

Program in Arms Control, Disarmament, and International Security

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

607 South Mathews Street Urbana IL 61801 217/333-7086

Occasional Paper

Superpower Cooperation in Eastern Europe

Roger Kanet
Professor of Political Science
University of Illinois
at Urbana-Champaign

June 1990

Roger E Kanet is associate vice chancellor for academic affairs and director of International Programs and Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He received a Ph D from Princeton University in 1966, taught at the University of Kansas and was a senior fellow at Columbia University before joining the faculty of the University of Illinois in 1973. Since 1978 he has been a professor of political science and served as head of the department from 1984 to 1987, he is also a member of the Russian and East European Center and the Program in Arms Control, Disarmament, and International Security. Kanet has won a number of teaching awards, including both the Campus and LAS awards for undergraduate teaching in 1981, the Department of Political Science award in 1984, and the Burlington Northern Foundation Award for Faculty Excellence in 1989. His research and publications have focused on the foreign and security policies of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. He has authored more than one hundred scholarly articles and edited a dozen books, the most recent of which have been *The Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and the Third World* (Cambridge, 1987), *The Limits of Soviet Power in the Developing World* (Thermidor in the Revolutionary Struggle) (Macmillan, London, and Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989, with E A Kolodziej) and *The Cold War as Cooperation* (Superpower Cooperation in Regional Conflict Management) (in press, Macmillan, London, with E A Kolodziej).

Superpower Cooperation in Eastern Europe

Roger E Kanet
Professor of Political Science
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

This paper is scheduled to appear in Roger E Kanet and Edward A Kolodziej, eds, *The Cold War as Cooperation Superpower Cooperation in Regional Conflict Management* (London Macmillan Press, forthcoming) The original version of the paper was presented at a Workshop held at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign on 4-6 May 1989 The Workshop was sponsored by the Program in Arms Control, Disarmament and International Security of the University of Illinois, the Midwest Consortium for International Security Studies, and the National Defense University

June 1990

Acknowledgements

The author wishes to express his sincere appreciation for the critical comments made on several drafts of the paper by his colleague Edward A Kolodziej. They have added significantly to the precision and clarity of the argument.

During the period of rapid deterioration of relations among the World War II allies in the years immediately after the war, the possibility of military confrontation between the United States (US) and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in Europe seemed extremely high. In fact, the conflict in interests and policies in Eastern Europe between the two emerging superpowers resulted in the Cold War. The extension, largely through coercion, of Soviet-style political systems directly dominated by the USSR, was viewed by American leaders as but a prelude to Soviet efforts to extend their control over Western Europe. By 1948, with the coup that imposed a communist regime in Czechoslovakia, a rough line from North to South divided the emerging Soviet- and US-oriented political-military blocs in Europe, the Soviets had closed all surface access to West Berlin, and loud and influential voices in the United States were calling for dramatic military rearmament to meet the menace of Soviet imperialism in Europe.

US leaders had already determined that the future of Europe was of vital concern to long-term US interests. Through both the Truman Doctrine enunciated in March 1947 and the Marshall Plan of June 1947 the US political leaders committed the nation to stemming what was viewed as the challenge to European, and US, interests emanating from Moscow. The establishment of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949, though it did not yet bring with it significant changes in the actual military situation, represented the culmination of the process of reorientation of traditional US isolationist policy vis-à-vis Europe, toward a policy of commitment and involvement.

Most Western analysts would agree that the conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union over competing interests and objectives in East-Central Europe in the late 1940s resulted in a higher probability of direct military confrontation between the two countries than at any other time in the ensuing four decades, with the exception of the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. Today, however, among the various regions of the world it is precisely in Europe that the outbreak of military hostilities and a direct military confrontation between the two superpowers is least likely.

The purpose of the present essay will be to examine those factors which resulted in the establishment in Europe, already by the late 1950s, of a security regime consisting of two political-military blocs. Both sides accepted this regime and merely reduced the likelihood of military conflict, despite (arguably because of) the physical presence of the largest military stockpiles of conventional and nuclear weapons ever assembled in one area. Although much rhetorical posturing and periodic increases in political tensions have occurred, this security regime brought peace and substantial political stability to Europe over the past forty years. Even prior to the recent "outbreak of peace", the threat of war no longer played the role of a political instrument in Europe, as it had in the past. The essential elements in dispute between the

two blocs have concerned the very existence and nature of the security system, not, primarily, issues of territory or resources. Until the revolutionary developments of late 1989, all were seemingly agreed that any effort to undermine or dismantle that system could result in a confrontation disastrous for all concerned.¹

To put the issue of the "cooperative" aspect of superpower relations in Europe within the theoretical framework of this study, it is crucial to note the essentially conflictual nature of US-Soviet interests in Europe. As will be developed in more detail below, the policy preferences of the two superpowers for Europe as a whole and for its two parts have been almost diametrically opposed. Yet, since at least the 1950s, each side has recognized the dangers inherent in a pursuit of its objectives in Europe that would directly challenge the position of the other side. What evolved was a system that included partial convergence of interests and objectives of limited scope. Though some cooperative arrangements that contribute to the stability of the European security regime are explicit and the result of overt bargaining (as in the agreements concerning Austria in 1955 and in the 1971 agreements over the status of Berlin), others are tacit in nature and are based on parallel actions or even non-actions of the superpowers. Most recently the unilateral statements concerning the reduction of military commitments in Central Europe and the ongoing negotiations on conventional forces in Europe give promise of possible major breakthroughs in superpower cooperation in reducing the likelihood of their coming into conflict in the area.

The present essay focuses on the competitive-cooperative relationship between the superpowers in Eastern Europe and is divided into four major sections. The first examines the nature of the interests of both the Soviet Union and the United States in Eastern Europe. The second part traces the evolution of the Eastern European security regime. Special attention is given to the evidence of superpower "cooperative" arrangements as they evolved over the course of the past forty years. The third part of the paper delineates the specific nature of the European security system and the rules of behavior (or "operational code") that emerged during that period. The discussion responds to the question, to what extent has "cooperation" become an operative element in Soviet-American relations as they relate to Eastern Europe. The final section of the essay outlines the reasons for the recent revolutionary changes in Eastern Europe and the prospects for the expansion and strengthening of superpower cooperation concerning Eastern Europe.

Superpower Interests in Eastern Europe

The years immediately after World War II witnessed a dramatic collapse of relations among the wartime allies, as the Soviet Union proceeded to establish political dependencies in the areas under its military control in east-

central Europe. Other authors have provided extensive documentation of the process which resulted, by 1948, in Stalin's successfully sealing off the area from both the military power and the effective political influence of the West and creating the foundations for communist rule and Soviet dominance.² What is important here is an understanding of the key objectives of the Soviet leadership in the late 1940s and of the ways in which these objectives were at odds with US goals. In other words, what role did Eastern Europe play in the origins of the Cold War and superpower global conflict?

Soviet policy objectives in Eastern Europe emerged only gradually during the war. Even in the immediate postwar period Stalin's views concerning the nature of a future Eastern Europe had not coalesced completely.³ As Stalin sensed the inability or unwillingness of the United States and Great Britain to oppose, effectively, his initiatives in the region, he pushed to incorporate Eastern Europe into the Soviet empire. The charges of revisionist historians notwithstanding, it is important to note that the evidence indicates only minimal US efforts, beyond diplomatic complaints, to intervene in Eastern Europe to influence political developments. As the Soviets and their Eastern European communist clients imprisoned or executed non-communist political leaders, the United States stood by, seemingly paralyzed. In fact, diplomats stationed in the Eastern European capitals were regularly instructed to avoid confrontation with Soviet officials. In Romania in 1944-45, for example, US representatives were precluded from meeting with local politicians, lest this might result in conflict with the Soviets.⁴

By 1948 Stalin's objectives in Eastern Europe had been clarified and implemented. They set the framework for Soviet policy in the region for the next four decades during which the Soviet leadership treated Eastern Europe largely as an extension of the Soviet domestic system—as a virtual fiefdom under Stalin or as a junior partner during the Brezhnev years.⁵ Briefly, the Soviets viewed Eastern Europe from several, not necessarily mutually compatible, perspectives.

As a defensive bulwark. In this sense Eastern Europe served as a buffer zone against possible attack from the West, as a zone of forward deployment of Soviet forces, and as a contributor to the overall defense effort of the region. In the ideological realm, Eastern Europe was also seen as a bulwark against the incursion of Western liberalism into the USSR. In fact, changes in the nature of warfare since the 1940s have reduced the military security value of the region, and Eastern Europe has acted more as a conduit of Western ideas than as a barrier or filter, even prior to recent political developments.

As a basis for an offensive strategy This springboard conception, the reciprocal of the first factor, had three major aspects

Ideological Eastern Europe was viewed as the advance guard of the world communist movement and, along with the USSR itself, the spearhead of the global communist revolution

Political Eastern Europe has served as a base for policy initiatives, e.g. peace campaigns designed to influence Western Europe and split the continent from the United States. During the 1970s several East European states also became important partners of the USSR in the pursuit of global objectives, especially in the Third World

Military Eastern Europe served as a forward base for possible military initiatives taken against the West, this logistical contribution was especially important for both the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and Poland

As the nucleus of an international bloc of support in world politics Though this Eastern European role has been important ever since Stalin, it was especially emphasized during the 1970s, when the Soviets spoke enthusiastically of the changing international correlation of forces and the important role of other socialist states in world affairs

As a source of ideological and political legitimization Though there have been changes over time Soviet leaders have seemingly been convinced that the existence of a bloc of states modelled after the USSR and publicly pursuing similar policies is essential to the political legitimacy of the Soviet system

As an economic asset Initially, through reparations and other exploitative arrangements, Eastern Europe served as a source of capital and technology for the USSR. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s barter arrangements brought Eastern European industrial and consumer goods to the USSR in return for raw materials. More recently, however, the economic benefit of Eastern Europe for the Soviets has become questionable, economic relations with most countries have resulted in a net transfer of Soviet resources

The relative importance of these factors has changed over the course of the past forty years. Ultimately, what the Soviet leadership has sought in Eastern Europe until very recently was a bloc of prosperous, single-party states organically tied to the USSR in such a way as to be fully supportive of all Soviet policy initiatives. The key problem faced by those leaders in achieving this objective has resulted from the basic tension or incompatibility between two essential elements of that vision—the viability of Eastern European

regimes and the cohesion of the Soviet-centered European communist system

Virtually all of the political crises in Eastern Europe over the past forty years—including the current one that is leading to the demise of communist systems—resulted precisely from this tension. In so far as East European leaders pursued policies consonant with Soviet interests, they generally did not respond to popular demands for national identity, expanded political participation, and improved standards of living, as in the GDR and Hungary in the 1950s. On the other hand, when leaders responded to the popular will in an effort to generate greater domestic legitimacy and viability, they found themselves in conflict with the Soviet concern about bloc unity and adherence to the traditional Soviet conception of socialist internationalism—e.g., in Czechoslovakia in 1968, and Poland in 1956 and again in 1980-81. For the Soviet leadership from Stalin to Chernenko, the ultimate touchstone in evaluating its relations with Eastern Europe was Moscow's ability to dominate the area and to control key developments. It was precisely this aspect of Soviet policy, along with the role that the region played in the military balance, that brought it into conflict with the United States.

It is a bit more difficult to outline the major interests of the United States in Eastern Europe in the postwar era, since they have never been so clearly developed. For the most part these interests were initially defined primarily in terms of the emerging conflict with the Soviet Union in the region. Moreover, over the course of the past forty years the US response to Soviet domination of Eastern Europe has varied, depending upon the nature of US-Soviet relations at any given time. During the generally rare periods of detente in superpower relations, the United States has tended to accept—at least not directly challenge—the Soviet sphere of influence in the region. At times of heightened tension, however, US policy has tended to treat the Eastern Europeans as mere extensions of the USSR, fit to suffer the penalties inherent in trade restrictions and coercive policies. Yet, throughout most of the past forty years, beginning with the Soviet-Yugoslav split, the general objective of US policy in Eastern Europe has been to stimulate and support diversity and political autonomy within the Soviet bloc, to implement a policy that might be termed reverse Finlandization. As Sarah Terry has put the issue: “in the periods of ‘competitive coexistence’ that have dominated the post-Stalin era, Washington has sought to encourage both domestic liberalization within the various East European countries and greater foreign policy ‘differentiation’”⁶

Already at the height of the cold war in 1949, the National Security Council advised President Truman that the most realistic objective for the United States was to encourage the creation of regimes in the region that were free of Soviet domination, rather than pro-Western. Rhetoric during the 1952 presidential campaign concerning the immorality of containment and

the need to 'roll back' the Iron Curtain in Eastern Europe notwithstanding, US policy during the Eisenhower administration pursued much more modest objectives—diversity within the Soviet bloc rather than liberation and liberalization in domestic politics rather than full-scale democracy.⁷ In effect, it was in the 1950s that the foundations for future US policy in Eastern Europe were firmly established. US objectives were limited to modest support for marginal change in the region, for they were based on the realization that the USSR viewed the region as a vital concern and that the United States was not in a position to provide active support for those who wanted major change—unless it was prepared to face a major military confrontation with the Soviet Union.

Although there has been essential continuity in the pursuit of limited goals by Washington since the Truman administration, long-term objectives are often expressed in maximal terms. This results in periodic incompatibility between stated principles and the reality of US policy. Never was that contradiction more clear than at the time of the Hungarian Revolution in 1956. The rhetoric of the 1952 presidential campaign and the propaganda lines of Radio Free Europe led many in Hungary to expect US support, yet, the strategic and geopolitical realities of east-central Europe meant that US support for the Hungarians was limited to public rhetoric and resettlement assistance.

Over the past four decades US interests in Eastern Europe, though real and significant, have been largely derivative and secondary. The primary objective in US policy, regardless of region of the world, has been the limitation of the risk of nuclear confrontation with the Soviet Union. Another policy objective of great importance has been containment of Soviet control and influence in Europe and elsewhere in the world. Within Europe the United States has been committed to maintaining the unity of the Western alliance system as a key element in containing Soviet expansionism. It is within the context of these policy objectives that US interests in Eastern Europe must be understood. In so far as Eastern Europe was perceived as a supporter of and adjunct to Soviet expansionist tendencies, US policy toward the region differed little from that toward the USSR itself. However, Eastern Europe was also viewed as a weak link in the defense chain of the Soviet Union and, thus, a potential target of US initiatives. However, given the level of Soviet concern about and commitment to the maintenance of its dominant position in the region, the US was forced to pursue a policy of "peaceful engagement," to use the term coined by Zbigniew Brzezinski and William Griffith.⁸ This policy meant that rivalry with the USSR in Eastern Europe would continue, but within circumscribed boundaries and by limited means. As will be discussed further below, the revolutionary changes that have affected Eastern Europe since 1989 have resulted in a new relationship between the superpowers, which diverges from past patterns.

Eastern Europe and the Emergence of a New European Security Regime

After this brief examination of the interests of the two superpowers in Eastern Europe, we turn to a survey of major elements of superpower policy in relationship to Eastern Europe. Specifically, we shall examine those aspects of policy that can be termed "cooperative" and that contributed to the emergence of the stable European security regime which characterized interstate relations after the late 1950s.

Nowhere was the conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union more pronounced in the years from 1945 until 1950 than in Central Europe. By 1947, the Truman administration concluded that little hope existed of cooperation with the Soviets to solve key issues such as "the German question," the civil war in Greece, and concerns about democracy in the East European states. The Truman Doctrine of 1947 served as the foundation for a new US policy of containing Soviet expansion and influence, while the Marshall Plan promised the economic rehabilitation of European countries associated with the United States.

The Soviets viewed this new US policy as a direct and immediate challenge to its postwar position in central Eastern Europe. At the founding meeting of the Cominform in September 1947, Andrei Zhdanov, the second-in-command to Stalin, proclaimed his 'two-camp' thesis and asserted that US policy was committed to the enslavement of Europe and the unleashing of a new war against the Soviet Union.⁹ From the Soviet perspective, US policy posed a potential challenge to Soviet objectives. This required an adjustment of Soviet policies, especially in Eastern Europe, where Stalin accelerated the consolidation of communist regimes, as well as the extension of Soviet control over the Eastern European communist parties. The result was a three-pronged Soviet offensive in the years 1948-1950 aimed at consolidating Soviet power over its new empire. First, they attempted to impose uniformity on, and control over, the Eastern European regimes. In Yugoslavia the attempt backfired, as Tito successfully resisted Soviet efforts and established a system which would continue to confound both the East and the West, as we shall note below. Elsewhere, local party officials were purged for alleged political deviations and by 1950, leaders were in power who owed their very existence to Stalin.

The second element of Stalin's program was the establishment of centralized ideological dominance of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) over other communist parties. This objective, which was closely related to the first, was accomplished through the creation of the Cominform and the imposition on all parties of the Soviet interpretation of "socialist internationalism." In effect, the interests of the CPSU and the USSR

and the ideological interpretations of the CPSU were declared to be the interests and interpretations of the entire communist movement

The third aspect of Stalin's initiative was his decision to test the West's commitment to the positions that it held in central Europe. Specifically, beginning on 24 June 1948, the Soviets closed all access to Berlin resulting in the first major potential military confrontation between the superpowers in the postwar era. During the ensuing eleven months, until the lifting of the blockade on 5 May 1949, the level of hostilities between the two superpowers was probably the highest during the entire postwar period [with the exception of the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962]. Yet, despite the Soviet attempt to coerce the West into withdrawing from Berlin and despite initial US consideration of using military power to force their way through to Berlin, the crisis was characterized by efforts on both sides to manage the level of confrontation.¹⁰ Neither side was willing to push so far as to make a military confrontation inevitable. For example, the Western decision to supply West Berlin by an airlift and the Soviet response not directly to challenge that airlift reduced the likelihood of direct military confrontation. Moreover, throughout the crisis regular political consultations and negotiations among the four occupation powers occurred, though until spring 1949 they made virtually no headway.

Despite the high level of tension associated with the Berlin Blockade, once the West decided to stay and challenge the blockade by an airlift rather than by direct military action, a stalemate ensued. Behavior on both sides was regularized. Key Western participants in the events, including Mayor Ernst Reuter and General Lucius Clay, were convinced that the Soviets did not want war and thus, avoided measures which the Western allies would have resisted with force.¹¹ In other words, despite the high level of tension, both superpowers were careful to control their behavior in order to reduce the prospects for direct military action. Moreover, once the Soviets recognized that they would not accomplish their primary objective of forcing the West out of Berlin, they were willing to cut their losses and drop the attempt.

Simultaneously with the Berlin Blockade, another series of events occurred which would prove to be important for the development of the postwar security regime in Europe and for the nature of US-Soviet competition. Stalin's efforts to impose on Yugoslavia the type of dependency relationship that had been created elsewhere in Eastern Europe, resulted in a major confrontation. Ultimately, Yugoslavia was expelled from the communist community, with the expectation that pro-Soviet elements in Yugoslavia would seize power and replace Tito and his supporters. After an initial period of foundering, Tito finally opted to turn to the West for economic and military support. The result was an independent communist state, hostile to the USSR and with close political, economic, and security ties to the capitalist West. The decision of the Truman administration to provide support to Yugoslavia initiated a policy of differentiation in which the United

States saw independent communist states as a positive alternative to those dominated by the Soviet Union

However, over the past four decades, Yugoslavia has represented something of a dual dilemma for the superpowers. While the United States supported Yugoslavia's successful attempt to pursue its foreign and security objectives independent of Soviet domination, it rejected the Yugoslav model of economic and political organization. At the same time, the Soviets did not fully accept Yugoslav foreign policy autonomy and found the Yugoslav claim to represent an alternative economic and political model of communism an irritant. Over the past forty years, the specifics of Yugoslavia's place in Europe may have shifted, yet the essential element of its independence has remained stable. Though Yugoslav leaders' perception of world affairs has often been closer to that of the USSR than to that of the West, their ties with the West and with developing countries have been viewed as essential to maintaining their independence.

In the mid-1950s, developments in both Eastern and Western Europe—e.g., West Germany's entry into NATO, the suppression of riots in Pilsen and Poznan, and the Soviet invasion and suppression of Hungary—created conflicts that pitted the superpowers against one another. Almost simultaneously, however, other developments were occurring which reduced the overall level of tension, most notably, the Soviet withdrawal from the naval base in Porkkala, Finland, and the signing of the Austrian State Treaty in 1955. Both actions contributed to the emergence of an increasingly stable Eastern European security regime. The second set of developments, along with the normalization of relations with Tito's Yugoslavia, was part of Nikita Khrushchev's effort to gain Western acceptance for his policy of peaceful coexistence. After Stalin's death the new Soviet leadership was convinced of the counterproductive nature of Stalin's confrontational approach to the West. That policy had stimulated Western countermeasures, including the establishment of NATO and Western rearmament and eventually, West Germany's entry into the Atlantic Alliance. In other words, while consolidating Soviet control over its postwar Eastern European empire, Stalin had also contributed to Western fears to the point that by 1953, the Soviets faced a militarily integrated and progressively more powerful Western alliance.

In justifying his position in the foreign policy struggle with Molotov, Khrushchev later stated that it was "more important to give a widely visible clear signal of willingness to negotiate, than to cling to military positions of little significance"¹². To reduce tensions and to gain general acceptance of his new approach to East-West relations Khrushchev made peace with Tito, returned naval facilities acquired from Finland in 1945, permitted Finland to join the Nordic Council, and invited German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer to Moscow to negotiate a normalization of relations with West Germany. It

was within this context that the Soviets also agreed to withdraw from Austria as part of the postwar settlement in Europe. Though the agreement meant that Soviet troops would pull back in central Europe, it also required the United States to give up its original goal of integrating Austria into the Western alliance system. Though there is some evidence that the Soviets had earlier hoped that the settlement in Austria might be viewed as a model for the solution of the Germany question, by the time of its signing, West German entry into NATO was virtually assured.¹³

Another important element of the emerging European security regime was the initial resolution of the German question through the long-term division of Germany, and of Europe, into roughly balanced regions each tied closely to one of the superpowers.¹⁴ It has been this regime which, for the past thirty-five years or so, has provided Europe with a high degree of political and security stability—though the regime was not fully in place in 1955—and has also undergone some serious crises during the ensuing years.

Despite the partial normalization of US-Soviet relations associated with these developments, other events in central Eastern Europe in the mid-1950s exacerbated tensions in relations between the two superpowers. The riots in Pilsen and East Berlin in June 1953, and in Poznan in June 1956, were suppressed by the Soviets or their allies. In part because of the brief duration of these events, the Western response was limited to strong criticism of the communists for their brutal treatment of legitimate political dissent.

It was in the Polish and Hungarian crises of fall 1956 that the greatest possibility developed for a US-Soviet confrontation. Not only were these political crises of longer duration, but in Hungary, full-scale revolution broke out followed by the Soviet reoccupation of the country and the military suppression of all resistance to the reimposition of Soviet control. As we have already seen, despite the earlier calls for liberation and the implied commitments made in Radio Free Europe broadcasts that Western assistance would be forthcoming, the US response was limited to diplomatic maneuvering and political condemnation. Actual US behavior during the Hungarian Revolution was not based on the principles of self-determination of peoples or the rolling back of Soviet domination in central Europe. Rather, it was based on the clear perception of US self-interest: specifically, the realization that any move to support the Hungarians militarily would likely result in a direct military engagement with the USSR and the possible use of nuclear weapons. Even in the mid-1950s, when the Soviets lacked effective delivery systems to target nuclear weapons on US territory, the possibility of a nuclear exchange was viewed as a frightening prospect to be avoided at all costs.

During the Hungarian Crisis, as during all future East-West confrontations in central Europe, US leaders effectively recognized Soviet

hegemony over this region and avoided challenging that hegemony in ways that might have resulted in military confrontation. Thus, by 1956 several rules of the emerging European security regime—or of superpower behavior in central Eastern Europe—had already been codified through practice: do not challenge the core interests of the other superpower directly, avoid intervention in the other superpower's sphere of influence, and do not pursue actions likely to result in a direct military confrontation. In the case of Hungary all of these imperatives were at work. First, Hungary was within the region viewed by the Soviets as their area of dominance. Moreover, US intervention in the region would have been perceived in Moscow as a challenge to Soviet security and, thus, might very likely have resulted in a military clash between the two countries.

To a very substantial degree the crises of the past thirty-plus years have largely followed the format laid out in Hungary in 1956. Only the Berlin Crisis of 1958-61 differed appreciably from this pattern. Beginning in 1958 the Soviets pursued a policy aimed at consolidation of the political system in the GDR and at strengthening the domestic and international legitimacy of its client. The key issue here was the inability of the GDR to consolidate effective control and to gain legitimacy among its populace or in world affairs, given the attraction of emigration to West Germany.¹⁵ In this sense then, the crisis that erupted in August 1961 was the result of one superpower's attempt to consolidate control which, however, also challenged the position of the other in central Europe. From November 1958 until summer 1961, the Soviets interspersed demands for the West to recognize the GDR's control over access routes to West Berlin with periods of willingness to negotiate a resolution of outstanding differences. The key issue, from the Soviet and GDR perspective, related to the problems that West Berlin posed for the viability of the East German state. As the GDR moved to finalize the process of collectivizing agriculture and of establishing a communist economy in the late 1950s, the number of refugees fleeing the country rose dramatically—to more than 70,000 during the first four months of 1961.

The problem for the Soviets was to find a policy which, while closing off access to the West, would not result in military confrontation. The decision to construct the Wall provided precisely such a policy. Despite the dramatic increase in the immediate level of tension—especially at the local level—it was clear that the West was not about to initiate actions that would challenge the USSR militarily, and thus, run the risk of nuclear confrontation. According to Theodore Sorensen, a member of President Kennedy's "inner circle," no responsible official in the United States, West Berlin, or West Germany recommended the use of force to tear down the wall.¹⁶ Thus, the outcome of the Berlin Crisis reinforces the points made above concerning the emergence of a European security regime and the rules of that regime. Though the Soviets did challenge the status quo in Berlin, that challenge never involved the threat of the use of force against the West.

When the decision was finally made to solve the GDR's legitimacy and viability problems by sealing it off from the western zone of Berlin, neither of the superpowers was willing to risk direct confrontation. As events in Hungary five years earlier had demonstrated, the United States was unable to force the USSR to change its policies in areas considered of vital importance to the latter.

The next set of events in central Eastern Europe of direct relevance to superpower security relations were those surrounding the 1968 reform movement in Czechoslovakia and the eventual military intervention in that country by the USSR and several of its allies¹⁷. Though the West was encouraged by the reforms and committed itself to supporting them politically and economically, it was unwilling and unable to do more than that when the Soviet leadership decided that the evolution of events in Czechoslovakia represented a challenge to core Soviet interests. Throughout summer 1968, as the Soviets made their growing concerns increasingly clear, the Western response was limited almost exclusively to warnings of the negative implications of Soviet intervention for the emerging detente in East-West relations.

In many respects the negative effects of the invasion on relations within the Communist movement were more lasting than those on East-West relations. Already, by spring 1969, the momentum of detente had resumed. As we shall see below, the period 1969 to 1975 was one of great importance for stabilizing the postwar European security regime. During these six years, most of the "rules" of superpower behavior that had emerged on an ad hoc basis since the late 1940s were formally codified in a series of agreements that culminated in the Helsinki Accords. The beginning of the 1970s witnessed a whole series of bilateral and multilateral negotiations—between West Germany and, respectively, the USSR, Poland, and the GDR concerning their mutual bilateral relations, among the four powers administering Berlin concerning the status of West Berlin, between the USSR and the United States concerning nuclear weapons, and among the thirty-five states which eventually signed the Helsinki Accords—concerning a broad range of issues. Out of these formal negotiations emerged agreement on the postwar boundaries of east-central Europe and the dominant position of the USSR in that region. However, agreement was also reached on issues relating to expanding East-West contacts, human rights guarantees in Eastern Europe and related issues.

A final series of problems faced by the Soviet Union that affected its relations with the United States concerned domestic political instability in Poland. In spring 1968, for example, student demonstrations against the increasingly repressive policies of the regime of Wladyslaw Gomulka resulted in harsh repression. In December 1970, strikes and workers' demonstrations in the major industrial cities along the Baltic Sea were initially crushed by the

regime. However, this brought down the Gomulka leadership which was replaced by that of Edward Gierek, who committed himself to reforms and economic modernization that were meant to solve Poland's endemic problems. Less than six years later, in June 1976, Gierek was faced with similar widespread labor disruption, as he attempted to raise prices of basic foodstuffs as part of a policy of economic retrenchment.

These domestic disturbances were short-lived and did not impact significantly on US-Soviet relations. Not until 1980-81, with the emergence of the major challenge to the Polish communist party mounted by Solidarity and the growing Soviet concern about a possible repeat of events in Czechoslovakia in 1968, did Polish developments become an important component of US-Soviet relations.¹⁸ Throughout the entire Solidarity period, the United States warned the Soviet leadership of the negative implications for bilateral relations of direct Soviet intervention in Polish affairs. The imposition of martial law and the outlawing of Solidarity in December 1981 did not involve Soviet military forces, however, convinced of direct Soviet involvement in the decisions of the government of General Wojciech Jaruzelski, the Reagan Administration imposed political and economic sanctions against both the Soviet Union and Poland.

The growing hostility in US-Soviet relations associated with events in Poland, however, must be understood within the broader context of deteriorating superpower relations. Already in the mid-1970s, there were those in the United States who questioned the wisdom of a policy of detente. In their view, detente had provided the Soviets with the cover to expand their influence within the Third World and to continue their unilateral military buildup in both the conventional and nuclear arenas. Even prior to the Soviet military invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 and the imposition by President Carter of the grain embargo, the SALT II treaty was in danger of not being ratified by the US Senate. The election of Ronald Reagan in November 1980 brought to the White House a new political leadership convinced of the growing challenge to US interests emanating from "the evil empire" and committed to reestablishing US military might and challenging the Soviet Union wherever possible. Thus, by December 1981, when General Jaruzelski imposed martial law in Poland, superpower relations had already deteriorated substantially toward what some analysts were calling "Cold War II."

Yet, despite the growing tension in US-Soviet relations, there was no question in 1981 of the possible use of US military force. In central Eastern Europe, this rule had long since been clarified. Despite unhappiness with events in Poland and conviction of the direct involvement of Moscow in those events, the Reagan administration never considered anything more than political and economic sanctions as an indication to the Soviets of the

level of US indignation and as an “inducement” to both the Soviet and Polish leaderships to modify their policies

The final example of conflicting interests between the superpowers as they relate to Eastern Europe—though the issue was really one of broader European interests—concerned the Soviet introduction, beginning in 1977, of SS-20 intermediate-range nuclear missiles targeted on Western Europe. In a very real way, the deployment of these missiles threatened a possible shift in the overall military balance in Europe and thus, a partial challenge to the security regime that had been in place for more than a decade. The introduction of Soviet missiles in the late 1970s and the NATO dual-track response of matching the development and deployment of medium-range missiles while simultaneously trying to negotiate their elimination, contributed significantly to the deterioration of US-Soviet relations in the early 1980s. Only after a complete breakdown in superpower negotiations on arms control, much political posturing on the part of both superpowers, and the emergence of a new political leadership with a new foreign policy and arms control agenda, was the issue resolved in the breakthrough Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty agreement of 1987 that called for the removal of all Soviet and US intermediate-range missiles. However, the Soviet decision to deploy this weapons system represented a challenge to the existing security regime in Europe. Despite Soviet claims that they were merely modernizing older weapons systems, both the qualitative improvements of the systems and the numbers of systems being deployed represented a major shift in theater nuclear capabilities.

Although the SS-20s have now been removed, the repercussions of this challenge remain. The INF treaty and the ongoing unilateral withdrawal of some of Soviet ground forces, including tanks, from Central Europe have encouraged widespread calls within NATO for fundamental reconsideration of the entire security strategy upon which NATO has been based for the past thirty-five years.

As should be evident at this point, despite US rhetoric and stated long-term objectives, American presidential administrations from Truman to Reagan recognized the reality of superpower interests and capabilities in central Eastern Europe. As a result, they pursued policies *vis-à-vis* the USSR that were part of an overall policy of competitive coexistence. Although the long-term objective of eliminating Soviet domination over Eastern Europe remained, it was tempered by the primary concern of not provoking a military confrontation with the Soviet Union. Thus, coexistence generally won out over the elements of competition in US policy in Eastern Europe. As noted above, US policy-makers pursued more limited objectives. As John Gaddis put it when speaking about the policy of the Eisenhower administration toward the Soviet Union: “since surrender was unthinkable,

military victory impossible, and the cost of containment unacceptable, it seemed logical to explore possibilities for incorporating Soviet-American rivalry—which was certain to continue—within a mutually acceptable framework of coexistence”¹⁹

By the 1960s and 1970s, the United States expressed the competitive elements of the relationship by efforts to encourage the peaceful transformation of the Soviet bloc into a more diversified and pluralistic entity—i.e. by a policy of “peaceful engagement.” In line with this objective, the United States granted most-favored nation status to several countries deemed to be pursuing independent policies. On a visit during the early years of his administration, President Carter praised Poland for its “enlightened” policies, the United States returned the crown of St. Stephen, the symbol of Hungarian statehood, to the government in Budapest, while also granting most-favored-nation status to Hungary, and at the Helsinki follow-up conference in Belgrade in 1978, Washington took a strong stand on the issue of human rights in Eastern Europe.

The revolutionary developments of 1989 and early 1990 have already restructured the domestic socio-political systems of the countries of the region and also the European security system that has been in place since World War II. Only four times during the past two centuries have events of such importance for the nature of domestic and international political relationships occurred in Europe: 1) during the French Revolution and the Napoleonic period when France attempted to destroy the old political order and replace it with a French-centered system of nominally independent and democratic states; 2) after the defeat of Napoleon in 1815, when the old order was in part reestablished by the victors; 3) after World War I and the collapse of the traditional Central and Eastern European empires and their replacement by a number of small states in Central Europe and a regime in Soviet Russia committed to revolutionary change; and 4) after World War II when the geographic and political map of Europe was modified once more by the collapse of the traditional great powers and the emergence of the USSR and the United States as the dominant actors in Europe and the world.

The changes initiated in 1989 promise to have long-term consequences comparable to those associated with the four earlier periods of revolutionary restructuring. Though the calls in Eastern Europe for the withdrawal of Soviet forces and the demands for German reunification, challenge the foundations of the existing European security system to this point at least, it appears that the leadership in Washington and Moscow are committed to ensuring that the changes do not lead to confrontation.

Thus, it was in Europe first—and particularly in central Eastern Europe—that the two superpowers reached a form of accommodation which has permitted them to compete, while simultaneously limiting the extent of

that competition lest it lead to military confrontation and, ultimately, to mutual destruction. It is also in central Eastern Europe that the Cold War is coming to a close.

The Postwar European Security Regime and the "Rules" of Superpower Behavior

After this examination of the nature of Soviet and US interests in Eastern Europe and of the evolution of postwar political and security developments there as they have concerned relations between the Soviet Union and the United States, we turn to a more systematic discussion of the nature of the security regime that emerged and of the general rules of behavior associated with that regime. We begin by emphasizing a point which, though central to the entire US-Soviet relationship in Europe and globally, has not yet been discussed directly in this chapter—namely, the centrality of nuclear weapons and the nuclear stalemate in that relationship. The development of nuclear weapons and effective delivery systems by the superpowers created an environment in which both countries were concerned lest conflicts escalate to nuclear confrontation and thus, the possibility of mutual annihilation. It has been precisely within the context of this nuclear stalemate that East-West and Soviet-US relationships have evolved in Europe.

Probably the most important security-related development for Europe that derived directly from this stalemate and the resulting commitment of both the United States and the Soviet Union to prevent confrontation, was the evolution of a stable security regime in Europe in which warfare—or even the threat of warfare—had been eliminated. However, at the same time, the participants in this security regime—especially the two major military powers—committed large amounts of resources to their security systems and maintained large forces. In part as a result of the stabilization of the security regime in Europe, but also resulting from the increased importance of other regions of the world such as the Middle East and Eastern Asia, Eastern Europe became relatively less important in the Soviet-American global competition and in international affairs generally. On the other hand, to an increasing degree until the growing economic problems of the 1980s, Eastern European countries played a supporting role in the expansion of Soviet involvement throughout the Third World. Military, economic, and political activities of individual Eastern European countries—along with Cuba—often facilitated the expanded activities of the USSR and/or helped to distribute the Soviet costs of empire.²⁰

Ever since the Second World War, Eastern Europe has been an area viewed as essential to the vital interests of one of the two superpowers, while the other's interests were more marginal. In a very real sense until the revolutionary changes of 1989, Eastern Europe was viewed by the Soviets as a

“hard sphere of influence” in which they had important interests and over which they are able to exercise extensive control²¹ Although at one level the United States refused to accept the idea of permanent Soviet dominance over the area, in other ways it admitted that in times of crisis when the Soviet leadership saw a serious challenge to its interests in the area there was little that the United States could do to influence Soviet policy Given the conventional military balance in the region and the implications of a global nuclear confrontation, American presidents since Truman have excluded the use of military power Thus, the security regime that emerged in Europe was one based on the reality of the dominant role of the USSR in Eastern Europe²²

In fact, during the the early 1970s the detente policy of Henry Kissinger was to a very great degree based on accepting the reality of Soviet dominance in Eastern Europe as a part of the cost involved in “taming” Soviet behavior throughout the rest of the world This viewpoint was expressed perhaps most boldly in the so-called Sonnenfeldt Doctrine of 1975 that referred to the ‘organic’ nature of the Soviet-Eastern European relationship and seemingly accepted long-standing Soviet domination in Eastern Europe However, this viewpoint incorrectly assumed that the imperial relationship between the USSR and Eastern Europe and the existence of political regimes viewed by the majority of the population as illegitimate, could remain stable over time²³ In fact, as we shall discuss in some detail below, at the very time when US policy accepted the stability of the status quo in the area, pressures were beginning to build up that a decade later would result in revolutionary change Among these were the growing evidence of economic deterioration that would reduce the ability of the regimes to fulfill commitments for improved standards of living, the festering of popular resentment of continued Soviet domination, and the ongoing suppression of open political expression

As we have already seen, throughout the past four decades there have been few actual confrontations between the USSR and the United States that had their origin in Eastern European events Only during the Berlin Blockade of 1948-49—when the nature of the postwar European security system was still in flux—was there a significant possibility of direct military confrontation But even in Berlin, the two sides soon worked out tacit arrangements short of the use of military force according to which the remaining months of the struggle over the status of Berlin would be conducted By the mid-1950s—and even more clearly after the Berlin Wall crisis of 1961—the general outlines of the new European system had emerged in which the continent and Germany were divided into separate political-economic-military blocs NATO and Warsaw Pact military forces have precluded each other’s ability to make a military breakthrough Moreover, the central role of the superpowers in this balance means that their global strategic nuclear capabilities are also integrally tied to the balance in Europe

Out of this situation arose a pattern of expectations and controlled responses that contributed to the overall security stability of Europe, despite periodic challenges that have emerged, primarily from the challenges to the Soviets control of their own bloc. This pattern of expectations and behaviors included several clear 'rules of prudence'. Seweryn Bialer and Alexander George provide listings of rules of prudence in conflict situations that have evolved over time to guide superpower relations.²⁴ But these rules depended on a cold war regime that was of mutual interest. What no one foresaw, was the eventual judgement of the Soviet leadership under Gorbachev that the cold war regime no longer serves its interests.

In the crisis situations that we have discussed, we find the type of behavior meant to limit conflict precisely because of the fear of escalation to the nuclear level. Though not all of the general "rules" are directly relevant to US-Soviet competitive relations in Eastern Europe, those which are relevant have been observed virtually without fail. In all of the cases of actual or threatened Soviet intervention to reimpose control over recalcitrant allies—Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland—the US publicly stated its intention not to intervene. Recently, though there has been no evidence of Soviet intentions to intervene in the area to maintain its dominant position, the US officials have announced that the United States will not attempt to take unilateral advantage of the revolutionary changes that are redefining the nature of politics and security in Eastern Europe.²⁵

In line with the 'rule' of caution in pursuing policies in areas where the vital interests of the other power are at stake, Western policy-makers have been especially careful in developing relations with the Eastern European countries. One important deviation from this caution was the first stage of West Germany's "Ostpolitik" initiated in 1966 by the Kissinger-Brandt Grand Coalition. The policy explicitly aimed at establishing direct relations between Bonn and the Eastern European capitals and, in part at least, weaning the latter away from their close dependency on the USSR, splitting the Warsaw Pact, and isolating the GDR. As a corollary of their military intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968, the Soviets made clear the level of their opposition to this type of "interference" in their sphere of influence. In the new version of "Ostpolitik" initiated in 1969 the Brandt government, in effect, cleared matters with Moscow prior to initiating efforts to expand relations in Eastern Europe.

Another exception to this rule occurred in 1981 in Poland as US and Western labor unions, and other interest groups, actively supported the Solidarity movement. One of the major accusations brought by the Soviets against Solidarity was precisely the charge that it was functioning as an agent of Western interests. The imposition of martial law in December 1981 reduced these "illicit" political contacts, though the Jaruzelski regime was never able to eliminate them entirely.

Throughout the entire postwar period, negotiations and less formal political contacts have occurred during periods of heightened tension. For example, during the Berlin Blockade in 1948-49, regular consultations occurred between the Soviets and the three major Western governments.

The "rules of prudence" in US-Soviet behavior concerning Eastern Europe resulted initially primarily from past behavior patterns and consisted of a kind of "common law" in US-Soviet relations. During the detente period of 1970-75, however, a substantial number of these rules were "codified" in a series of formal agreements. The treaties that emerged from bilateral and multilateral negotiations resulted in the formal recognition of existing postwar borders, commitments not to support change in the territorial status quo through coercive means, specific agreements concerning the status of West Berlin, and agreements on non-interference in the internal affairs of other states. Though it was never operationalized and was later the source of bitter criticism, the "Basic Principles Agreement" on US-Soviet relations signed by President Nixon and General Secretary Brezhnev in 1972 also contributed to the environment of formalizing the rules of behavior in US-Soviet relations.²⁶

As US-Soviet agreement and cooperation was formalized, it also became more complex. For example, in the negotiations over the status of West Berlin, both sides came to the negotiating table with a specific list of objectives. For the West, this was a list of rather limited goals of "practical improvements" in the situation in and around Berlin. For the Soviet Union the key objective was Western recognition of the GDR. However, both sides had additional objectives, the attainment of which the successful negotiations over Berlin might facilitate. For example, the Soviets recognized that they could not achieve the general objective of detente, nor the more specific objectives of Western recognition of the GDR and full Western participation in a conference on security and cooperation in Europe, unless the Berlin situation were improved. Thus, the negotiations were based on bargaining strategies that cut across different issue areas. The final agreement on the status of Berlin did not meet the long-term objectives or ambitions of either side, rather it was a compromise in which both accepted what they were able to get at the time.²⁷

Before turning to a concluding discussion of the importance of the dramatic recent changes in the USSR and Eastern Europe and their relevance for increased East-West and Soviet-US cooperation in relationship to Eastern Europe, it is well to summarize briefly the argument of this chapter on this point. By the mid-1950s—definitely by the early 1960s—a new security regime had emerged in Europe that included the division of the continent into conflicting military blocs. In addition, given the level of Soviet interest and involvement in Eastern Europe, the military balance in the area, and the

implications of the superpower nuclear stalemate, rules of behavior emerged which resulted in careful and limited Western involvement in the region of a type that would not lead to superpower confrontation. By the 1970s, this regime was largely formalized through a series of agreements that culminated in the Helsinki Accords of 1975. Though both superpowers have considered challenging the foundations of this security regime—the Soviets, marginally, by the deployment of SS-20s in the late 1970s and the United States, more centrally, through the effort embodied in President Reagan's campaign of military revitalization, including SDI, to shift the very nature of the global superpower military balance—it remained in place in 1985 when Mikhail Gorbachev took office. In the final section of this chapter we shall discuss the implications of Gorbachev's "new thinking" and the revolutionary events of 1989-90 in Eastern Europe for expanding the cooperative aspects of Soviet-US relations in the region.

The East European Revolution and Expanded Superpower Cooperation

Since 1985 when Mikhail Gorbachev assumed the leadership of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union—and even more since spring of 1989—revolutionary changes have occurred within Eastern Europe which are fundamentally transforming the European security system and the competitive-cooperative relationship between the two superpowers. At the beginning of 1989 Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev found only limited support among the communist political elites of Eastern Europe for his conception of political reform. Only the communist party leaderships in Poland and Hungary could be viewed as committed reformers. Elsewhere, the concept of reform received mixed reactions: little more than lip service in Bulgaria, sharp criticism in Czechoslovakia and the GDR, or outright condemnation in Romania. Even in Poland and Hungary, the pace of reform was slow and seemed on the verge of stalling. By the end of the year, a Solidarity government ruled Poland, the Berlin Wall had fallen and German reunification seemed but a matter of time, Ceaucescu's dictatorship had been overthrown in a bloody revolution in Romania, a world-renowned dissident playwright, Vaclav Havel, had been elected president in Czechoslovakia, and the Red Army was on the verge of moving out of much of the region at local request. Revolutionary change—in the full sense of the term "revolutionary"—was in process throughout the region, as the basic structures of domestic political power (including the formal institutions of governance) as well as the structures of the European inter-state system were radically changing.

Only four times during the past two centuries have events of such importance for the nature of domestic and international political relationships occurred in Europe: (1) during the French Revolution and the

Napoleonic wars, when France attempted to destroy the old political order and replace it with a French-centered system of nominally democratic, but dependent, states, (2) after the defeat of Napoleon in 1815, when the old order was in large part reestablished by the victors, (3) after World War I and the collapse of the traditional European empires and their replacement by a number of small states in Central Europe and a regime in Soviet Russia committed to revolutionary change, and (4) after World War II when the geographic and political map of Europe was changed once more by the collapse of traditional European states and the emergence of the USSR and the United States as the dominant actors in Europe and the world. The changes initiated during 1989 promise to have consequences comparable to those associated with the four earlier periods of revolutionary "restructuring."

Though the economic and political tensions of forty years of Soviet domination, autocratic rule by local communist elites, and economic mismanagement and corruption had become increasingly apparent throughout Eastern Europe, little overt evidence was visible in early 1989 that events of such import were about to occur—though social pressures were building that would explode later in the year. Central to the dramatic changes throughout the region that resulted in the end of the Cold War and in the establishment of Eastern Europe's first non-communist governments since the 1940s, was the new attitude of the Gorbachev leadership toward the area. In the past, any movement toward reform met with strong Soviet resistance. By 1989, Soviet policy had shifted to the point where it encouraged reform and was even willing to accept the reality of expanded pluralism and the demise of communist dictatorships as the price for economic efficiency and political stability in the region and enhanced long-term stable political and economic relationships with the West.²⁸

Yet, the radical changes that occurred in Eastern Europe after spring 1989, must be viewed within the overall framework of state socialism as it had been institutionalized in the area and of the recent emergence of autonomous social groups demanding an end to communist party dominance and a recognition of the rights and interests of "the people." As developed in the Soviet Union in the 1930s under Stalin, and in Eastern Europe after its imposition in the late 1940s, state socialism consisted of a highly centralized economy that emphasized heavy industry, authoritarian political structures meant to ensure political control by minuscule and illegitimate communist party elites, and a strong dependency or patron-client relationship between the USSR and the smaller communist states of Eastern Europe. However, almost immediately after Stalin's death in 1953 and throughout the ensuing years evidence mounted that demonstrated both the political and the economic weaknesses of the system. Sporadically, though generally unsuccessfully until 1989, attempts were made in some of the

various countries concerned, to reform portions of the state socialist system inherited from Stalin

After the signing of the Helsinki Accords of 1975, organized movements committed to the protection of political and human rights were active (and under great pressure) in a number of European communist states—Committee for Worker s Defense (KOR) in Poland, Charter 77 in Czechoslovakia, and Helsinki Watch groups throughout the region. Usually these groups based their demands for political reform on the commitments made by their governments in Helsinki and on the guarantees of the constitutions of their respective states.

Evidence also mounted throughout much of the region concerning the stagnation of economic growth and the fact that the socialist economies were falling even further behind their capitalist counterparts, including those of the East Asian Newly Industrialized Countries (NICs), in the development and adaptation of modern technology to the production process. In addition, the inability of the state to meet implied social commitments—i.e., the growing shortages of consumer goods and housing, the inability to halt the degradation of the environment, and related problems—contributed to increased dissatisfaction with the existing political system and to the demand for major political change that would extend effective participation beyond the narrow circle of the communist party elite. These attitudes were strengthened by the growing awareness of the success of capitalist Europe in improving living standards.

Even before the emergence to political prominence of Mikhail Gorbachev and “new thinking” in the USSR, evidence existed of a growing awareness of the fundamental nature of the problems facing communist states, the imperatives (and perils) of initiating economic and political reform, and the necessity of expanding flexibility in relations between the USSR and its European allies. Thus, prior to spring 1985 when Gorbachev was elected the new head of the CPSU the situation throughout much of the region was ripe for political change. However, only since 1985 have the efforts at reform expanded to the point where one can speak of the dismantling of key elements of the traditional state socialist system—from the dominance of central planning to the emergence of officially sanctioned pluralism and the decline of the dominant role of the communist *nomenklatura*.

Since the Gorbachev reform effort is so very central to the revolutionary changes that have occurred in Eastern Europe, it is important briefly to outline its most prominent contours. It is essential to recall that, when Gorbachev arrived on the scene in 1985, the Soviet Union was already in the throes of a major crisis. In the economic realm Soviet Gross National Product (GNP) had stagnated—according to key economic advisor Abel

Aganbegyan, real growth ceased by the mid-1970s. Politically, the population gave evidence of increasing levels of ennui and withdrawal, alcoholism and incompetent medical care resulted in reduced life expectancy, especially among males, and in higher infant mortality rates.²⁹ Soviet allies in Eastern Europe were suffering from similar problems and had become a growing drain on the Soviet economy, clients in the Third World had proven incapable of establishing stable functioning political or economic systems and contributed to the growing "costs of empire" for the Soviet state, the exponential growth of Soviet military capabilities had occurred at the expense of other portions of the economy, and many of the assumptions that had undergirded Soviet foreign policy during the Brezhnev years had proven to be false.

It was in this environment that Gorbachev proposed dramatic reforms as a means to rejuvenate the Soviet economic and political system. In effect, the initial Gorbachev message can be summarized as follows: the Soviet Union finds itself in an economic and political crisis situation that undermines its ability to provide basic goods and services to its population and threatens to erode its position as a global power. To deal with this problem, revolutionary changes are required within the economy—including decentralization of decision-making, the establishment of competition within the system, the emergence of elements of a market economy, and related changes of a comparably revolutionary character within the context of the Soviet economy. Increased efficiency, enhanced quality, and the reduction of the technological gap with the West are among the central objectives of the economic reform.

Such reforms, however, will inevitably confront opposition within the party-state bureaucracy which benefits greatly from the perquisites associated with the present system. To overcome this opposition, *glasnost* (or openness) and democratization will create an alliance between the reform-minded leadership and the masses of the population aimed at exposing the corruption, incompetence, and inefficiencies of the current system and, thus, contributing to the success of the reform effort. Initially, therefore, *glasnost* and democratization were viewed in rather narrow, instrumental terms as the means to facilitate the introduction of radical economic reforms.

There also existed the realization among many of the reformers that the centralization of political power and the absence of political participation and, thus, political responsibility, had been key elements in explaining the failure of the Stalinist system. These attitudes contributed to the view that the entire reform movement also included an important political component that would open access to political decision-making to ever broader segments of the population. On the negative side, from their perspective, the reform leadership underestimated the degree to which *glasnost* and democratization would develop a life of their own, as the political agendas of the minority

populations—Lithuanians, Armenians, Uzbeks, and others—emerged differently from the agenda of the reformers in Moscow. Yet, this development goes beyond the context of our current discussion, except as it relates to the growing pressures for political change that have impinged upon Gorbachev and his supporters.

Thus, *perestroika*, openness and democratization, have been intimately interrelated ever since the beginning of the Gorbachev reform program. Moreover, “new thinking” and new behavior in the foreign policy have also been an integral part of the Gorbachev reforms. First, the nature, scope, and cost of domestic reform would require an international environment in which the Soviet leadership was not concerned with a new cold war or arms race and would be able to devote more of its attention to the issues associated with reform. Moreover, the costs of Soviet foreign policy would have to be reduced dramatically, given the expanded investment demands of a successful revitalization of the economy. Since the past commitment of extensive resources to allies and clients in Eastern Europe and the Third World, had not resulted in politically stable and economically productive states, those commitments would have to be reconsidered and in many cases reduced. Since the expansion of Soviet military capabilities and the building of bigger and better weapons systems had not resulted in expanded security, efforts to achieve security through accommodation and assurance strategies toward the West and, thus, to reduce the military burden, would also be essential.

Soviet policy since 1985 has undergone more than than mere rhetorical change. The dramatic shift in position on a number of key issues concerning nuclear weapons and arms control by the Gorbachev leadership was essential to the agreement to scrap all intermediate-range nuclear weapons in Europe and Asia. The announcement in December 1988 that the USSR would unilaterally reduce its military strength in central Europe by 50,000 troops and upwards of 1,000 tanks—and the ongoing implementation of the first stage of that withdrawal, represented yet another shift in Soviet security policy. These moves were apparently meant to accomplish several important objectives. First, they indicated to the West that “new thinking” in the foreign and security policy areas was more than rhetoric, that it presaged a dramatic shift in the way in which the USSR would deal with the outside world, in particular, with the countries of Europe. Secondly, they were meant to encourage the West to enter into a mutual process of arms reduction. A third objective concerned the hope that arms reductions, especially in the conventional area, would eventually bring with them the economic savings required if the domestic program of economic restructuring and reform in the Soviet Union was to succeed.

An important component of Gorbachev's foreign policy initiatives has concerned bilateral relations with the countries of Eastern Europe. Since at

least 1987, Gorbachev's response to the growing economic and political problems of the region, as well as to the erosion of unity and cohesion within the socialist community, was to call upon the leaderships of the Eastern European countries to reform their own political and economic systems. Unlike past Soviet leaders, Gorbachev argued that, ultimately, the decision on reform—as other major decisions—must be made by the Eastern Europeans themselves. Moscow no longer viewed itself as the final arbiter of ideological orthodoxy for its Eastern European allies, according to the new interpretation of socialist internationalism, an interpretation verified by Soviet reactions to the revolutionary events of 1989. High-level Soviet officials have stated that the USSR was wrong to intervene militarily in Czechoslovakia in 1968, non-communist governments in Poland and elsewhere have been accepted as partners within the Warsaw Treaty Organization, and Gorbachev himself virtually renounced past Soviet policies in statements made during his visits to Strasbourg and Helsinki in August and October of 1989. Even the integration of its key Eastern European ally, the German Democratic Republic, into a reunited Germany, has been accepted in principle.

Initially, it appears that Gorbachev hoped that East European communists could reform their economies and their political systems in a manner to make them viable and productive. However, given the failure of Eastern European communists to accomplish this task and the revolutionary changes that have brought non-communist or coalition governments to power throughout the region, he has accepted the idea of an Eastern Europe comprised of stable, economically efficient, though non-communist, systems as preferable to a continuation of the status quo of the 1980s. The effort to maintain politically illegitimate and economically inefficient regimes in Eastern Europe by force or threat of force has been abandoned in the hope that mutually beneficial relationships can emerge in the future between the Soviet Union and Europe's dominant economic power, Germany, and a revitalized set of "Finland-like" systems in Eastern Europe.

In a way, by agreeing to dismantle its intermediate-range nuclear weapons, announcing unilateral cuts in conventional weapons, declaring its willingness to engage in wide-ranging negotiations for the reduction of strategic nuclear weapons, and accepting the "new order" emerging in Eastern Europe as a result of the revolutionary changes of 1989, the Soviets have challenged the very existence of the European security regime that has been in place for more than thirty years. The opportunity now exists of forging cross-alliance agreements that is already resulting in a dramatic lowering of the level of overt hostility in US-Soviet and East-West relations and in the development of a new European security regime in which the divisions of Europe might be appreciably reduced.

The dramatic changes that have occurred in the USSR, in Eastern Europe, and in East-West relations and have led to a changing European

international security system, are the result of both the domestic imperatives of the communist political systems and the Cold War environment in which they developed. The Cold War, defined in part as the emergence in Europe of a stable security regime that prevented war because of the dangers of escalation to nuclear confrontation, was a necessary condition for the recent revolutionary changes that have occurred in Europe. It created an international environment in which competition was diverted to areas of peripheral concern for both superpowers, though an environment in which ever greater amounts of military capabilities were being created and greater stress placed on domestic economies.

At the same time, however, within both alliance systems, domestic, political, and economic developments ran their own course. In the West, extensive political and economic cooperation contributed to an unprecedented expansion of both economic welfare and political participation. In the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the experiment in applied Marxism-Leninism proved to be a failure. By the 1980s, centralized economies could no longer provide adequately for the welfare of their populations (especially when compared with the almost unbridled economic successes of Western states) and were faced with ever greater demands for real political participation. In many respects George Kennan's prediction of the internal non-viability of the Stalinist political-economic model has proven to be accurate.³⁰

As recent developments in both Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union itself imply, a reduction in centralized, authoritarian control within the Soviet bloc will not necessarily result in increased local stability. Traditional conflicts—as those between Magyars and Romanians, Bulgarians and Turks—may well increase, as the heavy hand of Soviet control has relaxed. However, assuming that the West does not attempt to intervene in such conflicts to the disadvantage of the USSR, they need not result in expanded superpower conflict.

The past forty-five years have witnessed a competition for power and influence between the Soviet Union and the United States which began in East-Central Europe and then expanded to cover most of the globe. In the process of pursuing that conflict, the two countries have expended a tremendous amount of effort and capabilities. They have contributed to the exacerbation of regional conflicts and to the militarization of other societies. They have also come to the brink of nuclear disaster on occasion, such as during the Cuban Missile Crisis. They are now faced with the possibility of resolving at least some of their outstanding differences and building upon the stability of the relationships that have existed in Europe. Serious common problems face both countries—from the threats of nuclear destruction and environmental degradation to the security dangers that might emerge from the unrequited demands of some of the less developed countries. Efforts to

solve these and other problems may also contribute to an enhanced level of cooperation in the narrower, or co-valuational, sense of the term

In sum, we currently live in a period when dramatic changes in US-Soviet relations are possible. Cooperation, in the sense of agreements based on shared values, seems more feasible now than it has been in the past. This does not mean that the two major global powers will not continue to compete and that their objectives will not come into conflict with one another. What it does mean is the possibility, especially in Europe, of expanding the arena in which their interests coincide.

Notes

1 For expansion on this point see Richard D Vine, Introduction, and The Sources of Western Policies, in Richard D Vine (ed), *Soviet-East European Relations as a Problem for the West* (London/ New York Croom Helm, 1987), pp 5, 9-11, see, also, A W DePorte, *Europe Between the Superpowers The Enduring Balance* (New Haven/London Yale University Press, 1979), pp 165-66

2 See, for example, the classic treatment of the process in Hugh Seton-Watson, *The East European Revolution* (New York Frederick A Praeger, 1956), 3rd ed See, also, Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Soviet Bloc Unity and Conflict* (Cambridge Harvard University Press, 1967), rev edn

3 See Vojtech Mastny, *Russia's Road to the Cold War* (New York Columbia University Press, 1979)

4 Charles Gati, From Cold War Origins to Detente Introduction to the International Politics of Eastern Europe, in Charles Gati (ed), *The International Politics of Eastern Europe* (New York Praeger, 1976), p 6, Geir Lundestad, *The American Non-Policy Towards Eastern Europe, 1943-1947 Universalism in an Area Not of Essential Interest to the United States* (Tromsø / Oslo/ Bergen Universitetsforlaget, 1978), esp pp 419-424

5 The following discussion of Soviet objectives draws on James F Brown, Soviet Interests and Policies in Eastern Europe, in Richard D Vine (ed), *Soviet-East European Relations as a Problem for the West* (London/ New York Croom Helm, 1987), pp 43-45, and Sarah Meiklejohn Terry, The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe Implications of U S Policy, in Dan Caldwell (ed), *Soviet International Behavior and U S Policy Options* (Lexington, MA/ Toronto Lexington Books 1985), pp 11-26

6 Terry, The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, p 31

7 On the evolution of the policy of differentiation see Charles Gati, *Hungary and the Soviet Bloc* (Durham Duke University Press, 1986), pp 219-220, Bennett Kovrig, *The Myth of Liberation East-Central Europe in U S Diplomacy and Politics since 1941* (Baltimore/ London The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), *passim*, and John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (New York/ Oxford Oxford University Press, 1982), esp pp 65-71

8 Zbigniew Brzezinski and William E Griffith, Peaceful Engagement in Eastern Europe, *Foreign Affairs*, vol 39, no 4 (1961), p 642, see, also, Bennett

Kovrig, *The United States Peaceful Engagement Revisited*, in Gati (ed), *The International Politics of Eastern Europe*, pp 131-153

9 See Gati, *Hungary and the Soviet Bloc*, pp 112-115

10 An excellent analytic treatment of the crisis appears in Hannes Adomeit, *Soviet Risk-Taking and Crisis Behavior A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis* (London/ Boston George Allen & Unwin, 1982), pp 67-182 See, also, Avi Shlaim, *The United States and the Berlin Blockade, 1948-1948 A Study in Crisis Decision-Making* (Berkeley/ Los Angeles/ London University of California Press, 1983), esp pp 402-403

11 *Ibid* pp 170-171

12 Cited in Bruno Kreisky, *Die Herausforderung* (Dusseldorf Econ, 1963), p 103

13 See Kurt Steiner, *Negotiations for an Austrian State Treaty*, in Alexander L George, Philip J Farley, and Alexander Dallin (eds), *U S -Soviet Security Cooperation Achievements, Failures, Lessons* (New York/ Oxford Oxford University Press, 1988), pp 106-122

14 See, DePorte, *Europe Between the Superpowers*, pp 165-166

15 The following discussion benefits greatly from Adomeit, *Soviet Risk-Taking and Crisis Behavior*, esp pp 183-311

16 Theodore C Sorensen, *Kennedy* (New York Harper and Row, 1965), pp 593-594

17 This discussion draws on Karen Dawisha, *The Kremlin and the Prague Spring* (Berkeley/ London University of California Press, 1984), Galia Golan, *Reform Rule in Czechoslovakia, 1968-1969* (Cambridge Cambridge University Press, 1973), H Gordon Skilling, *Czechoslovakia s Interrupted Revolution* (Princeton Princeton University Press, 1976)

18 This discussion draws upon Roger E Kanet *The Polish Crisis and Poland s Allies The Soviet and East European Response to Events in Poland*, in Jack Bielasiak and Maurice D Simon (eds), *Polish Politics Edge of the Abyss* (New York Praeger, 1984), pp 317-344, Thomas M Cynkin, *Soviet and American Signalling in the Polish Crisis* (London Macmillan Press, 1988), Sidney I Ploss, *Moscow and the Polish Crisis An Interpretation of Soviet Policies and Intentions* (Boulder/ London Westview, 1986), and Arthur R Rachwald, *Poland Between the Superpowers Security vs Economic Recovery* (Boulder Westview, 1983)

19 John L Gaddis, *The Evolution of U S Policy Goals Toward the USSR in the Postwar Era*, in Seweryn Bialer and Michael Mandelbaum (eds), *Gorbachev s Russia and American Foreign Policy* (Boulder, CO/ Westview Press, 1988), p 327

20 On the role of Eastern Europe in the Third World, for example, see Roger E Kanet, *Eastern Europe and the Third World The Expanding Relationship*, in Michael J Sodaro and Sharon L Wolchik, eds , *Foreign and Domestic Policy in Eastern Europe in the 1980s Trends and Prospects* (London Macmillan, New York St Martin s, 1983), pp 234-259

21 Superpower competitive relationships at the regional level can be divided into three basic types 1) those in regions in which one superpower has dominant interests, while the interests of the other are nonexistent or minimal, such as Eastern Europe or Latin America, 2) those regions in which neither superpower has vital interests, such as much of Africa, and 3) those in regions which both superpowers consider essential to their vital interests, such as the Middle East On the subregional level, it is possible that the interests of the client of a superpower may draw the latter into regional commitments which otherwise might be considered outside its major concerns For a slightly different categorization see Alexander L George, *Crisis Prevention Reexamined*, in Alexander L George (ed), *Managing U S -Soviet Rivalry Problems of Crisis Prevention* (Boulder, CO Westview Press, 1979), p 381

On the usefulness of the concept of spheres of influence see Roger E Kanet, *Esfemas de Influencia de la Política Exterior Sovietica*, *Foro Internacional*, vol 14, no 2 (1973), pp 220-234, and Bennett Kovrig, *Spheres of Influence A Reassessment*, *Survey*, no 70/71 (1969), pp 102-120 During the past two years official Soviet views of Eastern Europe have changed markedly See note 28, below

22 This coincides with Alexander George s findings

Our model also suggests that situations of pronounced interest asymmetry favoring one side or the other should lend themselves to development of norms, if not also rules of engagement, that reflect that disparity of interest When one superpower perceives that the other side s interests are much more strongly engaged in a particular area than its own, the first power should moderate the *objectives* it will pursue in that area and/or the *means* it will employ on their behalf

George, *Crisis Prevention Reexamined*, p 384

23 For an argument in favor of linkage in policy toward the USSR developed several years later, see Helmut Sonnenfeldt, *Linkage A Strategy for Tempering Soviet Antagonisms*, *NATO Review*, XXVII, no 1 (1979), pp 3-5, 21

24 According to Bialer the most important of these rules are

avoid extreme behavior, especially direct military intervention in the other's declared or recognized spheres of influence ,

act with restraint where the vital interests of either superpower are involved ,

avoid direct confrontation or contact of military forces, and disengage when such confrontation or contact seems probable ,

avoid cornering the other side, and leave open to it a face-saving way out when a direct confrontation occurs ,

avoid inflicting a defeat on a superpower's ally so catastrophic as to humiliate the superpower itself ,

avoid even the most limited (i.e., tactical) use of nuclear weapons against any opponent ,

engage in nonpublic consultations, even at times of highly strained relations, about the superpowers' intentions with regard to areas or issues of high confrontational potential

continue, except for short intervals, to negotiate on arms control even in the face of great difficulties in the overall political relationship between the superpowers , and

reach explicit agreements creating mechanisms that would contribute to the de-escalation of potential confrontational incidents

George's listing of the rules of prudence rests on what he considers the single basic rule, that neither superpower shall initiate military action against the forces of the other superpower. From this rule can be derived other, secondary rules of behavior

neither superpower shall exploit its advantage in a crisis to impose on the other a policy dilemma between backing down in defeat or desparately initiating the use of force

each superpower shall operate with great restraint in its policies and actions towards areas of vital interest to the other superpower

neither superpower shall permit a regional ally to drag it into a confrontation or shooting war with the other superpower

each superpower shall accept military intervention by the other superpower in a regional conflict if such intervention becomes necessary to prevent the overwhelming defeat of a regional ally, moreover, in order to remove the other superpower's incentive to intervene in such a situation, each superpower shall accept responsibility for pressuring its regional ally to stop short of inflicting such a defeat on its local opponent

Seweryn Bialer, *Lessons of History Soviet-American Relations in the Postwar Era*, in Arnold L Horelick (ed), *U S -Soviet Relations The Next Phase* (Ithaca/ London Cornell University Press, 1986), p 91, and Alexander L George, *U S -Soviet Efforts to Cooperate in Crisis Management and Crisis Avoidance*, in George, Farley, and Dallin (eds), *U S -Soviet Security Cooperation*, pp 583-584

25 Secretary of State James Baker, *Points of Mutual Advantage Perestroika and American Foreign Policy*, *U S Department of State, Current Policy no 1213* (1989)

26 On the Basic Principles see Alexander L George, *The Basic Principles Agreement of 1972 Origins and Expectations*, in George (ed), *Managing U S -Soviet Rivalry*, pp 107-118

27 On the Berlin negotiations see Jonathan Dean, *Berlin in a Divided Germany An Evolving International Regime*, in George, Farley and Dallin (eds), *U S -Soviet Security Cooperation*, pp 83-105

28 For example, during his address to the Council of Europe parliamentary assembly in Strasbourg on 6 July 1989, Gorbachev said, *Social and political orders in one country or another have changed in the past and may change in the future But this is exclusively the affair of the people of that country and is their choice Any interference in the domestic affairs and any attempts to restrict the sovereignty of states—friends, allies, and others—are inadmissible Pravda, 7 July 1989 In October, during a visit to Helsinki, he repeated this argument and set up Soviet-Finnish relations as a model for relations between a big country and a small country, a model of relations between states with different social systems, a model of relations between neighbors NYT, 26 October 1989, p 7 See, also, Vladimir V Kuzin,*

Mikhail Gorbachev's Evolving Attitude to Eastern Europe, *RFER RAD BR/128* (20 July 1989), pp 1-12

29 The following discussion borrows from a number of sources. Especially important are Mikhail Gorbachev, *Perestroika, New Thinking for Our Country and the World* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1987), Abel Aganbegyan, *The Economic Challenge of Perestroika* (Bloomington/Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), Tatiana I Zaslavskaya, *A Voice of Reform: Essays by Tatiana I Zaslavskaya* (Armonk, NY/London: M E Sharpe, 1989), Ed A Hewett, *Reforming the Soviet Economy: Equality versus Efficiency* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1988), and Jerry F Hough, *Opening up the Soviet Economy* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1988)

30 Kennan's 1947 "Mr X" article on containment is reprinted in Charles Gati, ed., *Caging the Bear: Containment and the Cold War* (Indianapolis/New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1974)

