of society, refusal to allow any free associations, repression of all dissent;
-- Economically, rigid centralization of decision-making and absence of meaningful incentives for superior performance;
-- Socially, inordinate privileges for the elite, egalitarianism for the masses;
-- Internationally, steady advance into the adversary's domain with concurrent isolation of one's own territory from external penetration.

This system and the policies associated with it have remained intact since Stalin's death, even if its most extreme manifestations (such as irrational terror and the striving for economic autarky) have been abandoned. Stalin's successors have not dared to tamper with their inheritance: they have only modified its uses. In terms of laws, institutions, and procedures the house that Stalin had built stands.

The question arises: for how much longer? Evidence accumulates that the Stalinist system no longer serves ~~well~~ its purpose, adequately/ which is the preservation of the power and privileged status of the ruling elite, and may be due for a reassessment and possibly reform. The point is that to the extent that it develops internally and expands externally, the Stalinist system engenders contradictions which run counter to its stated objectives. Thus, the forced education instituted for the purpose of providing the state with adequate cadres of administrators, engineers, and skilled workers unavoidably yields also informed and inquisitive citizens who are no longer willing to be shut off from policy decisions. As the industrial economy matures, it can no longer be effectively managed by methods which worked when industrialization was first imposed on an agrarian society. Expansion brings with it the kinds of problems to which all empires are heir: heavy economic outlays for aid and defense of the dependencies, and nationalist resistance from the subjugated peoples.

The Stalinist system confronts a crisis: and because the Soviet Union today has such influence in the world and disposes of much military might, its crisis becomes also a global crisis. Whether the Soviet Union resolves its problems peacefully, by means of internal reform, or belligerently, by way of further expansion and conquest, is a matter of concern not only to its own subjects.

1. THE ECONOMIC CRISIS

Declining Productivity

The Achilles heel of every communist regime is its inability to bring into being a ~~rounded~~ and productive economy. When they balanced/ first come to power, communist regimes are able to create the illusion of improvement by distributing the wealth confiscated from the free economies which they have toppled, and by launching, using the same wealth, massive social programs. But it takes

only a few years for this illusion to dissipate. Sooner or later, all communist societies become hopelessly mired in inefficiency and low productivity, which provides the population, at best, with a marginal existence, and often with less than that. There are three main reasons for this:

-- Administrative overcentralization: In their quest for total control of economic resources, the communists create a system under which quite unrealistic decision-making responsibilities for the entire economy are imposed on the central bureaucracy. Removed from direct contact with the producers and consumers, the central planning authorities must grope much of the time in the dark, setting targets that bear little relationship to reality and allocating capital and resources in an irrational manner.

-- Absence of adequate incentives: Because they dread pockets of independent wealth out of fear that they could turn into centers of political opposition, communist governments insist on their citizenry (the small governing elite excepted) living on the same low but egalitarian living standard. A "flat income distribution", however, precludes rewards for superior economic performance. The mass of communist employees is assured of a living wage as long as they carry out their obligatory duties. There is no profit in doing more than required and therefore no incentive to improve productivity.

-- Stable prices for consumer goods (made possible by heavy subsidies) and guaranteed full employment make it virtually impossible to rationalize productivity: social objectives take precedence over economic requirements.

The combination of excessive centralization, inadequate incentives and high priority assigned to social goals is an obstacle to economic progress in all countries which adhere to the classic Stalinist model. Hence one can properly inquire whether this model, suitable as it may be for the forced industrialization of rural societies (albeit at a monstrous

cost), makes any sense once that objective has been attained and the main issue is no longer capital investment but the efficient use of the productive facilities already available.

The crisis of Communist economies can be graphically illustrated by means of figures which indicate the declining rates of growth of their Gross National Product.

TABLE I

AVERAGE ANNUAL RATES OF GROWTH OF THE GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT OF THE SOVIET UNION

Years	Percent
1951 - 1960	5.8
1961 - 1970	5.1
1971 - 1975	3.8
1976 - 1980	2.8

TABLE II

AVERAGE ANNUAL RATES OF GROWTH OF THE GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT OF THE COMMUNIST COUNTRIES OF EASTERN EUROPE

Years	Percent
1971 - 1975	4.8
1976 - 1978	3.7
1979	1.7
1980	0.5

The economic crisis affects both Soviet industry and Soviet agriculture.

Despite strenuous efforts over the past two decades to improve its performance, Soviet industry remains subbornly unproductive. A Soviet worker is estimated to require four times more time, raw material, and energy to produce a given item than his counterpart in free enterprise economies.

The Soviet leadership is so keenly aware of this problem that it has made a rise in labor productivity the centerpiece of the next Five Year Plan. The likelihood of this objective being attained, however, is low. Moscow's difficulty is compounded by an anticipated decline in the pool of available labor. Both before and since the Revolution, Russia has compensated for endemic low individual productivity by drawing on its immense reserves of cheap rural labor. In the coming decade this solution will no longer be available. During the 1970s, the Soviet labor market has received annually between two and three million fresh workers. In the coming decade, owing to declining birth rates in the European regions of the country, that figure will decline to half a million.

The situation is still worse in agriculture. The Soviet Union employs one-fourth of its working population on the land and yet it is unable to feed itself, and must import large quantities of foodstuffs (mainly animal feed) from abroad. The decline of productivity in agriculture is appalling: between 1971 and 1975, Soviet agriculture actually showed a negative rate of growth (-0.5 percent). In 1976-80 that figure rose but to a paltry 1.1 percent.

The problems here too are incentives. Under the system of collectivized agriculture, imposed by Stalin to ensure that his vastly enlarged industrial labor force was adequately fed, the Russian peasant has no reason to produce a surplus. The land does not belong to him, nor does the bulk of the product which must be sold to the state at artifically low prices. He has, however, every reason to concentrate on the minuscule private plots allotted to him by the state, the produce of which he is free to sell on the open market at prevailing prices. What the muzhik can accomplish when given the proper incentive can be seen from the fact that private plots, which comprise only three percent of the arable area of the USSR, account for 24 percent of the country's farm output, including 30 percent of the meat.

Analysts at the Central Intelligence Agency, surveying the mass of economic data at their disposal, conclude that the Soviet Government faces a "catalog of economic problems that could reach crisis proportions in the 1980's."*

Obstacles to Economic Reform

The problem of low productivity which plagues the Soviet economy can be resolved in one of two ways. One is progressively to automate manufacture so as to reduce dependence on scarce and inefficient human labor (presently over one-half of Soviet

* National Foreign Assessment Center, Soviet Debate Over Economic Management: A Party-Government Issue (PA81-10078; February 1981), p.iii.

industrial workers perform manual labor). The other is to reform the system by enhancing human performance. The latter entails decentralizing the industrial administration to make it more responsive to market forces and increasing rewards to managers, workers, and peasants to ~~encourage~~ stimulate greater efforts.

Of the two solutions, the Soviet leadership undoubtedly prefers the former, since it poses no threat to its power. It has been one of the cardinal aims of the Soviet detente policy to acquire from abroad large quantities of advanced technology for the purpose of raising productivity. Although in some sectors of the Soviet economy this policy has brought positive results, it has not raised overall productivity. Quite the contrary. Notwithstanding imports of high technology, "growth in output per man hour slowed by nearly one-half between the 1960's and the first half of the 1970's."* In agriculture, where individual labor is crucial, the effectiveness of mechanization is determined by the motivation of the peasant, and this, in turn, is decisively affected by incentives.

There remains, therefore, reform. But reform is dangerous:

-- Decentralizing economic decision-making entails some degree of loss of control over the economic base of the regime's power, placing it at the mercy of more spontaneous market forces;

-- Raising incentives produces social inequities which are unpopular with much of the population; it also allows centers of independent wealth to emerge which the Soviet leaders, educated as Marxists, believe must unavoidably turn into loci of independent political power.

-- Abandoning the goal of full employment and reducing substantially government subsidies for food, housing and transport would certainly cause dissatisfaction among the mass of the population which benefits from assured wages and low prices on necessities.

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* Joint Economic Committee, Congress of the United States, Soviet Economic Problems and Prospects (Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1977), p. 3.

Because those economic reforms which it finds politically palatable do not work, while those that work are politically unpalatable, the Soviet elite finds itself in a quandary. Its political and economic needs are increasingly at odds. The personal interests of the ruling elite -- the retention of its powers and privileges -- require (a) that the national economy remain strictly centralized, with all decisions the monopoly of the bureaucracy, and (b) that the population at large remain fully dependent for its livelihood on the government. From the economic point of view, however, this arrangement is becoming self-defeating. The Soviet economy has grown too large and complex to be efficiently managed from above by a central authority under a system which allows neither those charged with implementing policies nor the consumers (the "market") any say in decision-making. Furthermore, the regime's emphasis on mass egalitarianism and its dread of any productive wealth outside state control deprives the managers, workers and peasants of the kind of incentives they need to acquire a vested interest in raising outputs. The regime thus confronts the classic "revolutionary situation" postulated by Marx for societies in which the economic "base" and the political "superstructure" go out of phase. In democratic societies such an imbalance is precluded by unceasing partial adjustments to each other of economic and political forces; a totalitarian regime locks the two into a fixed relationship which becomes more difficult to adjust with each passing year. The negative effects of this situation are felt not only in the economic sphere but also in the political. In Stalinist societies there exists a striking absence of public spirit on the part of the population at large, and the governments are unable to appeal to what may be called patriotic sentiments. The ordinary citizen of such societies is so preoccupied with private interests that he feels little if any sense of communality with his government. Thus a survey of the youth of Leningrad,

conducted by Soviet sociologists in the 1960s, revealed that 38 percent were concerned exclusively with their private lives, 36 percent were totally indifferent, 23 percent ~~had a main~~ were mainly interested in education, and only 12 percent stated participation in public affairs to be their ~~main interest~~ principal concern.*

~~POSSIBILITIES OF ECONOMIC REFORM~~ Possibilities of Economic Reform

The problem which we have described is not new. Whenever confronted with it in the past, the Soviet elite has invariably given preference to its own "class" interests over those of the nation as a whole. So it was immediately after Stalin's death when voices were raised in favor of economic reform, only to be stilled. So it was also at the recently concluded 26th Party Congress of the CPSU which shunned questions about restructuring the economy. But it is doubtful whether such a conservative policy can be continued much longer. Economic pressures are building up in Communist countries both at the top (among economic planners) and below (among the consumers), and the day may not be far off when the same concern for political survival which hitherto has made for resistance to economic reform will push the communist elite to embrace it. What we see here is a recurrence of a phenomenon familiar from the history of other countries, whenever the dominant class, faced with challenges which it can no longer fend off, agrees to unpalatable concessions in order to survive. It is probable that as soon as the Brezhnev administration clears the stage, an acrimonious economic debate will break out in the high echeleons of the party. The recurrent question heard for years at Communist party meetings -- "How do we raise productivity?" -- with its unmistakable political implications, is likely to divide the leadership into "conservative" and "reformist" factions.

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* Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniia, No. 3, 1977.

A great deal hinges on the outcome of such a debate. Should the conservatives gain the upper hand, the Soviet Union will continue along the path of militarism and expansion, hoping to compensate for domestic economic failures with foreign conquests. Should the reformers win, the Soviet regime will turn inward and initiate changes which of necessity will entail greater popular participation in national life and inject certain inhibitions on the elite's waste of natural resources on militaristic and expansionist objectives. The Soviet threat will not disappr because it is inherent in the system and its ideology. Even so, it will be attenuated if the Soviet Union is administered by individuals who draw their inspiration from a patriotic vision of a Russia which is great by virtue of being a great, civilized nation rather than a jingoism which sees greatness in military conquest. And indeed, who can predict where economic liberalization, once implemented, will lead? The very considerations that make economic reform so distasteful to the Soviet elite, namely fear of losing a monopoly on political power, ought to make it attractive to us.

Polish events, 1980-1981

In this connection, the recent events in Poland acquire particular relevance. Poland has just undergone a revolution in the course of which both the foundation work and the superstructure of the totalitarian regime suffered an internal collapse. Political scientists have regarded such a development as a virtual impossibility. These events mark, therefore, a watershed in the history of communism regardless of whether or not Soviet forces invade Poland.

The original cause of the Polish turmoil were economic problems endemic to the system: low productivity, administrative overcentralization, inadequate incentives. These difficulties manifested themselves already around 1970 but the Polish Government saved itself, for the time being, from the necessity of reform by the device of massive borrowing from abroad. Unwilling to solve its problems by way of reform and yet afraid of the workers and intellectuals who defiantly organized themselves, the Polish Government temporized. In the summer of 1980, to avoid an open confrontation, it was finally compelled to recognize the existence of a trade union organization outside party control -- something that Communism had not tolerated since 1920.

But the process of decomposition did not stop here. The dissatisfaction soon spread into the ranks of the party itself, whose rank-and-file demanded a greater voice in decisions. With amazing speed the party apparatus, composed of three million members, disintegrated. In March 1981 the Party hierarchy had to agree to a thoroughgoing democratization of its apparatus, allowing for free elections of its functionaries.

Thus, in nine months, the entire social and political system of Communist Poland was profoundly shaken from within, without bloody riots, foreign intervention, or even a change in the forms of government. The system proved unexpectedly vulnerable to internal pressures.

In a sense, the post-Mao reforms in China may also be regarded as a revulsion against Marxism-Leninism by leaders who have concluded that it is unworkable. In the opinion of some Chinese specialists, the attacks on Mao are a disguised assault on the entire communist doctrine. If that is correct, the crisis of communism assumes even more urgent forms.

Conditions in Poland and the Soviet Union are admittedly quite different. Russia lacks a tradition of free associations, an independent peasantry, and a powerful church commanding the loyalty of the nation. Nor is there in the USSR, with its diverse ethnic composition, that spirit of nationalism which has given the people of Poland their sense of unity. There exists, therefore, little likelihood of a political upheaval in Russia on the Polish model. In the Soviet Union fundamental change is less likely to come from a mass movement initiated below than from a drastic reorientation of the government itself. Such has been the tradition of Russian history: major changes of the country's institutions and orientation have almost always come from above, from the state authorities.

Reform, however, especially of a fundamental kind, confronts the Soviet ruling elite with uncomfortable problems. Its de facto authority inside the country rests on a demonstrated ability to fend off any and all challenges. It must, therefore, always be, or, at the very least, appear to be omnipotent. The aversion of

Russian governments throughout history to reform derives from the fear that the population at large might interpret reform as a concession to pressure and admission of weakness. For that reason, the preference of the Soviet leadership is to have no reforms at all. When failures compel it to tamper with the system, it likes to confine itself to meaningless administrative reshuffles which do not affect the system's essentials. It will tackle reform in earnest only if convinced that the alternative is disaster. Then, however, it will strive to introduce changes likely to have little if any minimal effect on its own status, i.e., that will jeoparidze neither the party's power nor its authoritarian structure.

The Hungarian model or "goulash communism"

Can there be meaningful reform of the communist economy that would not jeopardize the authority or structure of the communist party? In an attempt to answer this question, the Soviet Government has initiated an interesting experiment in Hungary.

The New Economic Mechanism (NEM) was introduced into Hungary in 1968 with Moscow's blessing as a low-risk experiment that could be quickly aborted if it got out of hand and copied if successful. After a few years, Moscow seems to have developed doubts and pressured Hungary to restrain its zeal for reform. But in 1978 it changed its mind again and approved of even more far-reaching changes. At present, NEM is also being slowly introduced into Bulgaria, Moscow's most subservient client, which gives grounds for confidence that Moscow approves of the results of the experiment.

NEM points toward a mixed economy resembling the New Economic Policy (NEP) introduced into Russia by Lenin in 1921, which kept the state control over the "commanding heights" of the economy, but turned over its lower peaks and valleys to the free operations of the market economy. Under NEM, the central authorities continue to set macroeconomic goals but leave this implementation on the macroeconomic level in large measure to local initiative. Industrial enterprises are required to realize not preordained plans -- a practice which is notoriously inefficient and wasteful -- but to show a profit. To enable them to do that, they are given authority to set their own pay scales and even to discharge inefficient workers. Prices are set not in order to realize "socially desirable" objectives but to reflect actual costs of production. Much of the profit thus realized remains in the enterprises, partly for reinvestment, partly for distribution among managers and workers. In agriculture, the role of the private sector has been greatly enhanced: for example, state farms have been allowed to enter into contracts with private farmers to have them raise cattle.

NEM has not appreciably improved Hungary's overall economic performance, as yet, at any rate. This has been ascribed in part to sabotage by entrenched bureaucratic interests, and in part to the absence of competition among the state enterprises. Even so, the reform has appreciably raised the country's living standards, which are the highest in the communist bloc. Food is available in abundance (some of it going for export) as are consumer goods of decent quality. Above all, NEM seems to have produced a degree of rapport between the regime and the population that gives the country an enviable record of political stability.

It is known that influential leaders in the Soviet Union favor the Hungarian reform and are not averse to importing some of its elements into their country. Among them are the late Aleksei Kosygin and Andrei Kirilenko, a leading contender for Brezhnev's mantle. Sympathetic Soviet observers are impressed not only by the abundance of consumer goods in Hungary, but also and above all by the high level of public spirit which the reform engenders and which is noticeable by its absence in the USSR and other countries that follow the Stalinist model. Thus Vladen Kuznetsov, a Soviet correspondent who has written much on Hungary, speaks with unconcealed admiration of the spirit that has come to animate this country since the introduction of the reform. He praises the remarkable honesty which Hungarian party officials, managers, and workers show in their dealings with each other. He is even more impressed by the influence which the reform has had on the country's public mood. "The reform also had an effect that cannot be measured in purely statistical terms," he writes, by "[releasing] an enormous reserve of creative energy, enterprise and initiative..."* A reader cannot help but feel behind these words a wistful hope that something of the kind would befall the author's own country.**

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* "The main Asset," New Times (Moscow), No. 14, April 1978, pp. 21-22.

** In 1965 Yugoslavia has even more radically reformed its economic system by creating a regime that has been defined as "market socialism". It gives still greater power to enterprises than Hungary, and permits worker associations to participate in the formulation of economic plans and investment decisions. In September 1980 Poland has adopted a reform combining the Hungarian NEM and the worker's councils of Yugoslavia.

2. THE POLITICAL CRISIS

The political crisis that confronts the Soviet leadership in the 1980s derives from the following causes:

-- The mainly silent but occasionally overtly expressed dissatisfaction of a sizable part of the population with a system that grants them no political rights and few economic or general human rights.

-- The resentment of the ethnic minorities of the USSR at being denied the right to natural self-determination and being subjected to Russian domination.

-- The costs and risks of imperial expansion which make the Soviet Union ever more vulnerable to overseas debacles.

Unlike the economic crisis, which is already at hand, the political crisis threatens the Soviet leadership only potentially. But, as the experience of Poland has shown, once the dams that safeguard the integrity of a communist regime develop cracks, the floodwaters of accumulated discontent rush forward, sweeping everything before them. In a totalitarian state, political crises do not mature: they explode.

Domestic dissent

Domestic dissent in the Russian regions of the USSR takes two forms, overt and passive or latent.

Overt dissent is much better known abroad because its spokesmen consciously appeal to foreign opinion. Involved in this movement are several thousand individuals. Two qualities distinguish overt dissent:

-- Its participants not only refuse to conceal their identity but, on the contrary, deliberately publicize it in order to demonstrate their defiance of the government as well as to prove that they seek no benefits for themselves;

-- Not content to have it improve by bits and pieces, they reject the communist system in its entirety.

Overt dissenters constitute a small minority of the Russian population. But it would be a grevious error to judge their influence, actual or potential, in numerical terms: one only needs to recall that in February 1917 the Bolshevik party, which eight months later was to seize control of the country, numbered a mere 30,000 members. Behind each overt dissenter stand thousands and perhaps tens of thousands of passive dissenters whose dissatisfaction is with specific aspects of the communist system and who will certainly be heard from (as they were in Poland) the instant they perceive that central authority is weakening. The leaders of this movement are harassed and deported but the movement survives as ever new individuals come to the fore to replace the victims of the KGB.

Overt dissent in the USSR consists of two principal currents:

-- A liberal and pro-Western one which aspires to individual freedoms, human rights, and social justice on the pattern of Western Social Democratic parties. Its spiritual leaders are Sakharov and Iurii Orlov.

-- A conservative, nationalist current which assails communism as a foreign ideology destructive of the Russian nation, and yearns with some nostalgia for the old regime. Its hero is Solzhenitsyn.

Overt dissent represents only the tip of the iceberg. Ultimately, much more widespread and more dangerous to the system is the silent and latent dissent which embraces virtually the entire population of the Soviet Union. Its participants feel dissatisfaction not so much with the whole Soviet system as with those specific features of that system which affect their particular interests or aspirations. The most powerful representatives of this group are industrial workers, peasants, and ethnic minorities.

-- Industrial workers are dissatisfied with many things (such as poor housing, inadequate food supplies, and insufficient safety precautions) but most of all with their inability to

form genuine labor unions able to defend their interests. In recent years attempts have been made to form independent trade unions in the USSR: the leaders of this movement have been persecuted with exceptional savagery. It is also known that there occurs sporadic strike activity in the Soviet Union, usually on economic grounds. Ruthless as the authorities are with would-be labor organizers, they seem anxious to placate workers who strike for better conditions.

-- Soviet peasants whether on collective or state farms will never be content until they regain title to their land and the right freely to dispose of its entire produce. The rural population of the USSR numbers today some 30 percent of the total, but its potential number is appreciably greater inasmuch as many of the urban inhabitants are refugees who had fled the villages in search of a better life and would probably return from whence they had come as soon as conditions in the countryside would substantially improve.

The nationalities

Although the Soviet Union has no overseas possessions in the strict sense of the word, it is for all practical purposes an empire -- indeed, the last of the great European empires. Moscow exercises sovereignty over all the foreign lands conquered and absorbed by the tsarist regime, as well as over additional territories which it has managed to acquire on its own. A good part of the population of the Soviet Union has neither ethnic nor cultural kinship with the dominant Russian nationality: this applies to the 45 million Muslim subjects, the Caucasian peoples and the three Baltic nations. The two major Slavic groups -- Ukrainians and Belorussians -- are ethnically and culturally related to the Russians but long historical experience as subjects of Poland has differentiated them to the point where today few would question their claim to being full-fledged nationalities.

At present, Russians constitute the single largest ethnic group in the USSR, roughly equal in number to all the other ethnic groups combined. This numberical preponderance gives them unchallenged status as the dominant nationality. The ethnic balance, however, is steadily tilting against them. Censuses reveal that Russian fertility is declining while that of the minorities is rising.* The increase holds particularly true of the Asian minorities, such as the Muslims of Central Asia, whose annual rate of population growth is four times that of the Russians. Should these trends continue -- and they give no sign of abating -- the Russians will soon constitute a minority in their own empire, and a sizeable minority of the younger generation which supplies the labor market and the armed forces. This prospect is very disturbing to some Russians, engendering among them a siege mentality which finds outlets in xenophobic nationalism and a demand for forced Russification of the other ethnic groups.

The so-called "nationality question" in the Soviet Union derives from the dissatisfaction of the nearly one-half of its non-Russian citizens with a regime that gives them virtually no say in the manner their regions are administered and their resources allocated. The intensity of minority nationalism varies from area to area, being determined by such considerations as numbers, population density, levels of education, historic traditions, and economic relations with the Russians and other ethnic groups in the region. As a rule, the sense of nationalism is strongest among those nationalities which have the least in common with the Russians linguistically and historically and/or possess the largest intelligentsia.

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* This phenomenon is in large part due to the widespread practice of abortions. U.S. demographers estimate that the average Russian woman undergoes during her lifetime between eight and 10 abortions (compared to an overall average of six for the USSR). Abortion is virtually unknown among Muslims and other oriental inhabitants of the Soviet Union.

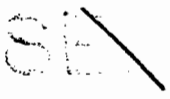
Like its tsarist predecessor, the Soviet Government seeks to neutralize minority nationalism by a policy of Russification, designed to mould minority youths into a single "Soviet nation", linked with each other and with the dominant nationality by Russian language and culture. An Estonian emigre paper in Sweden recently obtained and published a classified Soviet document detailing how this policy of Russification is to be implemented: it indicates an intense drive to impose familiarity with and use of Russian on governmental and educational institutions of the republics, including even day-care centers and pre-schools.* These efforts have met with staunch resistance from the people affected. There are scattered reports of demonstrations against attempts of the central authorities to impose Russification.

The "nationality question" may be said to be under control at present, in the sense that the Soviet security organs are able to prevent nationalist sentiments in borderlands from assuming politically dangerous forms. However, in the longer run the prospects of Russifying the minorities and molding out of the diverse ethnic groups a single "Soviet" nationality appear doomed. There is no reason to expect that of all the empires forged by European nations, history would grant the Russian Empire exemption from their common fate, which has been dissolution. Any major political crisis that afflicts the Soviet Union is likely rapidly to lead to the separation of the borderlands from Russia and their transformation into sovereign states.

Third World expansion

Ever since the publication of Lenin's Imperialism, it has been a cardinal tenet of communist theory that "capitalist" states are most vulnerable in their colonial areas where, according to Lenin, they obtain the raw materials and the markets that enable them to defer their inevitable collapse. The drive into the Third World was launched immediately after the October Revolution but it soon faltered for lack of serious support there.

* Estniska Dagbladet (Stockholm), No. 84, December 13, 1980. The document in question is dated December 19, 1978.



Stalin, who had little faith in the pro-communist forces in those areas, preferred to concentrate first on building his domestic power base and later, after World War II, on direct challenges to the West. His successors, however, promptly reverted to the old Leninist strategy, making a determined effort to penetrate those non-Western regions which are important either for their strategic location or proximity to critical raw materials. This new policy was adopted in the conviction that in the age of nuclear weapons direct confrontations with the West were to be avoided in favor of indirect, flanking moves aimed at the military and economic foundations of Western societies.

In the mid-1950s, the Soviet Government undertook an ambitious program of diplomatic and military alliances with Third World countries. At the same time it began to assemble an array of forward deployment forces centered on an ocean-going navy. Following the United States withdrawal from Vietnam and the passage of the Clark Amendment, Moscow threw all caution to the winds and, eager to seize all it could while the adversary was paralyzed, committed its own forces and those of its surrogates to diverse regions of Africa, Asia, and Central America. The global spread of Soviet influence during the past quarter of a century has been nothing short of phenomenal. There is hardly a region of strategic significance which is not directly or indirectly challenged by Soviet or pro-Soviet forces. It would be hard to find in history an imperialism pursued with comparable frenzy.

Whether this expansion has been profitable and given Moscow secure footholds overseas is another matter. In the past, successful imperialisms have tended to be pursued at a more measured pace and accompanied by economic and cultural penetration. Purely military imperialism, such as the Soviet one, has usually proven ephemeral. The Soviet Union lacks the economic wherewithal to attach its colonial dependencies overseas to its metropolis; nor does its culture have much appeal abroad. As a consequence, Soviet imperialism may be judged to be more extensive than profound, shallow-rooted rather solidly ensconced. It resembles more the

spectacular but transient conquests of a Chenghis-khan or a Napoleon than the patiently constructed empires directed from ancient Rome or nineteenth-century London.

Soviet expansionism also imposes economic burdens which are entirely disproportionate to the returns and which the inefficient Soviet economy is ever less able to bear. The following citation aptly describes the peculiar dilemma of Soviet imperialism:

> Never in the past has the global involvement of Soviet power been equally extended. The triumph, however, has produced contradictory results. On the one hand, this worldwide expansion feeds the messianic complex and the historic predestination of the Russian people for imperialism. On the other hand, the more this empire grows the more it oppresses Russia. In the past, imperial powers have come into being in order to make the metropolitan regions richer and more powerful as well as to push ever farther outward their security boundaries. In the case of the Soviet Union, by contrast, her global influence makes her ever poorer, because she is not able to keep up with her numerous strategic and economic commitments.*

Furthermore, expansion on such a scale has made the Soviet Union highly vulnerable to nationalist resistance among Third World countries where there is resentment of dependence on its largesse and of the often offensive behavior of its agents.

CONCLUSION

It is difficult to see how the Soviet Union can persevere much longer with the Stalinist political-economic model at home and the post-Stalinist model of expansion globally. Something will have to give. The successors of the present leadership, which is bound to retire in the next few years, will have to make fundamental decisions affecting domestic and foreign policy. We shall now turn to a discussion of the United States strategy and tactics best calculated to help the new Soviet leadership make the kind of decisions likely to preserve both freedom and peace around the world.

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* Frane Barbieri in La Stampa (Turin), February 22, 1981, p. 1.

PART TWO
AMERICAN STRATEGY AND TACTICS TOWARD THE SOVIET UNION AND ITS BLOC

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

After years of unremitting communist propaganda, occasionally reinforced by Soviet military action, a certain frame of mind has established itself in the West that is most unconducive to the formulation and conduct of an effective policy toward the Soviet Union. This frame of mind is shaped by several antithetical propositions hammered on by Moscow for the purpose of obfuscating the true complexities of the world and substituting for them a bipolar view. According to this view, all political choices reduce themselves to the alternative between "good" as represented by the Soviet Union, and "evil" as embodied by the United States. Involved are the following theses:

-- The Soviet Union and its camp are the vanguard of history and the bearers of justice and peace: their adversaries stand for the past, for inequality, for war. To oppose the Communist bloc is prima facie evidence of moral corruption ("fascism").

-- Any country that has made the transition to communism must never be allowed to change its social or political institutions; by contrast, all the other countries are the object of open competition between the two antipodal systems and their respective "superpower" champions.

-- The only sensible policy for non-Communist governments is to accept the inevitable, i.e., to cooperate with the Soviet Union and follow its initiatives ("detente is irreversible"); the alternative is nuclear war which will destroy humanity.

Presented in this stark manner, the above propositions may appear preposterous. In reality, however, they are seldom offered in this form, appearing disguised as attractive political slogans

which appeal even to those who have no sympathy for communism or the Soviet Union but do care deeply about the future of mankind. Upon close analysis, each of these statements can be shown to rest on either logical or substantive fallacies. Before an effective policy vis-a-vis the Soviet Union can be devised, it is imperative to break the mental habits which these ideas foster. There is little point in formulating elaborate game strategies as long as one accepts, even unconsciously, rules of the game designed by one's opponent to favor entirely his own side.

-- The United States should at once repudiate the principle and concept of "superpowers". The Soviet Union is a "superpower" only in the sense that it disposes of massive arsenals of nuclear and conventional weapons. Economically and culturally it is a power of the second rank, compared to our allies in Western Europe and Japan. Its leaders, nevertheless, insist on the status of a "superpower" and all the perquisites that it entails in order to maintain the myth of a "bipolar world" in which the only alternative to the Soviet version of peace and progress is reaction and war. This psychological trick promotes neutralism among pro-Western countries, unwilling to be dragged into "superpower" confrontations, and pro-communist tendencies among neutral powers. It further encourages the USSR to keep on building up its military, and especially nuclear, arsenals, since the vaster these are the greater its putative claim to the status of a peer of the United States. The Soviet Union should be treated as one of the world's great powers, no more and no less. All suggestions of a "special relationship" derived from Soviet nuclear might ought to be rejected out of hand.

-- The Soviet Union decidedly is not the "vanguard of history". Rather it is a misbegotten experiment based on nineteenth century ideas that bear little relationship to contemporary reality, and would long have been relegated to history books were it not for Soviet bayonets and tanks. Communism has

been unable to realize a single one of its stated objectives. Its symbol is the sealed frontier guarded by security personnel to ensure that no one departs. No nation has freely adopted communism; every nation on which it has been imposed has striven at the first opportunity to be rid of it. Communism is a prehistoric monster.

-- The so-called "Brezhnev Doctrine" has no basis in international law and violates every international statement of principles signed by the USSR, including the United Nations Charter and the Helsinki Final Act. Under the terms of this "doctrine" the Soviet Union is in the position of a gambler who places his bets with the casino's money: no matter how much he loses, in the end he must come out ahead. The "Brezhnev Doctrine" therefore must be declared null and void. Every country in the world, communist and non-communist alike, is free to change its system at any time in accord with the desires of its people. The sanctity of the communist enclave will be respected to the same degree that the Soviet Union respects the status quo of the non-communist world.

-- There exist numerous alternatives to the dichotomy "detente-nuclear war", all of them preferable to either of these options. Nothing in history is "irreversible", least of all policies. We must never allow ourselves to be blackmailed by fear, including fear of nuclear war, for to reach this condition is to surrender beforehand. The highest ideal of man is freedom: to place bare survival above one's basic human rights is to fall into the mentality of slaves. Men who have placed their human dignity above all else have survived and founded great societies; those who have raised self-preservation to the the highest good have managed to hang on to life only at the sufferance of their superiors, often to perish in the end.

Human actions are guided largely by perceptions. The points made above should be insisted upon on every occasion so that perceptions, formed over decades under the influence of Soviet

propaganda, will alter. To alter the psychological "rules of the game" set by Moscow is to clear the decks for the assertion of an effective American foreign policy.

U.S. POLICY TOWARD THE SOVIET UNION

As previously stated, United States foreign policy should be:

-- In harmony with the spirit and values of the American people.
-- Positive rather than negative, assertive rather than reactive.

This means that we cannot allow a serious disparity to develop between the kind of social environment that the Reagan Administration fosters at home and the kind that it supports abroad. Not that the United States has either the right or the ability to impose democratic government and the market economy on other countries. It does, however, have the right as well as the ability to extend preferential treatment to countries whose political and economic systems are most in accord with its own.

Two arguments support this contention:

-- A world in which the majority of the nations would live under authoritarian regimes, whether of the right or left variety, would provide a most unwholesome environment for a democratic, free enterprise United States.
-- Countries which adopt authoritarian political and economic regimes are inherently incapable of managing their own affairs. To maintain themselves in power they either engage in aggression or rely on foreign handouts: sometimes they do both. Insofar as the United States desires international stability and bears much of the burden of supporting bankrupt planned economies, it has a keen interest in promoting the spread of democracy and free enterprise.

One should be under no illusion that authoritarian and communist or communist-leaning regimes and movements can be brought over to our side by political or economic concessions. As is true of the Soviet Union, the purpose of leftwing dictator-

ships everywhere is not the creation of flourishing societies but the seizure and preservation of the power and privileged status of the ruling elite. The latter's interests are mortally imperilled by democracy and free enterprise. Its leaders naturally turn for support to the Soviet Union (which, however, does not preclude flirtation with the "capitalist" world for the purpose of obtaining some bargaining leverage with the Soviet patron). Experience indicates that regimes of this kind will commit themselves to the West only after they had dismantled their Marxist institutions (e.g., post-Sukarno Indonesia and post-Nasser Egypt).

In line with this reasoning, it is patently in America's interest to welcome any development within the communist bloc that points toward a weakening of its totalitarian structure. Any indication, no matter how modest, that democratic processes are being introduced into communist institutions and that market forces are permitted to influence the economy should be hailed as a step in the right direction. All economic relations with the Eastern Bloc should be viewed from this perspective. Thus there should be no sale of technology to the USSR that saves the Soviet government from the necessity of economic reform. Conversely, we should welcome and promote economic decentralization, increased role for trade unions, etc. Economic leverage consists not in tying the communists to the West by a mythical "web of interests" but in promoting <u>internal</u> processes that will help constrain communist aggression. Genuine detente would involve not "deals" with the Soviet leadership but reaching over the leaderships' heads to the people. We ought to promote political and economic freedom in the communist world by word of mouth and, to the extent that this is possible, by deed. We should do it openly and proudly, and not be put off by Soviet charges of "interference" in internal affairs. Our justification, if any is required, is the necessity of engaging in the "ideological conflict", whose continuity Moscow invariably asserts, and the unstoppable advance of freedom.

The Reagan Administration should show in its foreign policy the same faith in the abiding principles of political and economic

liberty, and the same enthusiasm for reducing the role of government, which it is displaying with so much success at home. Clearly, it will be more difficult to assert these ideals abroad. But if the Reagan program proves successful in the United States its effects will inevitably spill abroad, setting in motion compatible forces.

It has been pointed out in Part One that the Soviet Union and its bloc will face in the coming decade a combination of economic and political crises, presaged by the recent events in Poland. Economic decline and nationalist sentiment among its subject peoples are likely severely to test the ability of Moscow to control its domain. The outbreak of these crises probably will cause deep divisions in the post-Brezhnev leadership, splitting it into "conservative" and "reformist" factions. The former will wish to retain the existing system intact on the grounds that any tampering with it will be perceived as a sign of weakness and thereby endanger the regime. The reformers will argue that keeping the system intact courts revolution, and that the country requires far-reaching changes. At issue will be two variants of nationalism, familiar from Russian history and represented in the dissident movement (p. 20 above).

-- Xenophobic nationalism which asserts the primacy of the state and perceives greatness to lie in the might of the government, subjugation of alien peoples, and conquest of foreign lands;
-- Patriotic nationalism which asserts the primacy of the nation and perceives greatness to lie in a healthy and vigorous people.

Clearly, the former kind of nationalism leads to expansionism while the latter provides a more inward-oriented policy.

Many Westerners are under the impression that the government of the Soviet Union presently in power is controlled by "moderates" who need to be placated lest adventurous "hawks" replace them. In fact, the contrary is the case. It is the adventurous hawks

who are in power. Their rivals waiting in the wings are reformers troubled by the course of the Brezhnev administration for fear it might lead to catastrophe. Russia's present rulers are expansionists and xenophobic; they appeal to the basest jingoist sentiments of the Russian masses; they strive to Russify the minorities; they espouse antiSemitic and other racist sentiments. It is in our interest that the current leadership be discredited, that its ruinous economic policies and risky foreign adventures be fully exposed, so that a climate can be created in which more moderate, pro-reform elements can gain ascendancy. This objective should be the supreme goal of all our policies toward the Soviet Union, because, as already noted, only a change of the communist system itself can halt communist expansionism.

This objective can be pursued by a two-fold strategy:

-- Doing everything we can to weaken the totalitarian power of the Soviet regime inside its own domain;

-- Greatly increasing the risks and costs to the Soviet Government of military ventures outside its domain.

It is not in our power, of course, to mould the communist system to our liking. We are in a position, however, to help the people living under communism to improve that system in a way that is beneficial to them and the rest of the world.

U.S. Policy Toward Internal Soviet Developments.

1. Economic measures.

Ideally, one would want to develop an economic grand strategy by virtue of which the allied powers would coordinate their economic dealings with the Communist bloc to ensure maximum political leverage for themselves and minimum help to anti-reformist, pro-military elements there. Alas, realistically speaking, such a grand strategy does not seem feasible. Experience indicates that immediate economic self-interest almost always takes precedence over long-term political considerations. All attempts at embargoes have foundered for that reason, and it would be utopian to believe that things will change in the future. Even so, some economic counter-measures can be taken:

-- Controls on exports of high technology should be tightened: Strict limits should be placed not only on technology which has direct or indirect military applications (an example of the latter would be the Kama River truck plant built by the U.S.) but also on any technology likely to ease the mounting pressure on the USSR to reform its economic system (i.e., labor saving devices such as robots). It is in the interest of everyone except the Soviet ruling elite to make the Soviet economy more responsive to demands of its working force and the market.

-- Creating maximum Soviet dependence on the Western economy and minimum Western dependence on the Soviet economy. From this vantage point it is beneficial to sell the USSR technology which requires it to come back time and again to the West (an example are advanced drill bits for the petroleum industry) but detrimental to construct for the USSR self-contained export enterprises (e.g., factories manufacturing such drill bits or a gas pipeline from Siberia). Credits extended to the Communist Bloc, too, should be viewed as creating an unwholesome dependence of the creditors on their debtors, which can have political consequences.

It is decidedly not in our interest to help improve the performance of the Soviet economy as long as it adheres to the Stalinist model. It was a mistake of the theorists of detente to think otherwise. On the contrary: it is in our interest to induce the Soviet regime to take the path of economic reform inasmuch as every meaningful economic reform calls for a certain measure of democratization and thereby weakens the political position of the Soviet ruling elite.

2. Political measures.

It should be our objective to encourage the forces of dissent active within the USSR, especially those that strive for greater democracy and human rights.

-- We ought to express open support for all overt dissenting groups save those of the extreme right; in particular, we should sympathize with the "patriotic" current of Russian nationalism, in and out of government, because its ideals are most compatible with our own.

-- We ought to express strong support for the cause of national self-determination for all ethnic groups under Russian domination, as we have done in the case of the other imperial powers. Our task is not to work for the "disintegration of the Soviet Union" (any more than it is to keep it intact), but we are committed to supporting the principle of national self-determination, so eloquently asserted by President Wilson.

-- We ought to back the strivings of Soviet workers and Soviet peasants to gain the right to form trade unions and acquire possession of the land, respectively.

Propaganda or ideological warfare 3./

Almost every one agrees that propaganda, especially through short-wave broadcasts, is of the greatest importance. At the same time in every program of U.S. foreign policy this subject is treated as if in passing. If our analysis of the incipient crisis of the Soviet system is correct, a good case can be made that in the decade directly ahead propaganda will move to the forefront and become the single most effective instrument in our struggle to contain Soviet expansionism. As has been pointed out, it is only through a change in the system itself that the Soviet imperialist drive can be attenuated: and for this change to occur nothing is more important than an informed Soviet public. On this subject there is near unanimous agreement among Soviet dissenters.

-- Our propaganda should not seek to sell the United States and our way of life. This is unnecessary: Soviet citizens have already an exaggeratedly rosy view of our condition. Such an approach is also somewhat offensive, in that there is nothing they can do to acquire the benefits which we so attractively present to them.

-- Our propaganda should perform the function of a non-existent Soviet free press and inform Soviet citizens of the failures and misdeeds of their own government, of which they are the principal victims, such as:

- The immense costs of their government's defense programs which currently consume perhaps up to 60 percent of the state budget and of the actual scope of which they are kept in the dark.
- The size of foreign economic and military aid extended by the Soviet Government ($8.0 million a day for Cuba, at least $3.0 million a day for Vietnam, etc.); these programs are highly unpopular in the Soviet Union.
- Instances of official corruption and abuses of authority, with names, dates, and places (after thorough verification).
- In broadcasts to the military forces, information on suicides, alcoholism, desertions, brutalities, etc., which are increasing in frequency.
- Information about Soviet casualties abroad, with names of the dead, wounded, and taken prisoner.

The Imperial Government in the early 1900s was devastated by such information spread throughout the Russian Empire by clandestine publications. There is every reason to expect that it would produce a comparable effect today.

In broadcasts beamed to the minority areas we should explicitly affirm their grievances (Russification, unequal distribution of capital investments, maltreatment of minority soldiers in the Red Army, etc.) and express sympathy for their right to national self-determination. Such a policy is often objected to on the alleged grounds that the Soviet Government could exploit it to rally behind itself the Russian population. There is almost no chance of that happening. As best as can be established, Soviet media have never dared to mention that there are abroad voices calling for self-determination for the ethnic minorities. The ultimate dissolution of the Soviet empire is as inevitable as was the dissolution of the other empires: why not do the moral thing and be on the "side of history" to boot?

One might also contemplate establishing a network of other foreign-broadcast stations transmitting to communist or communist-occupied areas, such as a "Radio Free Cuba", and a "Radio Free Afghanistan".

Such an effort would require moving propaganda to the very forefront of our security efforts, and greatly increasing the budgets of the radio stations.

Imperial overextension

As noted, the Soviet Union is overextended in terms of imperial commitments and may find it difficult to maintain the momentum of its expansionism. To the extent that successful Soviet imperialism strengthens the regime's position at home, vis-a-vis its own population, unsuccessful imperialism has the reverse effect: it makes the communist regime appear vulnerable in the eyes of its subjects. Communist regimes maintain their authority principally by creating an aura of omnipotence and they cannot afford to have that aura dispelled by fiascoes abroad. This accounts for the well-known caution of the Soviet regime in imperialist ventures, as manifested in its preference for using surrogates. It also makes Soviet imperialism vulnerable. The USSR could not have weathered a domestic crisis comparable to that caused in the U.S. by the Vietnam war: a debacle of such dimensions would probably have produced a revolution in that country. This vulnerability offers us excellent opportunities in stemming the Soviet advance by a policy of cautious and indirect support of resistance to it.

It is morally incumbent on us as well as politically profitable for us to support in some way almost all groups that resist Soviet imperialism outside the Soviet Bloc, whether it be in Afghanistan, in Angola, or in Cambodia. Even if the actual transfer of arms may have to be carried out in a clandestine fashion, our political, economic, and moral support for such movements ought to be above board and well publicized. In such an endeavor cooperation with the People's Republic of China seems especially promising. The

more resistance the Soviet Union encounters in its expansionism, the more thinly its forces are spread out, the greater the probability of some major debacle with ominous domestic repercussions. The Soviet Union already finds itself in the risky position of arming sets of combatants who are at war with each other (Iran vs. Iraq, South Yemen vs. North Yemen). Unless our vital interests are endangered -- and we have fewer of those than the press seems to believe - we ought not to send U.S. combat troops to contain communist aggression. To the extent that Russia is becoming a "have" power, we are in an excellent position to lift a page from its own book and adopt its strategy of the 1950s and 1960s of low cost, low risk indirect resistance.

The Soviet regime is experiencing increasing difficulties in meeting the economic demands that its imperial drive produces. Every new convert to communism, every new non-communist ally in the Third World becomes another supplicant for economic aid: failure to provide it quickly leads to a cooling of relations. Communist leaders are aware of this fact, and in recent years an instructive debate has been carried on in Soviet academic centers on this subject. An influential school of thought argues that underdeveloped countries which have gone communist (e.g., Nicaragua) should not at once dispossess the "capitalists" but turn over to them certain sectors of the economy in order to maintain higher productivity and thereby make them economically self-sufficient.* Given this fact, it behooves us not to pull Soviet chestnuts out of the fire by extending financial and economic aid to Soviet client states in the hope that this will cause them to loosen their dependence on Moscow and turn pro-Western. Aid to such countries only serves to lift the burden off the shoulders of Moscow and improves its relations with its clients.

The Western Alliance

It is an axiom that our alliance with Western Europe and Japan needs to be strengthened. Indeed, the proposition can

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* See, for example, the interesting essay by the director of the Latin American Institute, S.A. Mikoian, in Latinskaia Amerika. No. 3 (March, 1980) pp. 34-44.

hardly be challenged. What needs to be questioned, however, is what are the realistic chances of this objective being attained. Current public opinion polls taken in Western Europe show a disturbing pattern: a growing fear of the Soviet Union and a declining willingness to do anything about it. This contradiction may be due in large measure to the spreading conviction that the balance of power has shifted away from the United States. In the words of Raymond Aron: "The Europeans recognize the danger of the Soviet buildup but they are pretending to disregard it because they are doubtful of the preset strength of the United States". To the extent that this explanation holds true, an improvement of U.S. military capabilities should contribute to the health of the alliance (a hypothesis confirmed by the fact that individual support for NATO among West Europeans is in direct proportion to their perception of U.S. military power). But there is still another cause of European neutralism, one not so easily remedied, and that has to do with the feeling that the conflict between the "superpowers" is no concern of Europe's, that Europe would do best to withdraw from that competition, and that the United States is interested in Europe exclusively as a forward base against its adversary. Many Europeans believe that the United States needs Europe more than Europe needs the United States, and for that reason ought to carry the main burden of Europe's defense.

Whatever the cause of European neutralism, public support for NATO in Europe seems steadily to erode. Where this process will stop, no one can tell. But prudence would require that in addition to joint action with our European and Japanese allies we consider the full range of unilateral measures which we might be required to take in the decade ahead should the unravelling of the Alliance continue.

SOME TACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

-- As a totalitarian regime which wants to control everything, a communist government likes to be on the offensive, inasmuch

as only the attacker can choose the time, place, and means of his action. Conversely, communist regimes are vulnerable to offensives launched against them by adversaries. For that reason the United States should always strive to place the Soviet Union on the defensive by taking all kinds of initiatives. In the diplomatic field, for example, it should bombard Moscow with whole arrays of proposals, forcing it to react instead of acting. Experience indicates that a communist regime when placed in this situation reacts slowly and confusedly, and in the process, becomes distracted from its intended aggressive moves.

-- For the same reason, the less communist leaders know about the personnel and intentions of the United States toward them, the better. Uncertainty sows confusion in their mind and serves as a further deterrent.

-- In our political pronouncements we should exercise great care not to fall into semantic traps set by the other side. The dangers inherent in the term "superpowers" has been mentioned above. One should not speak of "socialist countries" when one means "communist countries". Similar care should be employed when using such terms as "peace", "peaceful coexistence", and "detente".

-- One should avoid becoming chummy with Soviet officials; instead, one should assume decorous, grave, and distant airs. One should mistrust their private "confidences" especially if they are critical of their regime and indicate sympathy for the United States and its policies: this is a standard device to disarm suspicion and elicit genuine confidences from the other side.

-- One should never seek to influence communist leaders by appealing to the superior interests of humanity. They may feel such sentiments deep in their hearts but in their political dealings they invariably are realists or even cynics who assume the world is a place where dog eats dog. Humanitarian appeals strike them as a symptom of weakness and anxiety.

-- Tolstoy said that one should not approach a Russian peasant in a direct manner but instead get to the point in a round-about way so that he can figure it out for himself. The same holds true of Soviet officials who are mostly descendants of these peasants.

-- Formal negotiations with the Soviet Union should be entrusted to professionals with long experience in such activity and without a personal or political stake in the outcome. They should preferably be career civil servants or military personnel rather than well-known public figures.

-- One should never try to bluff Russians but always be prepared to back one's warnings and threats with action: they are specialists at exposing bluffs and lose respect for those who perpetrate them.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

June 3, 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR RICHARD PIPES

FROM: ANTHONY R. DOLAN

Read your document. No exaggeration to say, every page shone with brilliance.

CAPTIVE NATIONS

Let's Take the Offensive

ANTHONY R. DOLAN

WHILE THE White House has been working to undermine the Moscow Olympics and U.S. senators have proposed everything from trade embargos to military action in response to the Soviet adventure in Afghanistan, the least risky, most effective means of retaliation—one that has in the past made the Soviets apoplectic and yet curiously diffident—is not discussed.

History notes occasional moments of such Soviet outrage and paralysis. In his recent political memoir, Richard Nixon recounts that shortly before his departure for Moscow and the kitchen debates with Khrushchev in 1959, he visited a dying Secretary of State at Walter Reed Hospital. Dulles warned him to expect a chilly reception in Moscow —because, the previous week, Congress had passed a resolution on the Captive Nations.

Khrushchev's Rage

Dulles's deathbed warning was not overstated: Nixon's reception at the Moscow airport was frigid, and Khrushchev's rage transformed a diplomatic conference between the chairman of the Politburo and the Vice President of the United States into a debate over the comparative stench of pig and horse excrement. Khrushchev finally cooled, but promised Nixon that he would hear more about the captive nations during his stay: one occasion, Nixon says, when the Soviet leader kept his word. And yet the bluster, the former President suggests, hid a wariness about American resolve. On the few subsequent occasions when Western diplomats or even publications have called into question the presence of a Soviet occupation army in Eastern Europe, the Kremlin's reaction has been equally loud, equally pained.

There is no surprise in this—totalitarians can be counted upon to know their own vulnerabilities. A few years ago, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Daniel Patrick Moynihan, after listening to a particularly offensive lecture on American imperialism from the Yugoslavian representative, mentioned quietly the Croatian separatist movement. His sally provoked expressions of horror, then hurried calls between Belgrade and Washington. But the upshot of the diplomatic incident was a break from the anti-American stemwinders and a more subdued Yugoslavian delegation in the General Assembly.

Lawlessness breeds a curious psychology, and it is hardly necessary to look to international events for vivid examples. Students of the phenomenon of entrenched corruption in municipalities and government agencies have long remarked on the astonishing arrogance of mob figures and corrupt officials who —though aware they are under intense scrutiny—continue business as usual. It is only with the indictments and the glare of publicity that this coolness is replaced by hurt, hostile words to reporters, wild swings at photographers. At this point the self-insulation breaks apart and the outlaw sees, almost as if for the first time, himself.

The Kremlin's leaders—aged, comfortable, vastly powerful, surrounded by sycophants—can also not be expected to understand the world as it is, unless they are reminded, stingingly, of their own soft underbelly: the hostility of those they have conquered and the injustice of that domination.

Herewith, then, some foreign-policy initiatives designed to exploit Soviet weakness:

► The U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations should place on the agenda of the General Assembly a demand for the removal of the Soviet occupation army in Eastern Europe as well as in Afghanistan. The ambassador should follow with a lengthy historical account of Soviet subversion and aggression in Eastern Europe, carefully reconstructing—from Yalta onward—the destruction of the national integrity of the Captive Nations, the draining of their natural resources, the deportation of dissidents, the crushed revolts, the assassinations, the massacres.

► The White House should follow with an announcement of a new form of "linkage"—henceforth diplomatic discussions of not only the Afghanistan situation but the range of diplomatic matters from fishing rights to arms reduction will include, at the very least, a ritualistic mention of the Soviet presence in Eastern Europe and demands for a troop-withdrawal timetable.

► With each well-anticipated outburst of invective and hysteria on the part of TASS or *Pravda*, American demands should escalate. The Soviet Union must remove its troops and permit free elections to be held not only in the countries of Central Europe but also in the Baltic nations of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania and, should the rantings continue, the inner republics of the Ukraine, Georgia, and the Moslem areas, which so deeply resent domination by Moscow.

On the Defensive

Such a strategy would be provocative, but, for the Soviets, disarmingly, debilitatingly so. It is calculated to cause not more aggression but rather second thoughts and retrenchment. Not only will it force the Kremlin into a defensive psychology, it will put the geopolitical frame of reference back on center and focus UN debates not on absurd discussions of colonialism in the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico but on the critical issue of the latter half of the twentieth century: Soviet imperial ambitions.

Most important, such a strategy will improve the morale and stability of the West. After the self-deception that led to the spirits of Geneva, Camp David, and Glassboro, to detente and SALT II, to presidential speeches about our "inordinate fear of Communism," we will for a change be telling the truth about the world, about its awful danger, about our resolve to change it. □

Mr. Dolan, winner of a Pulitzer Prize for journalism in 1978, is a reporter for the Stamford Advocate.

USSR - Labor Force/ investment/migration

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LEADERS URGE NEW ECONOMIC PRIORITY FOR RUSSIAN REPUBLIC

IN RECENT PUBLIC STATEMENTS SOVIET LEADERS APPEAR TO HAVE ENDORSED A SHIFT IN REGIONAL INVESTMENT POLICIES THAT WOULD RAISE THE PRIORITY FOR THE RSFSR IN RELATION TO THE LESS DEVELOPED OUTLYING REPUBLICS. PRESIDENT BREZHNEV'S REPORT TO THE CPSU CONGRESS IN FEBRURARY AND SUBSEQUENT ARTICLES BY SENIOR PARTY SECRETARIES SUSLOV AND CHERNENKO HAVE IN EFFECT BACKED A SOLUTION TO THE USSR'S MANPOWER PROBLEMS THAT EMPHASIZES A MIGRATION OF WORKERS FROM THE OUTLYING REPUBLICS TO AREAS TARGETED FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE RSFSR, AS OPPOSED TO A DIVERSION OF MORE INDUSTRIAL INVESTMENT FROM THE RUSSIAN REPUBLIC TO THE PERIPHERY. THE APPROACH NOW ENDORSED AT THE TOP LEVEL HAS BEEN ADVOCATED BY SOME SOVIET DEMOGRAPHERS AND ECONOMISTS BUT CLEARLY RUNS COUNTER TO THE PREFERENCES OF LOCAL RESIDENTS IN MANY OF THE NON-RUSSIAN REPUBLICS.

AS IF TO EMPHASIZE THAT THE CENTRAL REGIONS SHOULD HAVE AN EXPANDED CLAIM TO LIMITED INVESTMENT RESOURCES, BREZHNEV IN HIS CONGRESS SPEECH DESCRIBED DEVELOPMENT OF THE AGRICULTURAL HEARTLAND OF RUSSIA--THE NON-CHERNOZEM ZONE--AS A CURRENT PRIORITY DEMANDING URGENT ATTENTION. HE CALLED UPON ALL REPUBLICS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THIS UNDERTAKING. NEW STRESS ON BUILDING UP THE RUSSIAN REPUBLIC HAS SINCE BEEN UNDERSCORED, FOR EXAMPLE, IN SUSLOV'S ARTICLE IN THE APRIL PARTIYNAYA ZHIZN (NO. 8) ENDORSING THE CALL FOR ALL REPUBLICS TO CONTRIBUTE AID TO THE NON-CHERNOZEM ZONE. THE HIGH PRIORITY ASSIGNED THIS PROJECT WAS EMPHASIZED IN A MID-APRIL PARTY-GOVERNMENT DECREE CALLING FOR INCREASING INVESTMENT IN THE NON-CHERNOZEM REGION AT A RATE ABOUT DOUBLE THAT OF THE ALL-UNION AVERAGE. FURTHER OFFICIAL ENCOURAGEMENT FOR OTHER REPUBLICS TO AID THE RSFSR WAS CONVEYED IN AN UNUSUAL REPORT IN THE 15 MAY PRAVDA INDICATING THAT THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE LOOKED FAVORABLY ON PLANS ANNOUNCED BY UZBEKISTAN, BELORRUSIA, LITHUANIA, AND KIRGIZIA TO CONTRIBUTE LABOR TO PROJECTS IN THE NON-CHERNOZEM.

A NEW TILT TOWARD THE RUSSIAN REPUBLIC WAS ALSO EVIDENT IN THE REVISED DRAFT OF THE 11TH FIVE-YEAR PLAN, ISSUED DURING THE CPSU CONGRESS. THIS DRAFT DROPPED AN ABSOLUTE BAN ON THE NEW CONSTRUCTION OF HEAVY INDUSTRY IN THE EUROPEAN PORTIONS OF THE USSR THAT HAD BEEN INCLUDED IN THE FIRST DRAFT OF THE PLAN, PUBLISHED IN DECEMBER 1980. SN CONTRAST, LOBBYING EFFORTS IN BEHALF OF OTHER REPUBLICS PRODUCED NEGLIGIBLE RESULTS. THE MOST AMBITIOUS OF THESE, A WELL-COORDINATED MAJOR EFFORT BY CENTRAL ASIAN LEADERS TO SPEED DEVELOPMENT OF A COSTLY PROJECT TO DIVERT SIBERIAN WATER TO THEIR REPUBLICS, FAILED TO PRODUCE ANY CHANGE IN THE SECTION OF THE PLAN DISCUSSING THIS PROJECT.

MIGRATION ISSUE

IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE NEW FIVE-YEAR PLAN, SOVIET SPECIALISTS HAVE BEEN ACTIVELY DISCUSSING OPTIMUM INVESTMENT STRATEGIES FOR THE USSR. THE INTIMATE CONNECTION BETWEEN THIS QUESTION AND THE COUNTRY'S MANPOWER PROBLEMS WAS EMPHASIZED IN A RECENT ARTICLE IN THE PARTY THEORETICAL JOURNAL KOMMUNIST BY V. KIRICHENKO, DIRECTOR OF THE STATE PLANNING COMMISSION'S SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF ECONOMICS. IN A DECEMBER ISSUE OF THE JOURNAL (NO. 18), KIRICHENKO POINTED OUT THAT THE CURRENT MANPOWER SHORTAGES IN THE EUROPEAN PARTS OF THE COUNTRY RESULT IN PART FROM THE HIGH RATE OF INDUSTRIAL CONSTRUCTION IN THAT REGION. AT THE SAME TIME, HE OBSERVED, NEW INDUSTRIES IN THE OUTLYING REPUBLICS FREQUENTLY DRAW LABOR FROM THE EUROPEAN REGIONS BECAUSE OF THE LOW LEVEL OF TRAINING OF THE NATIVE POPULATIONS.

TO ADDRESS THIS PROBLEM, KIRICHENKO AND OTHER EXPERTS HAVE BEEN URGING AN ACTIVE PROGRAM OF TRAINING FOR THE NATIVE POPULATION OF THE CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA SO THAT THEY CAN ENTER THE INDUSTRIAL WORK FORCE AND BE ENCOURAGED TO MIGRATE TO OTHER REGIONS OF THE COUNTRY. SOVIET EXPERTS HAVE ACKNOWLEDGED THE RELUCTANCE OF THE NATIVE POPULATION OF THE REPUBLICS TO SETTLE VOLUNTARILY IN OTHER AREAS AND HAVE SUGGESTED THAT IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO ALTER THEIR TRADITIONAL LIFESTYLES FOR SUCH A MIGRATION POLICY TO BE SUCCESSFUL.

SOVIET LEADERS HAVE APPEARED TO ENDORSE SUCH MIGRATION POLICIES IN RECENT MONTHS. IN HIS SPEECH TO THE 26TH CONGRESS, FOR EXAMPLE, BREZHNEV COMPLAINED THAT CURRENT MIGRATION PATTERNS WERE THE "OPPOSITE" OF THOSE THAT WERE MOST DESIRABLE AND URGED RESIDENTS OF THE CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA TO BECOME MORE "ACTIVELY INVOLVED" IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF OTHER REGIONS OF THE COUNTRY. SPEAKING IN TBILISI ON 22 MAY, BREZHNEV ENCOURAGED MORE VIGOROUS EFFORTS TO PROMOTE MIGRATION, SUGGESTING THAT GEORGIA'S EXCESS MANPOWER SHOULD BE BETTER UTILIZED BOTH IN AND "OUTSIDE" THE REPUBLIC. IN THE MAY ISSUE OF THE PARTY JOURNAL POLITICHESKOYE SAMOOBRAZOVANIYE (POLITICAL SELF-EDUCATION), CHERNENKO ALSO ENDORSED THIS APPROACH BY CALLING FOR USE OF THE NATIVE POPULATIONS OF THE CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA "WHEREVER THEY ARE MOST NEEDED" IN THE COUNTRY.

4 JUN 1333Z JTD/CAJ

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL 6/8

Allen Henz

from - Dennis Klein

cc: Dick Piper

6/8/81

Allen -

I see the point Rosenfeld is making, but I think that it is difficult to interpret Soviet behavior since the late '50s as anything but a single-minded drive to displace the United States as the preeminent power in the world. The Soviets themselves talk this way - their concept of a peaceful stable world is one in which they are the predominant economic and military power and enforce the peace. Their record of success in the past 20 years cannot give them any other inclination but that they should continue as before - build up military power, even at the expense of domestic economic progress, continue to take international adventures when the risks are low. With Brezhnev and his cohorts at the controls, I can see no way that they would do anything but what they have been doing.

With this mindset on the other side, I think that our top priority is to reverse the trends of recent years, to convince the Soviets that near-term history is not on their side, and make them retreat to the inner warmth of a Marxist conviction that long-term history is. I can see no other way to do that than to reverse the economic and military trends of the last decade. Only under those changed conditions do I think we stand a serious chance of engaging the Soviet Union in negotiations to stabilize the world situation. (I don't mean that we do not talk to the Soviets for several years; I mean that we talk to them on the basis of optimism on our part of the future economic and military power balance, not pessimism. This is a complete change from Kissinger's approach of striking the best bargain

we can as our power diminishes.)

Within this overall context, I agree with Dick Pipe's ideas that we should attempt to encourage within the Soviet Union those who reject the imperial strain of Soviet Communism. We should encourage those who believe the Soviet Union has reached, or even exceeded, its natural bounds, and are more concerned with internal development. A key part of this is emphasizing the fragility of the present Soviet empire - Afghanistan, Poland, and the Soviet nationalities problems are all symptoms.

This has been somewhat a stream-of-consciousness response to your question - hope some of it makes sense. I'd be glad to discuss further.

Dennis

THE WASHINGTON POST - May 29, 1981

Stephen S. Rosenfeld

Reagan's Soviet Illusion

"Reagan is mortgaging his policy to a single, extreme, arbitrary and historically unproven concept of Soviet power."

The president and his chief aides have been refining and publicizing a composite view of the Soviet Union that starts in insight but verges quickly on illusion. One can't be too dogmatic in these matters, but my fear is that a policy based on this view could, in the name of strength, weaken the American position in the world.

The insightful aspect is that the Soviet Union is two things: a country in trouble and a country that can cause trouble. It is sterile in ideology, beset economically, facing restiveness among its allies and perhaps incipiently among its citizens. At the same time, it has a formidable and growing military capability and a clear tendency, if not a spasmodic compulsion, to test its new power globally.

The inconsistency between these two elements is only superficial. The late Vince Burke of The Los Angeles Times used to say there were two Soviet societies or economies, the open one that you could see didn't work and the secret one that produced, and well, for the military. To keep one eye on the fault lines of Soviet reality while keeping the other on the Kremlin's drive for power seems to me quite sensible. It is even possible to suspect, with the administration, that the Soviet Union may be most dangerous in the period just before its internal weaknesses take an evident toll.

But anyone who has read Soviet history has got to be a bit amused, and sobered, at the lengths to which the president and some of his aides tend to carry this otherwise prudent view. The echoes are there, though the administration does not show signs of hearing them.

Since the first days of the Bolshevik regime in 1917, its Western foes have been predicting its decline and eventual fall. This is usually presented as a fate arising from the regime's own inescapable contradictions. Often, as now, these Western prophecies have had to them a ring of historical determinism recalling nothing so much as past communist predictions of the demise of capitalism. Those latter predictions, of course, we have mocked for decades. The Soviet attitude now is the same.

Reagan and his aides and supporters burst with confidence in the American way. They portray their confidence itself as an instrument of national revival and foreign policy, and they move on easily to mirroring denunciations of the Soviet way. To the extent that this reflects a healthy appreciation of value differences, this is fine. When it becomes a banner of ideological war, however, difficulties arise.

That crusades don't promote compromises is, of course, precisely why a good number of people *like* the Reagan approach to the Soviet Union, which they regard on the Hitler model as an indelibly adventurous power with which workable compromises are out of the question. Others, including me, take a different view: that the Soviet Union is adventurous but pragmatically so, that certain accommodations are possible and desirable, and that at least they should be given a fair try.

If you think the Soviet Union is not only morally unworthy but also headed toward eventual collapse, then it is but one step to standing back and letting history spell itself out and one more step to moving in and giving history a little shove. Along the way there may be moments when practical considerations, such as the clout of American wheat farmers or the need to accommodate allies, force you to deal with Moscow. The basic thrust, however, calls for not dealing, for not linking the American and Soviet futures at all, for keeping the pressure on.

It doesn't seem to be clear in the Reagan view whether Soviet communism is to wither away or to be swept away or to be transformed into something else or just to be brought to heel. But there is a conviction that the regime (now 63 years old) is transient as well as illegitimate, that its economic, imperial and ethnic frailties are such that a policy of strength and endurance will pay off in a reasonable time, and that a change of regime or even a change of heart will produce a suitable partner for the United States.

I think President Reagan is being tough to a fault. He is mortgaging his policy to a single, extreme, arbitrary and historically unproven concept of Soviet power. By so doing, he risks continued strains with friends and allies, whose politics and psyches are geared not for a Reagan-type all-or-nothing roll of the international dice but for nursing their chips and staying in the game for the long haul.

Reagan cannot expect to profit indefinitely from the still-pervasive sense that he is correcting, necessarily, for his predecessors' errors. As time goes on, Americans are bound to become more sensitive to the budgetary and political implications of his policy. The relative consensus prevailing now may cloud. It could take as little as a year.