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THE USSR AND EASTERN EUROPE IN POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE

by

DR. VERNON V. ASPATURIAN

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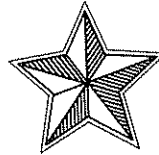
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In broad brush strokes, I would like to paint a picture of the Soviet Union's posture in international affairs, attempt to forecast its position during the remainder of the 70's, and discuss the relationship between the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe during this period. I will also present some relevant observations concerning the mission and purposes of the Soviet Union and the United States in the international community; their crises of identity; and their difficulties in redefining defense, security, and vital interests in an era of detente.

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IMPACT OF SINO-SOVIET RELATIONSHIP



One of the anxious uncertainties confronting the Soviet leaders today, as they enter into a detente relationship with the United States and an increasingly hostile relationship with China, is the impact which these developments will have on Eastern Europe and its relationship with the Soviet Union.

The developing Soviet relationships with China and the United States are likely to generate forces in Eastern Europe that will reinforce one another, although for entirely different reasons. Both China and the United States are interested in loosening the bond between Moscow and Eastern Europe for reasons that are not only different, but perhaps even contradictory.

The Chinese purpose, I would say, has these four objectives: one, to weaken Soviet posture with respect to China by depriving the Soviet Union of an important reserve of human and natural resources. Two, to render the Soviet Union vulnerable to attack from the West, as the Soviet threat to China grows, and thus to act as a brake or deterrent to a possible Soviet attack on China. Three, to subvert Moscow's credentials as a Communist revolutionary power by depriving the Soviet Union of its principal ideological extension in the world. And four, to create a community of ideological interests between China and a group of small Communist states in search of a new Communist protector that can provide protection without the risk of domination. Of course, I think this latter is a reflection of the peculiar fantasies that agitate the Chinese leaders at this particular moment. For some reason, they believe that the regimes in

Eastern Europe are bona fide Communist regimes, being corrupted and contaminated by Soviet revisionism, that would like to break away from the Soviet Union and find a genuine, authentic Communist revolutionary protector, namely Communist China, a protector that is simultaneously sufficiently distant so that it cannot become a dominant power. To a certain degree, the relationship between China and Albania represents the kind of fantasy model that the Chinese leaders would like to see emerge, an East European group of Communist states looking to China for leadership rather than to the Soviet Union.



Incidentally, I might mention that I spent three weeks in the Peoples Republic of China in February 1974 where I gave a seminar on Sino-Soviet relations at the University of Peking. My experience confirmed what other observers have noted, that the main preoccupation of the Chinese seemed to be the Soviet threat, or what they perceived as the possibility of an imminent Soviet attack on China. And from one end of the country to the other, I was constantly bombarded with questions about Soviet intentions. I was also asked frequently why the United States was being hoodwinked by the Soviet Union; why we believe their talk about detente which the Chinese maintain is nothing but a smokescreen; why we were permitting NATO to fall apart; why we were allowing the Soviet Union to penetrate into the Eastern Mediterranean and the Arab states; a whole list of such questions which led finally to the seminar at the University of Peking. They didn't like my presentation because I told them that they were exaggerating the Soviet threat, and that the risk of a Soviet attack on China had diminished considerably. This argument was unacceptable, because the current line was that a Soviet attack was imminent, justifying heavy expenditures in China for the construction of air raid shelters and similar defensive facilities.

INTERESTS OF THE UNITED STATES

To return to my main point, what are the

US interests in loosening the bonds between Moscow and Eastern Europe, and how do they coincide with the Chinese purpose?



First and foremost I think that the United States, since the end of World War II, has sought to disassociate the Soviet Union from Eastern Europe, not so much for ideological anti-Communist purposes but rather to deprive the Soviet Union of a forward geopolitical springboard for possible invasion or intervention in Central and Western Europe. That is, to remove once and for all threat of direct Soviet intervention in Germany and in Western Europe, in response either to Communist uprisings within these individual countries, or as a result of vulnerabilities and openings that might entice the Soviet Union to directly move its own forces into the area. What the United States would prefer is the transformation of Eastern Europe from a Soviet springboard into a buffer zone between Soviet power and West-Central Europe.

A second purpose is, of course, simply to diminish Soviet power by depriving the Soviet Union of the human and material resources of more than 100 million people who live in the region, although the current reliability and usefulness of these resources is questionable. No one knows exactly how the armies of Eastern Europe would react in the event of a war. The Soviet leaders themselves view the reliability of the East European states with considerable skepticism.

A third purpose would be to deprive the Soviet Union of its universalist and Messianic credentials as the leader of a world revolutionary movement. By separating Eastern Europe from the Soviet Union, Soviet communism would be transformed from an international ideology into a parochial one. This, I think, is a very important point. At present, given the fracturing and near dissolution of world communism as a movement and the effective decapitation of its head, the Soviet Union, for more than a decade, the only residual credential that the Soviet Union possesses in the worldwide movement is its ideological leadership in Eastern Europe. The East European Communist states are in many ways an

extension of the Soviet system, and as will be pointed out below, they perform an important function in validating the main ideological purpose of the Soviet Union.

Needless to say, the Soviet leaders are not about to accommodate either China or the United States by relinquishing their East European empire. Indeed, as time goes on, Eastern Europe will become more, not less, important to the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, as its detente relationship intensifies with the United States and as it progresses, there will be important changes in this relationship. No one knows at this point, either in Moscow or in Washington, exactly how the East European states will be affected by detente; how the Soviet Union will justify its military presence in the area if there is no longer a credible threat from Western Europe, from Germany, or the United States; and to what degree this will stimulate boldness and once again encourage dissidence in the Soviet Union's East European empire.

Of course, to the degree that the detente relationship intensifies, the American interest in loosening the bonds between the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe diminishes as well, because the absence of a credible Soviet threat to Western Europe will have a similar corrosive impact upon the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. What's the purpose of NATO if there's no longer a Soviet threat, just as on the Soviet side the question inevitably arises: what's the point of the Warsaw Pact if there's no longer a threat from the West?

So I think that as detente develops, if it does develop, important changes are going to take place in both alliance systems, although we really cannot forecast the nature of those changes. All we can do is consider the various possibilities that might take place.

SOVIET PURPOSES



As the Soviet Union's credibility as a revolutionary power erodes, and much of that erosion is due to the criticism and denunciation of the Chinese who are now their principal challengers, the Soviet leaders are likely to be more obsessive about the importance of Eastern Europe as a

validation of their own system and their original pretensions. By keeping Eastern Europe within the Soviet orbit, Moscow retains the fig leaf of Communist internationalism although it may stand exposed nakedly as an imperialist global power in all other dimensions.

At this point, perhaps it would be wise to state some fundamental yet simple and obvious truths that might be otherwise obscured as we strive for a more sophisticated analysis. The Soviet position in Eastern Europe has always served and continues to serve two distinct but interrelated and interdependent purposes; these purposes are in a continuously changing relationship to one another, and this relationship changes not only over time but in response to circumstances and events.

The first is a purely strategic security purpose connected intimately with national defense and security. I think most of you know from your study of diplomatic history that Eastern Europe has constituted historically an invasion funnel from the West into Russia. Similarly, it has constituted an invasion funnel from the East into Central and Eastern Europe. It is, you might say, a prototypical march land. It is an important buffer region made up of small, relatively weak states that are divided against one another by traditional historical animosities, which have been manipulated and exploited by neighboring great powers for their own ends. The small countries themselves are incapable of filling the power vacuum that inevitably develops in this region, and it has always been the fate of East Central Europe to become the sphere of influence of one of the great powers. If it was not within the sphere of influence of Russia, then it fell within Germany's sphere of influence or that of some German-type state (e.g. Austria). And, since World War II, it has become a part of the Soviet Union where it functions as the Soviet's single most important geographical defense zone.

Hence, it is not likely that the Soviet leaders will permit Eastern Europe to break away in the foreseeable future. As events in Czechoslovakia demonstrated in 1968, the

Soviet leaders are prepared to intervene, if necessary, to prevent any significant erosion of their East European empire.

The Soviet presence in Eastern Europe thus guarantees at the minimum, and I say this is just the minimum guarantee, a denial of the region to any other great power, and here when we talk about any other great power we're talking particularly about Germany, because Eastern Europe has traditionally been a sphere of influence of both Germany and Russia. They have contended over the region for many centuries and they're likely to do so in the future. Thus, one of the things that frightened the Soviet leaders was the Ostpolitik that had been initiated by Erhard and then extended by Chancellor Kiesinger. The Ostpolitik of that era threatened to loosen the bonds between Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. You may recall that it was a policy that served to entice the East European states into developing closer relations with West Germany. To a certain degree, this encouraged the autonomous defiance of Rumania, particularly in the realm of foreign policy. More importantly, it reinforces internal developments in Czechoslovakia which seemed to be moving it right out of the Soviet orbit. One reason why the Soviet Union intervened in Czechoslovakia in August 1968 was that they were afraid that the German policy of Ostpolitik, in conjunction with Lyndon Johnson's policy of "bridge building to Eastern Europe," was succeeding; it was likely to be more successful in eroding Soviet power in Eastern Europe than a frontal, hostile posture that had existed to about 1965-66, when Ostpolitik and the bridge building policy were inaugurated. Although Eastern Europe is vital to Soviet security, the Soviet presence there also constitutes a threat to Western Europe, just as the presence of another great power in the region would constitute a menace to Moscow. These are interlockable and unpalatable truths but they must be faced.

The Soviet control of Eastern Europe, in a psychological sense, also serves to validate Moscow's credentials as a regional power, as a leader of a group of states, and as a leader of one of the two principal alliance and political

systems in the world. I think it important to bear in mind that the United States and the Soviet Union are the only two alliance leaders in the world today, and that a certain amount of prestige is derived from that particular role. Furthermore, much of the Soviet Union's prestige in international affairs derives from the fact that the Soviet Union is the leader of a group of states.

IDEOLOGICAL RELATIONSHIPS



I think that these aspects of Soviet relationships should be viewed as a distinct set of relationships apart from the second set that I will be discussing, and that is the ideological relationship between the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Here, let me again emphasize that the Soviet Union has two principal roles in the international community; there are other roles too, but these are the two principal ones. One is as a great power, as a



Festival on Red Square.

global power, one of the two global powers in the world today operating in the general international system made up of Communist and non-Communist states; in that particular role she is a rival with the United States for paramountcy within the international state community.

But the Soviet Union is also the leader of another international constellation, or at one time was a leader, and is still the putative leader of, or more properly the dominant power in, something called the "World Communist Movement." In a more contracted dimension, she is also the leader of a group of Communist states within the interstate system; that is the 14 Communist states which, to a certain degree, constitute an international subsystem within the general international system. And within this particular environment, the Soviet Union is in rivalry with China for paramountcy in the world of Communist states and Communist parties. Thus the Soviet Union is confronted with two major rivals.

Unlike either China or the United States whose rapprochement diminished considerably their adversarial relationship, the Soviet Union is in direct competition with two principal powers in the world today in these two separate but very interdependent and interrelated interstate systems.

Thus, the second general purpose of the Soviet presence in Eastern Europe is essentially ideological and symbolic. This is more closely tied-in with the ideology of communism and the existing Soviet socio-political system.

The first set of relationships that I discussed are largely traditional, and might have occurred whether or not Russia was a Communist state, a fascist state, a democratic state, or any other kind of state. There are certain imperatives that operate in the relationship between the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe that transcend ideology and involve other major factors. This ideological and symbolic purpose is increasingly residual but nevertheless continues to be important for the short run, and I emphasize the short run, because in my own assessment of the Soviet position the ideological element in Soviet behavior has been eroding for many

years and will continue to do so. The Soviet Union has no real future as a leader of a Communist movement, because China's emergence as a rival has effectively arrested that role. Before the emergence of China as a rival, the policies of the United States had, in many ways, also blocked the expansion of Soviet or Communist power, but in different ways.

I need not remind you that the last state that moved into the Communist orbit was Cuba. That was some 15 years ago and it had very little to do with Soviet behavior, either directly or indirectly. And since about 1954, when North Vietnam became a Communist state, it appears that the Soviet hope of communizing the world has become both ambivalent and muted. There was much concern and anxiety, you may recall, during the 50's and 60's about the vulnerability and the naviete of the emerging countries in the third world, particularly in the Middle East, and how they might fall, first within the Soviet diplomatic orbit, and then be sucked into the Soviet ideological orbit. It is significant that as vulnerable and exposed as these small countries were in the third world, not a single one of these former colonial areas succumbed to the Soviet brand of communism, or to any brand of communism for that matter. And most of these states, of course, do maintain friendly relations with the Soviet Union, but largely for their own purposes, and are far from being instruments or pawns of the Soviet Union. We now know that even Egypt, long considered a virtual Soviet satellite, was manipulating the Soviet Union more for its ends than it was being manipulated by the Soviets. Despite the quasi-alliance treaty of 1971, Sadat was even able to attenuate the relationship, suggesting how tenuous the Soviet penetration into the Middle East was and still is.

In the short run then, the existence of Eastern Europe as a bloc of Communist states modeled on the Soviet system, and I emphasize the word "Communist," continues to validate the Soviet Union's credentials as an ideological and revolutionary power, as well as a residual center of a world revolutionary movement.

Thus, Eastern Europe serves not only as an

imperialistic extension of the Soviet Union, but it is also an ideo-social extension of the Soviet's social system itself. Eastern Europe is the first and most important extension of the Soviet system beyond the borders of the Soviet Union, and it represents the residue of Moscow's former ecumenical pretensions. All of the Communist states in Eastern Europe came into being under various forms of Soviet sponsorship. They were all cast from the Soviet mold, and represented the first step in universalizing the Soviet system in one way or another. All have been beneficiaries of Soviet protection, as well as victims of Soviet domination. We might say that while the Communist regimes have been the beneficiaries of Soviet protection, the populations have been the victims of Soviet domination.

The Communist states of Eastern Europe are, in effect, miniature alter egos of the Soviet Union, and when the Soviet leaders look at Eastern Europe they find contentment only if it reflects a reasonable facsimile of themselves. The integrity, viability, and even existence of the Soviet system depends upon the maintenance of the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe and thus, for psychological reasons alone, the overthrow of any Communist regime in Eastern Europe would constitute a threat to the Soviet system. I think it's important to bear in mind that the Soviet Union does not consider itself to be merely a state; it considers itself as a representative of a particular form of social and economic organization which has universal validity and application. And the East European states are not subordinate simply to Soviet foreign policy, but their internal structures are also in some degree subordinate to the Soviet will.

DEFENSIVE FUNCTION OF EASTERN EUROPE



The defensive function of the Soviet presence in Eastern Europe has always been recognized as valid by the West, certainly by the United States, and this has been justified amply by both history and logic. But a second purpose has bothered the West, particularly the United

States—that is, the function of the Soviet presence in Eastern Europe as a first step in the communization of all Europe. This has provoked anxiety, both in Western Europe and in the United States, and as long as these two functions of the Soviet presence in Eastern Europe remained intertwined and equally weighted in Soviet calculations, the ideological expansionist aspect of the Soviet presence in Eastern Europe dwarfed all other considerations insofar as we were concerned.

In other words, the Soviet presence in Eastern Europe constitutes, first, a defensive function. Eastern Europe is as important to the defense of the Soviet Union as it was to its predecessor, Russia. This function has always been there; it's always been recognized. And of course, in the past those who emphasized American responsibility for the Cold War have always maintained that the primary purpose of the Soviet presence in Eastern Europe was entirely defensive; but Eastern Europe can also serve simultaneously as a springboard for an invasion into Central and Western Europe. And both of these factors were interlocked very intimately and intricately in Soviet calculations. It was only when the Soviet leaders themselves started making the distinctions between these two functions that it became possible for the United States to react and respond in a different way.

SOVIET AND AMERICAN CRISES OF IDENTITY



These two purposes, then, reflect the two main roles of the Soviet Union in the international community which I suggested earlier—its role as a global and regional hegemonic power, and its role as a center of a world revolutionary movement. As these two roles came into increasing conflict over the past three decades, the Soviet leaders have been forced periodically to satisfy the demands of one role at the expense of the other; while Moscow has fluctuated in its choice of priorities between them, on balance the role of the Soviet Union as a global and regional power has grown at the expense of its role as

a revolutionary power. This has confronted the Soviet Union with what can be called "a crisis of identity" as it moves into the 1970's in its rivalry with the United States and China. Whereas the confrontation with the United States is increasingly one of traditional imperialisms in collision, the confrontation with China reflects the ideological side of the Soviet Union's existence.

The struggle with the United States is for paramouncy in the international state system, while the struggle with China is for paramouncy in the international Communist system. Eastern Europe, as a part of both the general interstate system and the Communist subsystem, thus constitutes a dual battleground and its disposition will affect Moscow in both of its roles.

Now what is an identity crisis as it relates to a major power like the Soviet Union? And I might point out here, I'll be discussing the Soviet Union in relation to the United States and China as well. All three major powers, in fact, are going through an identity crisis, but I want to concentrate on the crisis as it affects the Soviet Union.

Basically, this crisis revolves around the image that the leadership of the Soviet state and its supporting constituencies hold of the nature, role, and purpose of the Soviet Union in the international community. Does the Soviet Union conceive of itself simply as a state dedicated to defending and promoting the interests of its citizens and inhabitants in whole or in part, or does it imagine itself to be the vehicle of a higher mission or broader purpose? Does it view itself as a terminal entity, the nucleus of an expanding organism, or as a model to be universally emulated? Are its purposes absolute or relative, its goals limited or unlimited? To what extent is its self-image, moral and physical integrity, and sense of self-fulfillment dependent upon the achievement of transcendental purposes as opposed to the more modest and restricted criteria of self-development? To what degree is its conception of security and defense integrated with the achievement of higher purposes? And finally, to what degree is the legitimacy of the state, the system, or the social structure interrelated with these so-called higher goals?

The crisis of identity is particularly critical for the Soviet Union at this juncture, as well as for the United States, for unlike most other states neither one is a conventional nation-state whose purposes can be justified almost entirely in terms of nationhood and national integrity. Nevertheless, neither the Soviet Union nor the United States considers itself to be an ordinary nation-state among states, but both have invested themselves with an existence, a mission, and a purpose beyond the simple satisfaction of the needs and interests of their citizens. Both are supranational states without being conventional imperial states, and until recently neither considered itself afflicted with an identity problem. Each felt secure and confident of its identity as defined by itself and by others. Each was a global power, the leader and center of a coalition of states in which its military and ideological supremacy appeared assured, indisputable, indispensable, and permanent.

It is unnecessary to explain how both the Soviet Union and the United States imagined themselves. Of course, they both imagined themselves as being in the forefront of progress and justice. The United States was going to save the world from the evils, first, of fascism and then communism; and the Soviet Union, of course, was going to liberate the world from the evils of capitalism and imperialism.

In many respects, the rivalry between the two countries was mutually reinforcing, and the identity and the legitimacy of one state was validated, to some degree, by the behavior of the other state. We might say, in effect, that totalitarianism on the one hand and imperialism on the other became ideological code concepts establishing what each of the two great powers was against; these concepts also served to obscure the affirmative purpose of each which was to impose upon the world its own vision of a just and stable order, that is, a Pax Americana or a Pax Sovietica. This period of rivalry, as you know, has been called the Cold War. It was characterized by a bipolar situation in the international system, but now, after three decades of rivalry, the United States has recognized implicitly its failure to impose its

version of justice and order upon the international system. The Soviet leaders, on the other hand, are probably aware that there is very little likelihood of imposing a Soviet version of international order on the world, given the intramural Chinese challenge to the Soviet leadership in the World Communist Movement, and the polycentric evolution of the movement itself in other parties and in other states.

I should point out that there are still some Soviet leaders, particularly the professional ideologues, who have not abandoned completely the notion that the abdication by the United States as the world's policeman creates opportunities for Moscow to assume such a role, at least for a transitional period. This is, of course, part of the debate within the Soviet leadership itself and I think it should be recognized. In this connection, however, it is my judgment that the dominant group, at least now, probably subscribes to the view that if the United States failed in establishing itself as the world's policeman or gendarme, the Soviet Union would probably fail as well, and that is a very risky proposition where benefits as opposed to the possible costs are not sufficiently enticing.

The crisis of identity for both Moscow and Washington thus resolves itself essentially as a reexamination of the scope and intensity of their mission and purpose in the world community, with a tendency towards reduced scope and diminished intensity. I think most of us know that in our own country, especially since Vietnam, more and more Americans are asking themselves, what is the role of the United States in the world? Do we have a purpose? We used to think we had a purpose, but I think most Americans are confused today, and this is one of the problems of contemporary American foreign policy—we have not been able to replace an earlier purpose with a new one.

There is a similar problem in the Soviet Union. Now that Communist China has effectively demolished the earlier Soviet notion that the world was moving inexorably towards communism and that the Soviet Union would be the epicenter of this movement, many Soviet leaders have lost

heart in the promotion of a world Communist system because they feel that new Communist states are more likely to follow the Chinese lead than the Soviet lead. They believe that the progressive exfoliation of communism would simply mean altering the balance of power within the Communist movement in favor of China; and so they too seem to have lost their sense of purpose and are thrashing about for some new mission or goal.

For the time being, both countries are increasingly looking inward, are concentrating more and more on self-development, and are paying attention to domestic problems that have been overlooked or shunted aside as the international situation has become more crucial. But I think it's fair to say that both countries are in a transitional period, and this inward-looking phase is purely temporary. Both countries retain powerful residual universalist and Messianic impulses derived from both tradition and ideology, reinforced in recent decades by enormous military and economic capabilities. And although these have been blunted, they have been neither exhausted nor explicitly repudiated.

During the 70's, we're likely to see at least a temporary retrenchment to regional hegemonies, and continued erosion of ideological impulses in foreign policy. Whether this remains a temporary or permanent condition will depend not only upon the domestic forces and trends in each country, but also in the growing power of other states and the resolution of their own identity crisis, particularly that of China.

I would suggest that as both the United States and the Soviet Union admit or exhibit failure to achieve their global missions, and as they retrench from their forward positions in the international community, political traumas and social turbulence will probably occur in each country since, to a great extent, the structure of priorities, the internal distribution of power, the direction of development, the mobilization of social effort, the discharge of psychic and moral energies, and the contours of legitimacy were conditioned and shaped by the missions and purposes that each country had in world affairs. While the circumstances of failure in

each instance are different, and the character duration and intensity of the internal bickering and social turbulence provoked will also vary, reflecting in each case the nature of the system, it appears very likely that social turbulence, political conflicts, turmoil, and even challenges to the legitimacy of the system will ensue in both countries during the 70's.

A prime characteristic of the Cold War was that defense and security, not simply foreign policy, were defined in terms of ideology and thus increasingly assumed an absolutist and often amorphous character. This made it simple to define national security and defense, but we find now it's not so easy to define. The Watergate affair, for example, has demonstrated how national security and domestic political interests can become intertwined and intermingled, as it were. Thus, the Cold War was characterized not only by a conflict of state or national interests, but also by a conflict of competing ideological and social systems in which the promotion of a particular ideology or social system became the reference point for defining defense and security. But defense and security were not defined in terms of the United States as an entity, but in terms of what the United States represented as a political system or idea. Our foreign policy was geared not simply to defend the United States but to defend the Free World, to defend free institutions, and to defend and promote democracy. The idea was that American democracy could survive and develop only in an environment in which a substantial number of other states shared the same political values and political institutions.

Similarly on the Soviet side. The Soviet conceptions of defense and security are not simply to defend the territory of the Soviet Union, but to defend a particular social system called communism within the Communist world. And so security and defense were defined in these broader terms rather than in the narrower terms, and naturally while each country defined its conception of defense and national security in these broader ideological and social terms, it tried to deprive the other of the right to do

so. After all, the United States wasn't interested in destroying the Soviet Union as a state. It was only interested in preventing the expansion of communism as a system, as if the Soviet Union had no interest at all in defending communism or promoting its expansion. In other words, we would insist that the Soviet Union define its defense interests in a more traditional and restrictive way while we defined ours in a broader way, and similarly the Soviet leaders would demand the same of us. Both countries then, would define their own security in very broad terms while trying to narrow the definition of security for their adversaries. Thus, it wasn't the defense of this or that state, but the defense or expansion of a system or an ideology that became the focal point, although this was linked with parallel though subordinate promotion of state interests as well. Under these conditions, defense policies transcended the security of the state, and became increasingly irrational and indecipherable in conventional terms as they responded to the imperatives of affirmative Messianic objectives rather than defensive objectives.

Now while the redefinition of identities will dominate the agenda of the 70's, other related critical problems will also demand simultaneous resolution—some like the reexamination and redefinition of foreign policy goals and objectives; the reconceptualization of defense and security; the rearrangement of priorities; and the redirection of growth and development that will logically flow from identity redefinitions.

DEFENSE AND SECURITY REDEFINITIONS

One of the immediate problems facing the Soviet Union and the United States, as they retrench from global positions, is a redefinition of their defense and security interests and their conception of vital interests. Obviously, there can be a very important distinction between what a state considers its security interests and vital interests to be and what they are. There is a tendency to confuse the two which can be coterminous, but they need not be.

Defense and security interests are always a part or the core of a state's vital interests, but vital interests can also be defined outside the pure requirements of defense. The danger for countries like the United States and the Soviet Union is the tendency to swerve from an ideological definition of vital interests to a purely physical definition, and vice versa, as reflected in the contrasting policies of both unlimited interventionism and periodic isolationism. Hence, the redefinition of defense will be much easier than the reconception of vital interests. I mean, when we talk about defense we're talking about something much more tangible than when we talk about vital interests; the term vital itself is rather subjective and elastic.

Since both the United States and the Soviet Union are regional powers as well as global powers, each already possesses its own regional sphere of influence including what I call an inner territorial glacis made up of client vassal or satellite states subject to varying degrees of control by the hegemonic power. Each sphere is differently managed, reflecting the nature of the political and social system of the dominant state. The American territorial sphere of influence has been the Western Hemisphere with Canada, Central America, and the Caribbean constituting the inner territorial glacis. In other words, this is probably the last ditch territorial buffer zone, insofar as American defense is concerned.

The current Soviet territorial defense zone is a much more recent development. What Moscow has traditionally considered as part of her defense zone and its sphere of influence has been historically claimed by other powers. Thus, Eastern Europe is the current Soviet territorial glacis. The same region has been claimed traditionally by Germany as its zone, and has been viewed historically by both Moscow and Germany simultaneously as a forward defense zone for further penetration eastward or westward as the case may be. Since Germany is currently in no position to contest the Soviet zone in Eastern Europe, the latter constitutes the Soviet territorial glacis in the West, and has been formalized via the Brezhnev Doctrine which is the counterpart to the American Monroe Doctrine.

The Soviet defense zone in Central and East Asia, except for Mongolia, remains ill-defined and is actively contested by China. As the Soviet Union and the United States retreat from their global positions to their regional spheres, the Chinese will be advancing towards global positions and, in the process, will attempt to demarcate their own territorial sphere of influence, including perhaps an inner territorial glacis whose precise demarcation remains to be established.

REDEFINITION OF SOVIET AND AMERICAN VITAL INTERESTS



The redefinition of vital interests beyond defense requirements will be a much more difficult problem for the big powers to delineate. Without ideological imperatives, the components of vital interests beyond defense tend to become banal, selfish, and uninspiring, reduced almost entirely to international commerce and investments. Such interests are hardly worth the risk of nuclear war. To what extent, for example, in an era of deglobalization and detente between Moscow and Washington, assuming that it develops, will the security of Western Europe constitute a vital interest area for the United States if it is no longer essential to American defense and security? Since the United States has become involved in two world wars to prevent a single power from dominating Europe, is it realistic to believe that America can dismiss Western Europe as a vital interest region? These will not be easy questions to answer in the 70's, as I'm sure most of you are aware, particularly if threats to Western Europe originate in internal ideological and political conflicts. Aside from the widespread fears of the so-called Finlandization of Western Europe, what about the greater likelihood of what I call "Chileanization," that is, a revival of political coalitions between local Communist parties and other left wing parties, especially Italy on the model of the late Allende regime.

What would the United States do in the face of a series of Allende type coalitions in Western Europe? Both France and Italy periodically are on the verge of going in this

direction. Would the absence of a US military presence in Western Europe, for example, encourage such developments? To what extent would they be construed as detrimental to US interests? That is, to what degree can the United States in the next few years view an internal Communist takeover in France and Italy as a threat to the defense and security of the United States? Just to pose the question, I'm sure, is enough to provoke all sorts of controversy, and there will be plenty of answers but they will not all be moving in the same direction.

The broader question is, of course, will the elimination of Western Europe as a zone of US vital interests lead to its transformation into a Soviet sphere of vital interests? It was in anticipation of the possibility that US decisionmakers might no longer consider Western Europe as vital to its security that impelled General De Gaulle to create the French force de frappe, and with talk of unilateral American reductions or withdrawal, about mutual balanced force reductions, SALT II, and the European security conference, the force de frappe syndrome may become a live issue in West Germany, for example.

To a larger degree than usually recognized, US military presence in Western Europe constituted a shield, not only against possible Soviet military onslaught, but also against internal political and social convulsions. In particular, it served as a guarantee against Communist participation in West European governments, as well as against any Communist takeover of these countries. As long as NATO exists and as long as US presence in Western Europe is in force and credible, it would seem highly unlikely that any Communist Party in its right mind would attempt to seize power in any West European country. But if our forces are withdrawn from Western Europe and if NATO dissolves, can one say that this likelihood will remain at the same level? In my own view, it would probably not and the chances of internal Communist attempts to take over would go up tremendously. The question for us is whether or not this is still an important factor in the security considerations of the United States.

Now, although the 70's will create new opportunities for Soviet foreign policy, Moscow will also be faced with the greatest hazards and vulnerabilities among the great powers, and I think it important to place this in proper perspective. The Cold War and bipolarity, in many respects, provided the Soviet leaders with a measure of security and relatively simple options, since the United States functioned not only as a rival of the Soviet Union but also in some respects, as a legitimizer of Soviet control over its own sphere. It also provided the Soviets with justification for pursuing a global policy. Thus, for many years the Soviet Union justified its military presence in Eastern Europe on grounds that the United States constituted a threat to the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe and to the Soviet Union itself.

With America's willingness to abandon its role as world policeman and reduce its worldwide commitments, the Soviet leaders have been deprived, to some degree, of a powerful justification for their globalism. Furthermore, the discipline which the Cold War imposed on the two global powers served to confront the Soviet Union with only one main rival. As long as US-Chinese enmity persisted, even Moscow's rebellious partner was conveniently chained by the United States and was thus crippled in its confrontation with the Soviet Union.

The abdication of globalism by the United States thus frees the West European powers and Japan from the constraints imposed by Washington, while American rapprochement with China leaves Peking free to concentrate its fire on Moscow. While these changes in US policy do not pose an immediate threat to Soviet interests, it will become apparent during the 70's that the volitional diminution of US power automatically provides all the other powers with greater freedom to develop their own power, and to define their relationships with one another without direction from the United States.



In this connection, the peculiar geographical location and configuration of the Soviet state once again assumes geopolitical significance. The

Soviet Union has the longest continuous state border in the world. The 4,000 mile border with China alone is the longest, most remote, and most hazardous international frontier between two hostile states. Of all the major powers, the Soviet Union is also the most vulnerable to concerted action on widely separated fronts. It is encircled geographically by three major powers—China, Japan, and Germany, all of which have latent or active territorial demands against the Soviet state. The Soviet Union also constitutes the main target of all the non-Soviet nuclear powers—Britain, France, China, and the United States. This is something to contemplate. I do not think that we appreciate the fact that there are five nuclear powers in the world today and, of those five, four have virtually all of their targeting on the Soviet Union. Should West Germany and Japan acquire a nuclear capability, the Soviet position could become quite desperate. Can one imagine the nuclear weapons of China, France, or Great Britain pointing in any direction other than the Soviet Union? And the Soviet Union is very acutely aware that it is the only state surrounded by nuclear powers.

The Soviet leaders thus cannot view the emergence of a polycentric international system with placid equanimity, and whatever Soviet advantages may accrue in the early 70's may erode rapidly soon thereafter. Paradoxically, and I say this half in jest but half in seriousness as well, the United States may emerge as a chief protector of the Soviet state in the 70's, because only with its active cooperation and support can Moscow hope to maneuver among its many potential enemies from the various hostile combinations which may develop on both her eastern or western frontiers. In many ways today, the United States is also a de facto protector of China against Soviet attack. This is one of the things that I gingerly told the Chinese in Peking, and they didn't exactly respond with enthusiasm to that observation. And just as US warnings to the Soviet Union function as a deterrent against a Soviet attack upon China, the United States' attitude toward other nuclear powers could function as a deterrent to their hostile intentions toward the Soviet Union.

The United States, on the other hand, because of its unique geographical position, would remain vulnerable to direct attack only from the Soviet Union, since the other nuclear powers, including potential ones, have neither the desire nor the reach to directly threaten the United States. Of all the nuclear powers, only the United States and the USSR possess an authentic, transoceanic, intercontinental capability. The nuclear capability of other nuclear powers, including potential ones, is largely of local relevance, and the most relevant locality for all is Russia.

A Eurasian continent with six or more nuclear powers would create the foundations for a new and qualitatively different type of nuclear stalemate, and thus would serve to render the Soviet capability useless for diplomatic purposes since she would be vulnerable to multiple retaliation from different directions. Moscow could be the subject of multiple pressures around her periphery by powerful neighbors seeking to rectify local grievances against the Soviet Union. Curiously enough, nuclear proliferation would serve to debase Soviet strategic capability as it applies to the United States, and result in a Eurasian containment of Soviet power more effective than that ever forged by the United States.

I emphasize that this is the kind of nightmare the Soviet leaders envision. We may not appreciate this since we do not always look at the situation the way they do. But remember, when the Soviet leaders get up in the morning they're still cognizant of the fact that they're surrounded on all sides by great powers. In fact, they are the only country in the world that is surrounded in this way, and consequently they don't always view the future with any great placidity. In particular, as they see China growing more powerful on their eastern frontiers, with its active territorial demands against the Soviet Far East and with its challenges to Moscow's credentials as a Communist power, the Soviet leaders must be startled into reality when they realize that, as time goes by and China's influence grows, their supremacy in Eastern Europe will become increasingly vulnerable and correspondingly indispensable.