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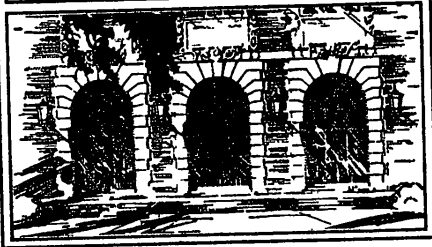
PROSPECTS FOR STABILITY IN THE EUROPEAN SYSTEM

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In 1979, A W DePorte made the argument that the new European system that had evolved out of the cold war was fundamentally stable, and it now stands quite independently of its cold war origins ¹ The stability derives from the fact that the new system serves the minimum interests of most states, especially the most powerful ones By stability, DePorte means that the system helped to ensure the survival of the member states and maintain peace DePorte argued, Those who think they foresee power changes [on the scale of the 1950s] may fairly claim to foresee also major shifts in the European system, others should not ²

The stability of the political equilibrium in its current structural form is due to the fact that it restrains the maximum objectives, while serving at least the minimum interests, of the major actors The primary powers have been forced to abandon hope of achieving their maximum revisionist goals The US rollback policy, the German desire for reunification, the Eastern European desire for independence from Soviet domination, and the Soviet ambitions to dominate Western Europe can no longer be seriously considered The current power configuration enables the essential interests of the major powers to be met The German problem is solved for everybody The communist threat and the capitalist threat have been neutralized since neither side can gain a power advantage over the other The Soviets have gained the means and the rationale for dominance over Eastern Europe Eastern Europe has enjoyed relative peace, and the Eastern European communist regimes can maintain their tenure in power Poland gains protection against German revisionism on the border question Western Europe gains peace and the ability to pass on a large share of its defense costs to the United States The United States gains a stable balance of power in Europe, and an umbrella of peace that shelters an international economy open to US trade and capital, enabling most countries to abandon the economic nationalism required by the self-help system

The political equilibrium is maintained by six essential structural characteristics The first is a balance of power between the United States and the Soviet Union, and the overall East-West balance Second, each superpower is more powerful than any European state or potential combination of states Third, the states in each half of Europe were linked to their protecting or hegemonic superpower by a thickening web of security, political, and economic ties Fourth, the two subsystems were asymmetrical The Western subsystem was based on more or less voluntary commitments, while the Eastern subsystem was based on Soviet power The division of Germany is the fifth characteristic ³ The sixth implicit characteristic is that there is no extra-European state on the horizon with the power to alter these balances in the manner in which the United States transformed the European state system beginning with its involvement in the two world wars

The thesis of this paper is that the power shifts that have occurred since 1979 have not been the kind that are likely to upset the political equilibrium. Moreover, the major sources of change that are acting on the system seem to be reinforcing, or at least not disrupting, that stability.

The Thesis Challenged

1 From the Left

This thesis has been challenged in recent years from a number of directions. On the left, Sherle Schwenninger and Jerry Sanders argue that events have rendered the original transatlantic bargain nonsensical.⁴ They argue that Europe and Japan are perfectly capable of defending themselves, while opposing many US policy positions on issues such as Vietnam, arms control, the Middle East, Central America, interest rates, terrorism, Libya, and economic sanctions against the Soviet Union.⁵ The central threat, they imply, comes from the arms race instigated by the Reagan defense buildup, while the political and economic realities in Europe have made Soviet aggression unthinkable.⁶ The main reason is that Moscow's ambitious plans to increase the GNP by 4 percent a year until the year 2000 require not only a stable and peaceful international environment, but also Western developmental assistance.⁷ They argue that an aggressive NATO modernization of its conventional forces could reinforce the position of those in the Kremlin who have argued for their own high-tech conventional strategy.⁸ Their recommendations include a reduction of the US defense burden without increasing Europe's defense spending (it would be provocative and reduce European demand for US exports), encouragement of Soviet economic development, and integration into the world economy.⁹

2 From the Right

Henry Kissinger proclaims a crisis of confidence in the Atlantic alliance.¹⁰ He argues that the fear of decoupling, combined with Soviet conventional superiority, will make it probable that Europe will seek new directions in the years ahead. Some countries will be tempted to maneuver between East and West; others will go in the opposite direction and seek to build up their own nuclear forces. In either case, the old pattern of American tutelage will end.¹¹ Kissinger feels that a policy of denuclearization would open the floodgates of neutralism.¹²

As Michael Lucas notes, Some NATO officials worry that the Germans will see Gorbachev as an excuse to opt out of the East-West conflict, as one former US official put it ¹³ Lucas cites Sam Nunn as saying, One NATO road leads backward down a slippery slope to European denuclearization, American disengagement, and Soviet domination The other NATO road leads forward to the solid ground of solidarity, stability, and security ¹⁴

Stability or Change

Certainly, change is the norm rather than the exception in international politics, indeed DePorte notes that stability is a special case of change, not the natural order of things ¹⁵ The European system, now as always, is experiencing pressures from a number of different directions These pressures, however, will not affect the stability of the system unless they either induce a significant change in the distribution of power, or alter countries perceptions of their interests The remainder of the argument will assess the impact of the various forces of change on each of the structural components of the system

The United States-Soviet Strategic Balance

The Soviet Union achieved strategic parity with the United States in the late 1960s This parity was codified by the SALT process during the 1970s Since then, there have been perennial warnings about the erosion of the credibility of extended deterrence Extended deterrence, however, is still the declared US policy The presence of US ground troops and tactical nuclear weapons, moreover, would make it impossible for the United States to separate itself from any European conflict History has not yet invalidated extended deterrence Twenty years after the Soviet achievement of nuclear parity with the United States, Western Europe still has democratic institutions and market economies The United States has maintained its presence on the continent The Soviet Union has not invaded Western Europe Nuclear parity between the superpowers is likely to continue in the foreseeable future, and a new strategic arms agreement seems possible This pillar of stability is likely to remain intact

The Intermediate Range and Shorter-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) Treaty does not undermine this stability Treaty critics argue that the

real reason the Pershing 2 missiles were placed in Europe was to enhance extended deterrence, not to remove the Soviet SS-20s¹⁶ Kissinger explains that with intermediate-range US weapons in Europe, the Soviets could not threaten Europe selectively, any nuclear attack and any successful conventional attack would trigger an American counterblow from European installations. The Soviets would have to calculate—even in the case of a conventional attack—that we would use our missiles if they used even conventional weapons in Europe, that in turn would trigger our strategic forces.¹⁷ The zero option in the INF treaty therefore weakens extended deterrence. Jonathan Dean rightly points out that this is based on the assumption that only visible land-based deployment of American nuclear weapons in Europe would really convince Soviet leaders that they risked strategic nuclear war if they decided to attack Western Europe.¹⁸ Kissinger's next line concedes that other kinds of nuclear weapons would do just as well as the ones banned by the INF. In that sense, the US offer [to deploy] intermediate-range missiles was a selfless act. If we needed intermediate-range weapons for purely *American* purposes at all—which is doubtful—we could have deployed them more easily and with much less controversy on ships.¹⁹ Dean adds that the US decision to respond to a Soviet attack would not depend on whether the missiles were land-based or not, but would depend on other factors such as the balance at the time and the President's personality.²⁰ More seriously, it is difficult to see the original coupling link in Kissinger's argument. It is not clear how the use of US INF missiles in Europe would automatically lead to the use of US strategic missiles as long as the Soviets abstained from attacking the United States directly. Indeed, INF missiles could themselves lead to decoupling, since the United States could use the INF missiles first while delaying the response of using the strategic missiles. In any event, the Hudson Institute study of INF cites Kenneth Adleman, who notes that after the treaty, the West would still retain over 4,000 nuclear warheads for a variety of US and allied delivery vehicles—nuclear capable aircraft, including F-111s with greater range than the Pershing II, short-range missiles, and nuclear artillery, several hundred Sea Launched Ballistic Missile (SLBM) reentry vehicles would also remain dedicated to NATO. British and French systems would remain and modernization could proceed as planned.²¹

The Conventional Balance

Many would argue that the East-West balance in conventional weapons seems to be less stable than the strategic balance. Despite the talk of INF treaty, *glasnost*, *perestroika*, and the new thinking in Soviet foreign policy, there is no evidence that the Soviets have now begun to lower their defense budgets or otherwise unilaterally reduce their own force levels or those of their Warsaw Pact allies.

Meanwhile, the four largest NATO powers are facing domestic political pressures and economic pressures to unilaterally reduce defense expenditures. US annual trade and government budget deficits are still over \$100 billion. Political support for defense spending is weakening. It is inevitable that NATO spending will be targeted for cuts since over half of the defense budget is attributable to NATO. United States calls for more allied burden sharing are a part of this trend. Britain, despite its anemic economic condition, already shoulders the largest financial burden in NATO, aside from the United States. Its defense budget comprises 5.5 percent of its GNP (1984).²² Its defense budget is the third- or fourth-largest [in the world] (depending upon how one measures China's total), its navy the fourth-largest, and its airforce the fourth-largest.²³ It has been argued that Britain's Trident program will 'at best, inhibit a major British contribution to enhancing NATO's non-nuclear provision, and at worst, could impel a reduction in the country's current contribution to the Alliance's conventional capabilities.²⁴ Prospects for increases in the French budget for conventional forces are almost as bad. Given the delicate state of the French economy, the 4.2 percent of the GNP it spends on defense cannot be increased by very much.²⁵ It will be further constrained by the nuclear modernization program, along with the fact that 30 percent of the French defense budget is spent on nuclear arms.²⁶ In West Germany, the government desires to keep defense spending to 3.5 or 4 percent of the GNP.²⁷

West Germany, moreover, is suffering from adverse demographic trends that will greatly reduce its pool of eligible draftees. Record and Rivkin argue that there is virtually no possibility that the *Bundeswehr* can maintain its present strength [495,000] beyond the early 1990s. By 1995 the *Bundeswehr* could shrivel to a force two-thirds its present strength (i.e., to 335,000).²⁸ Ministry of Defense officials say the *Bundeswehr* is almost certain to decline to a force of 400,000-450,000 men within the next decade.²⁹

There are four main reasons why these trends are not likely to lead to instability. First, the Soviets do not have the capacity to take advantage of this by increasing their own defense spending in the absence of cost-reducing arms control agreements. William Safire cites recently revised CIA estimates of Soviet growth rates which indicate that Soviet growth has been much lower than previously estimated. The implication is that Moscow's arms budget, not including the costs of empire, is closer to 25 percent of the GNP.³⁰

Second, NATO nuclear deterrence will remain intact. Extended deterrence is still declared US policy. The British and French governments are proceeding on schedule with their nuclear modernization programs, which have solid public support—at least in France. The conventional balance has always been supported by the nuclear balance.

Third, NATO weapons have become much more powerful since the late 1970s. NATO has introduced 10,000 new main battle tanks with laser range finders and ballistic computers since 1980 while half of the Soviet tank force, the aging T-54/55s, continue to grow older than their current 40 years.³¹ NATO has advanced F-15 and F-16 aircraft along with the naval F-14 and F-18. The new stealth fighter is now beginning to be introduced into the US arsenals. NATO may have fewer men, but its forces are not likely to be significantly weaker as a result. The reliability question of Eastern European forces and the upset in the Soviet demographic balance between Russians and Asians will offset, to some degree, the impending reductions in Western manpower. Moreover, birthrates in Asia are not down, and thus may require the Soviets to shift more forces to the Asian fronts in the future.

The fourth reason is the difficulty of reversing Gorbachev's new approach in foreign policy. Indeed, a major factor in the pressure on Western European governments to reduce defense budgets is the perception of a receding Soviet threat. As long as this perception is accurate, however, and if economic reconstruction is really motivated by economic and consumer concerns, stagnation or reductions in Western defense capabilities should pose little threat to continued stability. A return to intimidation would only result in continued restrictions on Soviet access to Western technology.

The serious danger that could theoretically emerge would be reductions in defense budgets leading to a reversal of the Soviet policy of detente and a return to a policy of intimidation, whether as a result of Gorbachev changing course or as a result of his fall from power brought about by KGB and bureaucratic fears of domestic instability. There is strong evidence indicating that such a policy reversal is not likely. First, the Soviet program calling for a 4 percent annual growth rate up to the next century, will require a period of relaxed international tensions and access to Western technology. A return to intimidation would jeopardize both. Moreover, a recent CIA report showed Soviet economic growth in 1987 to be stagnant at 0.5 percent. The CIA predicted that the Soviet GNP would grow at an average of less than 2 percent per year for the next two years.³² Continuing weakness in the Soviet economy greatly reduces Soviet ability to increase defense spending and avoid consumer unrest. Returning to intimidation would only stimulate an arms race the Soviets could not afford. Second, Gorbachev wants to prevent, or at least postpone, the development and deployment of the West's technologically advanced weapons system, of which SDI is at the top of the list, but that also includes a number of conventional weapons as well.³³ Intimidation would reverse the peaceful Soviet image and dash all hopes of stopping deployment of new high technology weapons.

If the Soviet Union did return to a policy of intimidation, the Western European reaction would probably be one of resistance rather than neutralism, as some are concerned it might be. It is unwise to assume that

countries do not learn from history or adapt to circumstances. There are significant conservative political factions in Western Europe that have taken the lead against Soviet intimidation in the past and would undoubtedly do so in the future. These are the Europeans whom Kissinger and other conservatives cite when they wish to document European fears regarding such problems as decoupling and credibility.

Western Europe has a long history of resistance to aggression, even in difficult times. Europe backed the US policy of aiding the resistance in Afghanistan and voted for the Afghanistan resolution in the UN General Assembly. The Berlin blockade was strongly resisted. NATO followed through on the Dual Track decision to deploy INF missiles in response to the Soviet introduction of SS-20s. Britain and France responded to Imperial German aggression in World War I. The critics all point to the example of the appeasement of Hitler, citing it as a demonstration of the weak backbone of the West. This explanation is highly misleading. If they had had the power, Britain and France probably would have resisted Hitler earlier. The French forces were set up for a defensive war, an offensive action would have overextended French forces lacking the logistic capability for an offensive war. They felt stronger on the military defensive. World War I pushed Britain literally to the edge of bankruptcy, the Treasury warned that another war would be an unmitigated financial disaster. The Chiefs of Staff, in any case, indicated that British unpreparedness was such that war should not be risked before spring 1939, at the earliest.³⁴ Even the Soviet Union's internal weakness was such that it signed the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939. The Soviet objective was to avoid war, if possible, and if a war was unavoidable, to ensure that the burden fell on the West first.³⁵ The West would have resisted Hitler if it had had the power, but it didn't. With the NATO alliance and the United States, Western Europe does have the power to reduce any intimidation by the Soviet Union which, in all likelihood, would only strengthen NATO.

The New Thinking and Soviet Foreign Policy

Some authorities argue that the Soviet leopard has not changed its spots. Dimitri Simes claims that Gorbachev is merely displaying unusual tactical flexibility in the pursuit of traditional Soviet objectives.³⁶ Among these objectives, according to Simes, is maintaining control over Eastern Europe, preventing, whenever possible, the emergence of unfriendly governments on the Soviet periphery, sponsoring Third World clients, aggressively seeking to undermine and/or replace US geopolitical influence, and developing a military capability sufficient both to assure the USSR's ability to deal with any conceivable coalition of enemies and to project force on a global scale.³⁷ While these objectives demand careful attention on the

part of the West, they are hardly of the apocalyptic dimension portrayed by Caspar Weinberger, who still argues that 'world domination is the never-changing Soviet goal'³⁸ According to Simes, most Soviet people are intensely patriotic and cherish the Soviet great power image Gorbachev's own devotion to Soviet greatness is not in doubt On the contrary, he has often emphasized that one of the principal reasons behind his call for far-reaching economic reform is the need to maintain and enhance the Soviet role in international affairs³⁹ While the Soviets have begun to display a greater flexibility in arms control talks and areas outside of Europe, they have not taken any concrete steps to revise their force posture to a more defensive stance Soviet internal debates on strategic doctrine have not yet produced tangible alterations in force structures They are careful not to allow their flexibility to be interpreted as a sign of weakness

There is considerable evidence, however, that Gorbachev is acting to relax international tensions and reallocate foreign policy and defense costs in order to give higher priority to domestic and economic reforms The previous policy of intimidation seems to be giving way to a policy of conciliation If it proves enduring, the 'new thinking' in Soviet foreign policy will continue to be an important factor in continued European stability

The INF treaty and the impending withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan are the most dramatic signs of the Soviet abandonment of their policy of intimidation The Soviets abandoned or compromised on the last-minute obstacles that threatened to delay Senate consideration of the treaty George Schultz concluded that 'we have reached a completely satisfactory agreement on all of those issues'⁴⁰

The Soviets have followed a policy of conciliation on regional issues as well, which were until now considered to be the main sticking point hindering better East-West relations The Soviets commenced their withdrawal from Afghanistan on schedule This withdrawal, moreover, will pave the way for better relations with China and its ally, Pakistan Gorbachev's Vladivostok speech in July 1986, made a significant concession on the border dispute with China⁴¹ The Angolan government has accepted the principle of total Cuban withdrawal, and Soviet officials have hinted that they would not block progress toward a settlement⁴² Gareth Porter is of the opinion that the Soviets have become more active diplomatically in promoting a negotiated settlement on the Cambodian question, and that Hanoi clearly cannot count on indefinite Soviet support for its occupation of Cambodia⁴³ The Soviets have exercised restraint in the Persian Gulf, even hinting that they may, under certain circumstances, be willing to go along with sanctions against Iran They have begun, seriously, to explore the possibility of improved relations with Israel Galia Golan notes Gorbachev's declaration 'that the absence of diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and Israel cannot be considered normal'⁴⁴ Soviet unwillingness to

accommodate Ortega's demands for assistance probably reflects a desire to avoid complicating relations with the United States as much as the need to avoid the high economic costs that would be entailed. The Soviets seem anxious to avoid more multibillion dollar Cubas or Vietnams. The *New York Times* reports that the Soviet Union has taken measures recently to reduce its support for the Cuban economy.⁴⁵

There have also been reports that the Soviet Union has been making fundamental changes in its military doctrine, from a preemptive strike to reasonable sufficiency or defense sufficiency. According to Raymond Garthoff and a Department of Defense official, most experts doubt the Soviet strategic about-face is a ploy to lull the West into complacency.⁴⁶ Soviet Defense Minister Yazov was even willing to discuss doctrine during his unprecedented official visit, in Washington, with US Defense Secretary Carlucci. Carlucci's evaluation of these talks was cautiously optimistic. While his talks with Yazov 'produced no concrete proof of any change in doctrine, Carlucci believes that simply holding a meeting set an important precedent. The fact that 'Soviet officials are at least talking intently about such a change is a sign of hope.⁴⁷

Certainly the INF treaty and prospective START agreements enhance the importance of conventional weapons, possibly giving the Soviets a military advantage. Henry Rowan and Charles Wolf, Jr. point out that the Soviets may use any financial savings gained from arms control to concentrate on other types of weapons. They argue that resources may be transferred instead to command, control, and communications, militarization of space, airlift capability, defense research, or aid to the empire.⁴⁸ Yet these arguments neglect two important considerations. First, savings out of current budgets would be negligible. The systems are already built. More money might even be needed for reductions (to destroy the missiles) and verification. Once built, nuclear weapons are relatively cheap. Any savings would have to come from future programs. Second, to the extent that there are savings, the United States would be equally able to take advantage of them. A START agreement could easily limit the number of expensive new strategic systems, such as B-1 and Stealth Bombers, new ICBMs, or more Trident submarines, that the United States must acquire. To the extent that this happens, funds would be freed for use on conventional weapons. An agreement on short-range nuclear weapons could free British and French funds currently earmarked for nuclear modernization, easing pressure on conventional weapons budgets. The Soviets could have little interest in the technological race in conventional arms that would ensue. Even Dimitri Simes allows that an intensified technological arms race would occupy thousands of Soviet scientists and engineers whose work is vital for economic modernization.⁴⁹ This would seem to point to a tangible Soviet interest in a conventional arms control agreement.

Whether the new Soviet flexibility is motivated by primarily economic concerns or military concerns relating the need to keep up with the West, the issue of Soviet motivation will have little impact on the question of stability. If the Soviet Union is motivated primarily by economic concerns, then stability is almost assured. The Soviets would not be likely to invade Eastern Europe, and the pace of European integration would continue and possibly be expanded to include the East. Small changes in the conventional balance would not make much difference.

Yet, even given an unreformed, ever aggressive Soviet Union, domestic and economic reforms will still be necessary. This is acknowledged even by those hawks who ceaselessly warn about the need for ever higher defense budgets to combat the ever increasing Soviet threat. Former National Security Adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski declares that the Soviet Union has clearly failed as an economic rival [and it] does not represent a challenge to American global primacy as such.⁵⁰ Moreover, 'over the next two or three decades the Soviet Union will fade even further.'⁵¹ Even Caspar Weinberger can reluctantly acknowledge that Gorbachev most likely does want to buy some time from the West in order to stimulate his country's moribund economy.⁵²

The genie is now out of the bottle, reform in the Soviet Union is now underway. To stop it now, to reverse the process before it could be given a fair chance, would be a bitter disappointment to many. Historically, the Soviets have proved competent at handling the dangers that attend a dashing of rising expectations, such as Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968, although the Shah in neighboring Iran was less successful. Yet, any uprising, with its attendant political and economic dislocations following the subsequent repression, would gravely weaken the Soviet Union and hinder its ability to conduct an effective foreign policy, although probably not to the extent of 1917.

There are other reasons why it does not matter if the Soviets are pursuing economic reforms only to enhance their ability to compete with the West. First, the reforms might not work anyway, and the Soviet threat would be still further reduced by its continued relative economic decline. Second, any savings obtained by the Soviets from their military budgets will be matched or exceeded by savings from the military budgets of the Western alliance. If both sides use the savings productively, the prospect is for Soviets to do little more than hold their own in terms of relative economic standing in comparison with the West. If or when the Soviets decided to reverse their tactics again towards a more aggressive strategy, the West would be able to draw on increased resources to meet the renewed threat.

Eastern Europe

It is difficult to foresee the impact that Gorbachev's policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika* will have on Eastern Europe. The leaders of East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Bulgaria are all in their mid 70s. Ceausescu is 69. The current leaders in Eastern Europe are unenthusiastic about the application of *glasnost* and *perestroika* in their own countries. The danger of domestic instability from these policies is much greater in Eastern Europe than in the Soviet Union. Charles Gati asserts that any significant efforts at reform would only generate demands for more—more democracy, more independence, more consumer goods, higher living standards.⁵³ Eastern European leaders also worry that Gorbachev may not be able successfully to implement his reforms in the Soviet Union. Nor are they sanguine about his prospects for staying in power.⁵⁴ Even if the Eastern European leaders were interested in reforms, they do not have a Brezhnev or Chernenko, as Gorbachev does, on whom to blame past problems.⁵⁵

Yet, the test will come within the next few years as the old regimes are replaced. The process is already beginning in Hungary. Prime Minister Karoly Grosz, regarded as favoring more radical changes, has announced a special conference to be held on May 20, 1988, on the subject of Kadar's position in the government. According to the *New York Times*, the conference 'is also expected to look at major questions such as redefining the leading role of the Communist Party, and reducing its role in the day-to-day running of the country, particularly in economic matters.'⁵⁶ The Soviet Union will be forced to confront a new generation of leaders in Eastern Europe within a few years.

There are essentially two possible outcomes. The first is Soviet acquiescence in whatever course Eastern Europe decides to take, even if it means growing political liberalization and increased economic ties with the West, along with at least some Eastern European sensibility to Soviet concerns. This outcome would maintain or enhance European stability, and the slowly deteriorating conventional balance would be of small consequence.

The other possibility is that the Soviets will feel forced to intervene militarily, whether to prevent too much independence and movement towards the West or to put down a rebellion against an Eastern European government that tried to reform too slowly. This prospect is just as likely as the first. Simes believes that the Brezhnev Doctrine is very much a part of Gorbachev's policy. He quotes from Gorbachev's speech at the Polish party congress in June 1986:

socialism now manifests itself as an international reality, as an alliance of states closely linked by political, economic, cultural and defense interests. To threaten the socialist system, to try to undermine it from the outside and wrench a country away from the socialist community means to encroach not only on the will of the people, but also on the entire postwar arrangement and, in the final analysis, on peace.⁵⁷

One observer worries that Soviet military repression might drift into an unplanned conflict, with local skirmishes escalating into a major war.⁵⁸

This outcome is highly unlikely, since neither superpower would have the interest or the ability to begin an all-out East-West conflict in that event. The West has a long history of nonintervention in the periodic Soviet invasions of its satellites. It would be very difficult for the United States to act without its allies, and there would be little prospect for an agreement on military intervention. NATO, moreover, does not have the supplies or the bridging and pipelaying equipment needed for an invasion of Eastern Europe. It is highly unlikely that the Soviet Union would attempt to undertake a preemptive attack. During an invasion of Eastern Europe, the Soviets would have to watch their fellow Warsaw Pact armies very carefully. If other Eastern European governments were not supporting the action against the offending country, it is even more unlikely they would support an invasion of the West. In this situation, the Soviets could definitely not rely on their Warsaw Pact allies in an attack on the West. The Soviets would be hopelessly overextended if, deprived of their allies, they tried to fight Eastern and Western Europe simultaneously. It would be uncharacteristic of the Soviets to take risks on that scale. An invasion of Western Europe would probably create internal divisions within the Soviet leadership, and it is unlikely that the General Secretary would risk his position on a scheme with such a small chance of success. The possibility of accident is equally unlikely. Since the Cuban missile crisis, both superpowers have learned how to give the other side a face-saving way out when a conflict is not desired.

The outcome of the recent labor turmoil in Poland demonstrates the interest that all parties have in preventing a violent confrontation. According to the *New York Times*, the solution reached in Gdansk was a face-saving compromise for both sides. Solidarity was free to continue its pressure on the authorities to follow through on commitments to economic change, including union pluralism. The communist authorities were spared the international outcry that certainly would have followed a decision to end the strike with broken bones and bloodied heads.⁵⁹ Solidarity leaders are careful not to destabilize the situation to such an extent that the Soviet Union would be forced to intervene. They do not want to undermine Gorbachev's authority and his policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika*. The Polish government is equally anxious to avoid Soviet intervention, which would

only exacerbate its lack of domestic political legitimacy. It also recognizes that domestic stability depends on some degree of reform. For its part, the Soviet Union is eager to avoid a situation where it would have to intervene in Poland. A military intervention in Poland would destroy all the progress that the Soviet Union has made in enhancing its public image in the West. The likely Western reaction would probably include a military buildup, which would be difficult for the Soviet Union to match, and restrictions on economic relations. Soviet foreign policy would be set back twenty years by an intervention.

Foreign Policy Distractions from Domestic Failures

One oft-cited danger is that if Soviet domestic reforms misfire and cause political instability, the Soviet regime might be tempted to embark on foreign policy adventures in order to deflect attention from domestic problems. William Hyland worries that if Gorbachev senses that he is failing and struggles to survive, it could be a dangerous period for the United States as the temptation to compensate for internal failures with foreign policy adventures may prove irresistible.⁶⁰ The fact that people who worry about this problem never provide any clues as to what form such an adventure might take, is but one indication of the improbability of its occurrence. Restricting access to Berlin and putting missiles in Cuba have already been tried more than once, there would be no reason for the Soviets to suppose that the Western reaction would be any different another time around, especially since the West is much stronger than it was during the previous crises. Intervention in the Middle East would be the height of folly. The Soviets cannot but be painfully aware of American sensitivities in this region. This is where the erstwhile accommodationist, Carter, drew the line. A Democratic Congress added to the Reagan Administration's requests for covert funding of the Afghan guerrillas and insisted that Stinger missiles be provided. The Democratic Congress has also refused to challenge Administration naval missions in the Persian Gulf. On an earlier occasion, Henry Kissinger raised the alert status of US nuclear forces as a warning against Soviet intervention in the Middle Eastern.

Any aggressive adventures would be attended by risks of a high degree, the type of risks that the Soviets have typically been loathe to take. It is difficult to generalize, but historically, the Soviets have not engaged in questionable foreign policy adventures during periods of internal weakness. The Soviets have probably not forgotten that it was the attempt by the Czars to bolster their regime by entering World War I, that enabled the Bolsheviks to gain power. The internal turmoil after the Revolution in 1917 was followed by the Brest-Litovsk treaty, authorized by Lenin in order to

consolidate his domestic control. Stalin was desperately afraid of war with Hitler, which he feared could lead to the destruction of his regime.⁶¹ He took all possible precautions to avoid war. When Hitler's invasion finally came, Stalin was reluctant even to order resistance until he was convinced Hitler had launched an all-out attack.⁶² After the War, Stalin did pursue a policy of isolation and hostility towards the West,⁶³ but military initiatives, such as Iran, were more of a probing nature, and imposition of control over Eastern Europe was seen as a strategic necessity. Yugoslavia was the driving force behind the Greek communists, and Stalin's refusal to be dragged into an East-West conflict over Tito's ambitions over Trieste and China's ambitions over Formosa, were major factors in the Soviet-Yugoslav and Sino-Soviet splits. The only real exception was the Cuban Missile Crisis, which illustrates the penalty for failure. Khrushchev was ousted and his policy condemned as a harebrained scheme.

Current non-Soviet examples further illustrate the difficulty of this concept. The penalty for failure in these adventures is the near certainty of the downfall of the regime, as the Argentine Generals learned after the Falklands. Reagan's Grenada adventure succeeded only because it was a situation of killing an ant with a sledgehammer. The Soviets may have a sledgehammer, but ants are in short supply.

Any adventure of an aggressive character could easily ruin everything the Soviets have gained through detente, gains that were pursued under a policy initiated by the conservative Brezhnev regime. Gorbachev could definitely improve his domestic position by foreign policy adventures, but not of the aggressive variety. More likely candidates for adventures would be peace overtures in Korea or Indochina, or dramatic arms control proposals in START, short-range nuclear missiles, or conventional arms in Europe.

Finally, if Gorbachev's new policies did lead to domestic political instability, there would be no reason to expect a foreign policy adventure to solve the problem. A foreign policy victory, whether of the aggressive or accommodative variety, might placate disgruntled party leaders, but for domestic unrest it could do no more than buy time or temporarily deflect *international* attention from the problem. As soon as the euphoria over a foreign policy victory subsided, the domestic instability problem would resurface. In this situation, the only solution that would maintain the power of the Communist party, as presently constituted, would be a return to Stalinist methods for which the apparatus still exists. To embark on an aggressive foreign policy adventure during a period of repression of widespread agitation against the regime, would be a dangerous overextension of resources.

Western European Orientation

1 Unity

DePorte argues that a united Western Europe would constitute a major structural change in the European system, the fundamental bipolarity would be ended⁶⁴ While true, the important issue is what the impact of greater Western European unity on the stability of the European system Historically, economic integration has been much more successful than efforts at political integration, and it is likely that this pattern will continue There are two possible sources of pressure, however, that could give political integration the urgency it has not had until now These would be a US decision to force burden sharing on the European members of NATO, or right wing worries about the credibility of extended deterrence Much would depend on whether greater unity was a result of cooperation with the United States or of clumsy US diplomacy

If unity resulted from US clumsiness at a time of economic dislocation, there would be a danger that Western Europe would increasingly resort to heightened economic nationalism This is not very likely, however, even in this extreme case European interests are adequately served by the international economic system, as presently constituted, there would be no guarantee that other arrangements, especially a trade war with the United States, would bring any improvement Indeed, the United States represents fully one-third of the world's industrial markets⁶⁵ According to Donald Straszheim, president of Merrill Lynch Economics, basically anybody in any industry has to be a player in the United States if they want to be a big player in the world⁶⁶ Moreover, large transnational economic institutions, such as multinational corporations and banks, have a vested interest in the current system, and would strongly oppose a return to European economic nationalism

The only real potential danger is that a more united Europe, less dependent on the United States for its security, would challenge US policies in international economic institutions, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), with increased regularity and vigor One source of contention could be an increase in Special Drawing Rights (SDR) or the reallocation of IMF quotas This could become increasingly important now that the United States is a debtor nation Now, the stick of burden

sharing is always an implicit threat against excessive European actions against US economic interests, if the stick is used once, its power becomes negligible

The most significant result of greater unity would be that the Europeans would have to take responsibility for their actions, they would no longer be able to play off the superpowers off against each other. Consequently, greater European unity and burden sharing would probably not lead to a divergence of interests on arms control. As currently constituted, the British and French governments are intent on pursuing their nuclear modernization programs, and would likely insist that conventional arms talks be given priority over further nuclear arms talks. The United States even now supports the British and French position on nuclear arms, there is no reason why this would change with greater European unity. Additionally, greater unity would enable Europe to achieve a greater degree of efficiency in military procurement and strategy.

The most likely outcome is for a gradual, not precipitous, move towards unity. Any burden sharing would likely be gradual. Nobody is suggesting that all US troops be withdrawn at once. Extended deterrence remains declared US policy.

2 On Fragmentation

The right wing sectors of opinion tend to fear that decoupling, excessive pressures for burden sharing, and the alleged Soviet siren song will lead to fragmentation and neutralism, resulting in the long-sought Soviet goal of elimination of US influence from Europe. One observer worries that by fostering intra-German relations, for example, the USSR eventually could weaken West Germany's commitment to NATO and sow further disunity in Western responses to the Soviet line.⁶⁷ Kissinger worries that while the Soviet Union and its Eastern European allies have no conceivable interest in actual unification, they could discourage the Federal Republic from making further pro-Western moves without paying the price of actual unification by manipulating the slogan of German unity.⁶⁸

These kinds of arguments rarely present an analysis of actual German opinion. When Kissinger wants to criticize US policy, he defines the German component of European opinion as the Christian Democratic leaders whom he has known and who have [had] responsibility for foreign policy and defense for decades. After a lifetime of unquestioning support for American policies, they find themselves adrift in an unfamiliar world in which American briefers parrot the slogans of their antinuclear adversaries.⁶⁹ When Kissinger wants to highlight what he sees to be the

dangers of US policy, European opinion becomes an ocean ready to rush through the floodgates of neutralism ⁷⁰

There are three strands of thought within the Socialist Democratic Party (SDP) on security policy—the anti-nuclear left led by LaFontaine, the center left group of Bonn security professionals, including Horst Ehmke, and the moderate Atlanticist group ⁷¹ Only the left wing of the SDP led by LaFontaine has rejected nuclear deterrence and advocated pulling out of the military wing of NATO ⁷² The center recognizes a continuing need for NATO and an alliance with the United States, recognizing that the US connection maximizes the West German bargaining position with the East ⁷³ Horst Ehmke, a leader of the centrist wing of the SDP, writes that at a minimum, the alliance must insist that the Soviet Union forego its current offensive-oriented posture in Europe and restructure its forces in a more defensive fashion We must also insist that Moscow revise its notion of peaceful coexistence, as Gorbachev now seems to be doing, to disavow unequivocally the Marxist-Leninist tenet that Western imperialism is incapable of peace ⁷⁴ He argues for a stronger European pillar in the alliance, ⁷⁵ and advocates greater Franco-German cooperation on security matters ⁷⁶ Ehmke concludes by asserting the need for US cooperation if detente is to succeed, but predicts that if the United States hesitates, or worse, reverts to military confrontation, and if it continues to oppose the expansion of East-West trade, then either detente or the alliance will be undermined—sadly, probably both ⁷⁷ The implied threat, the undermining of the alliance, could only mean the withdrawal of Germany from NATO Yet it is not clear that Ehmke could carry out this threat even if the SDP had power, if it required the Soviet Union to alter its force structures and renounce the struggle against Western imperialism, and also that the Soviet Union was not willing to meet these conditions The Soviets would certainly not be enamored of greater French-German defense cooperation The rhetoric seems more an attempt to influence US policy than a rush through the floodgates of neutralism

Any SDP government would require an alliance with the Greens, if they can replace the Free Democratic Party (FDP) as the third party The first would be opposed by the radical faction of the Greens and the center elements of the SDP The attempt at such a union could easily result in a schism in either the Greens or the SDP or both An alliance with the FDP would probably require the retention of Genscher as Foreign Minister and a foreign policy that would, at a minimum, require substantial material concessions from the Soviets before any drastic actions with respect to NATO could even be contemplated Szabo concludes that a Red-Green coalition is very unlikely to come to power in Bonn in the medium term ⁷⁸ In any case, the SDP will not have a chance to gain power until at least the mid 1990s ⁷⁹

The fact is that nobody, except the Germans, has any shred of interest in German unity The Soviets would never follow through on any offer of

reunification Brzezinski is of the opinion that the Soviets have few carrots they can offer to West Germany since East Germany is the linchpin of Soviet control in Eastern Europe, something which is non-negotiable In the present circumstances, releasing East Germany—as the price of seducing West Germany—would deprive the Soviet Union of its key bastion for the exercise of effective Soviet military and political control over Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary ⁸⁰ The other European powers would exert enormous pressure on the Federal Republic the moment unification became a realistic possibility, possibly including drastic measures to revoke its privileges in the EEC

The German left may be overly optimistic, but they will eventually become disillusioned if the Soviets do not give them what they want In the meantime, it is unlikely that they will take any drastic action, such as withdrawal from NATO or expelling US troops from their soil without concrete Soviet concessions

Rise of Extra-European Powers

European politics were set in balance after World War II by the intervention of two extra-European powers the United States and the Soviet Union In theory, this balance could be upset in the future by the intervention of other extra-European powers In the long run, the new powers of Japan, China, India, and the East Asian NICs, will certainly have some affect on the balance Today, India and China together possess one-third of the world's population A recent Census Bureau report said that by 2050, Nigeria and Indonesia are expected to surpass the Soviet Union and the United States as the third and fourth most populous nations ⁸¹ China and, very likely, India already possess nuclear capabilities When these countries become fully industrialized, they could become a real threat to Western dominance of international politics and economics The Soviets are surely aware of these trends which are undoubtedly a cause for great concern These trends, by themselves, might be considered sufficient justification for Gorbachev's economic reform program Indeed, taking the extremely long view, the West might well consider buttressing the Soviet Union as a counterweight to the Asians This, however, is premature, the danger is in the somewhat distant future The non-communist developed world still produces roughly two-thirds of the world's GNP, and the Soviet Union remains the biggest competitor by far None of the rising extra-European powers has the interest or ability directly to affect the course of European events

Conclusion

The prospects for continued European stability are good despite all of the pressures from various directions, because the essential interests of all of the actors involved are being met by the current system and the directions of its evolution. The desire of Europeans to maintain their civilization and way of life is often underestimated in the United States, where many have a different view of the Soviet threat. Any clear sign of a Soviet return to a policy of intimidation is more likely to lead to greater integration and greater defense efforts, not neutralism and Soviet domination. The system would simply revert back to the old equilibrium. In any case, it is clear that any adverse changes in the conventional balance or European orientation towards greater unity or neutralism will probably not occur for another four or five years. That amount of time will be sufficient to see whether Gorbachev is likely to stay in power, whether his policies of reform will succeed, and whether the Soviets are serious about changing their force structure and abandoning their old strategy of intimidation. If signs from the Soviet Union are good on these questions, the European structure is likely to evolve towards greater stability. If the optimists are proved wrong, the system will, in all likelihood, revert back to its old equilibrium and not break down into a shooting war.

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