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by

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To analyze the Warsaw Pact in any one phase of its development is a formidable task. To analyze it in all of them—past, present, and future—is almost a forbidding one, particularly in the brief space available here. In complexity and scope the conceptual possibilities and problems involved in such a task are awesome to contemplate. No less awesome, however, are the political and military challenges with which the Warsaw Treaty Organization currently confronts the United States and its NATO allies. These challenges dictate that, despite the difficulties involved, broad analyses of the Pact's development at least be attempted. Without such attempts, and the comparative perspective on past, present, and future developments that they alone can provide, the nature of the Warsaw Pact's current challenges to the West can be neither fully understood nor completely met.

This attempt to provide a wide-ranging, comparative, yet brief analysis of the Pact's development over time requires at the outset some definition of the particular categories, historical periods, and questions to be addressed. For the purpose of this analysis, the Warsaw Treaty Organization will be considered in terms of the development of that organization's external relationships, on the one hand, and its internal relationships, on the other. By external relationships is meant the political-military posture that the Pact as a whole presents to the world outside the boundaries of its member states and that it presents, in particular, to NATO. By internal relationships is meant the variety and extent of the political, military, and economic ties among Pact members but, primarily, the variety and extent of such ties between non-Soviet members of the Pact and the USSR. Comparisons between historical periods will be made in terms of these categories. Changes and continuities from past to present to probable future will be related to them as well.

In addition to the present and future, this analysis will refer to two different periods in the past in which these external and internal Pact relationships have developed. The first of these historical periods is the one that followed the inception of the Warsaw Treaty Organization in 1955; it roughly coincides with the rise of Nikita Khrushchev to a position of preeminence in the Soviet hierarchy. For want of a better term, this period in the development of Pact relationships will be referred to as the "Khrushchev era." The second period, which roughly coincides with Khrushchev's fall and Leonid Brezhnev's rise to power in the Soviet Union, will be termed the "post-Khrushchev era," reserving the term "Brezhnev era" for the current state of relationships among and between members and nonmembers of the Pact. The primary method of comparison to be employed here will thus be a historical one, focusing by and large on developments over time within the Pact itself. However, a secondary method will occasionally be employed as well: Where and when appropriate, direct comparisons between the Pact and its obvious historical counterpart, NATO, will also be suggested.

THREE QUESTIONS

In order to evaluate the status of the Warsaw Pact's external and internal relationships in the different periods, three separate but related questions will be raised in connection with each period.

The first of these questions applies primarily to the external relationships of the Warsaw Treaty Organization. The question is whether such relationships in any given period are predominantly offensive or defensive in character. A pattern of Pact external relationships that would appear to be largely offensive might aim at attacking, pressuring, or otherwise mounting initiatives against the West. To be characterized as defensive, these relationships would be directed more exclusively toward protecting Pact members against perceived external threats, however valid or invalid those perceptions might be. Obviously, theoretical difficulties are bound to occur in applying such terms as "offensive" and "defensive" to the external relationships of the Pact over time. The terms themselves are inherently ambiguous—witness the adage that the best defense is often a good offense. Nevertheless, the need to evaluate the dominant thrust of the Pact's external relationships in these terms is vitally important to the West, for ambiguities in theory may not be so ambiguous in fact.

To evaluate the status of internal relationships within the Pact in each period, however, a second question will be raised. This question involves the theory of "cohesion with viability" formulated by another analyst of the Soviet Union and its Eastern European satellites to explain a recurrent problem in their internal relationships.

Cohesion implies:

> . . . a general conformity of both domestic and foreign policies, as well as an identity of the institutions implementing these policies in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.[1]

Viability suggests a degree of:

> . . . confidence, credibility, and efficiency in the Eastern European states that would increasingly legitimize Communist rule there and consequently reduce Soviet need for a preventive preoccupation with the region.[2]

According to the theory, the unresolved dilemma for the Soviets and their associates in the Pact, in the past as well as the present, is how to achieve both cohesion and viability—or "cohesion with viability"—that is, how to maintain a balance or reduce periodic imbalances between the two.[3]

Relationships within the Pact can be viewed as oriented primarily toward cohesion when a breakdown in mutual confidence results in political or military crackdowns or other such reassertions of control by the Soviet Union. They can be interpreted as tending more toward viability whenever the Soviets decide to relax their grip a bit and, perhaps experiencing a greater sense of self-confidence themselves, foster (if only by example) greater confidence, credibility, and possibly a degree of independence among other Pact members. In this analysis, therefore, the relevant question to be raised concerning the Warsaw Pact's internal relationships is whether, during a particular period, underlying tendencies toward greater cohesiveness are smothering desires for increased viability: whether "cohesion with viability" is on the rise or on the wane.

This question, in turn, suggests the third: To what extent can Pact relationships in any given period legitimately be characterized as those of a viable alliance system, one based in practice as well as in official theory upon principles of equality and mutual respect for differences? There is a certain lack of reality about the Warsaw Pact as a military and political alliance. This unreality is reflected in the mutual defense obligations contained in the 20-year bilateral treaties of friendship signed after World War II by the Soviet Union with each of its Eastern European allies and by the latter with each other. The original treaties expired in the

late 1960's and were then renewed. As the analyst quoted above has suggested, the existence of these treaties makes the Warsaw Pact:

> . . . if not redundant, at least largely dispensable in terms of the military obligations each ally has toward the other. Its disbandment, therefore, for which the Soviet Union and its allies have intermittently declared themselves ready if there is a simultaneous dissolution of NATO, need not greatly affect the Soviet-dominated military posture of the Eastern alliance.[4]

For the purposes of this analysis, the relevant question is whether the Warsaw Treaty Organization can be characterized accurately, in any period of its development, as a bona fide alliance, with all that that term tends to imply in the way of shared decisionmaking and control as well as of operational support.

Taken together, the analytical categories and questions just introduced provide a useful basis for analyzing the Warsaw Pact in the past, the present, and the future. Instead of turning immediately to the past, however, it might prove more useful to begin with the present. Although somewhat unorthodox from a strictly historical point of view, this approach has certain advantages. It quickly identifies, through readily apparent examples, key elements in the Pact's external and internal relationships; it conveniently summarizes the present results of cumulative developments from the past; and it effectively limits the fields of inquiry here to issues that would appear to be most relevant for the future.

THE PACT TODAY

In terms of its current external relationships, the military posture of the Warsaw Pact is by far its most impressive feature. The Pact has come a long way from Western perceptions of it in the early 1960's as an unsophisticated assemblage armed with masses of rugged, easily maintained but simple weapons. Pact ground and, to some extent, air forces are steadily reaching maturity and becoming more comparable, on a one-to-one basis, with the formerly superior (qualitatively, if not quantitatively) forces of the West. According to the annual report of the US Secretary of Defense to Congress for fiscal year 1979, the Soviets have considerably expanded the structure of their tank and motorized rifle divisions (of which there are 31 in Eastern Europe), "most notably in the 20 divisions of the Group of Soviet Forces Germany (GSFG)" that directly confront the NATO allies:

> Since the 1960's, about 1,000 men have been added to each of the tank divisions, and approximately 1,500 to each of the motorized rifle divisions. At least in the GSFG, modern tanks, self-propelled artillery, new anti-tank guided missiles, armored personnel carriers, attack helicopters (including the heavily armed MI-24 HIND and MI-8 HIP), and organic air defenses have been provided in quantity.[5]

Still heavily dominated by such Soviet military components as these, the Pact is nevertheless characterized today by more extensive reliance than ever before on the capabilities of non-Soviet forces to deal with the outbreak of a conventional war in

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Europe. Twenty years ago, the Soviets were expected to bear the brunt of any fighting against the West and to require for that purpose prior reinforcement of their forces deployed in Eastern Europe from the USSR. It now appears quite possible that the Pact expects to achieve its initial objectives on the ground in Europe without reinforcement in advance from the Soviet Union. Because of the significant increases and improvements in overall Pact capabilities during the past 10 years, the combination of Soviet and indigenous Eastern European forces in place may be sufficient at present to accomplish this task.

Politically, the Warsaw Pact presents as much of a unified front today in such regional negotiating forums as the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and the Vienna talks on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions (MBFR) as does NATO. The Pact has its troublesome renegade, Romania, but NATO has France as well as Greece. Expanded mechanisms and procedures for consultation and advice are now available to Pact members. However, unlike the numerous institutions within NATO where views are exchanged on an equal basis, "advice" in the Warsaw Treaty Organization tends to originate with the Soviets and to flow in one direction to the other member states.

The Pact is still largely a centrally controlled political as well as military instrument of Soviet policy objectives in Europe. Officially, it is supposed to deter a perceived NATO threat to Eastern Europe (although, as the US Secretary of Defense has pointed out, the Soviets appear confident "that they need not be prepared for a surprise attack on Eastern Europe by NATO").[6] More specifically, the Pact is designed to insure that any actual conflict takes place in the West, not the East, and, failing that, to provide the Soviet heartland with a buffer against invasion. Otherwise, the organization seeks to maintain the status quo in Eastern Europe and to prevent any deviation from this objective by its members. On the whole, the Pact functions rather effectively today as a political mechanism of established utility, at least as far as the Soviets are concerned.

In terms of its current internal relationships, the Pact is a congeries of faction-ridden national and party groups. One of its main purposes, as indicated above, is the insurance of pro-Soviet stability in Eastern Europe. Toward that end, it fosters domestic political control by factions heavily dependent upon the current leadership in Moscow. Dependence in the Pact these days, however, is defined by more than simply ideological, political, and military supports. A critical element of dependence at present is continued economic support, in the form of Soviet-subsidized foodstuffs for Poland, for example, or energy exports to the Pact members at lower-than-world-market prices.

While there is some uncertainty concerning the ability of the Soviets to maintain current levels of such support indefinitely, and well-founded apprehension of the consequences if they cannot, few doubt their ultimate resolve or course of action should serious political instability in Eastern Europe arise. Despite recurrent outbreaks of dissidence in that region, however, the overarching structure of power there is firmly entrenched, if only in the numerous Soviet divisions which dot the landscape.

Currently the Soviets are attempting to suggest greater viability through a reinvigoration of the Pact's Political Consultative Committee as well as establishment of an additional Committee of Foreign Ministers and a permanent secretariat patterned after NATO. While they would thus appear to be interested in developing a more viable alliance—one based to some degree on principles of equality and mutual respect for differences—their residual instincts still gravitate to desires for cohesion. The stated objective of these ongoing efforts in the Pact is to continue and to expand effective cooperation in the field of foreign policy. The unstated objective is presumably to coax Romania back into a more unified, pro-Soviet fold.

In sum, the Warsaw Pact today has all the appearances of a permanent fixture of international life in Europe, as permanent a fixture perhaps as NATO. Externally, this fixture projects the image of a powerful collective, organized in fact, if not in theory,

for offensive political and military action. Internally, a proliferation of multilateral pronouncements and institutions attempts to convey the impression that the viability of the Pact, and therefore of its individual members, is increasing. It is significant, however, that such attempts characteristically originate at the top of the Warsaw Pact system, flow downward, and seek to increase viability within the system by fiat. The procedure suggests that maintenance of cohesion and centralized control inspires such attempts in the beginning and limits them in the end.

Thus, the Warsaw Pact is difficult to conceive of today in terms of the normal give-and-take that has traditionally characterized alliance systems. Rather, it more accurately resembles a joint stock corporation controlled by a major shareholder, in this case the Soviet Union. Actively wielding the ultimate power that their majority interest conveys, the Soviets have built an imposing politico-military organization (as opposed to an alliance), one that suits their own imposing purposes quite well and is—to borrow a term often employed in Pact pronouncements—"businesslike" in the extreme.

THE KHRUSHCHEV ERA

Today, more than 20 years after the founding of the Warsaw Treaty Organization in 1955, it is not often remembered that that organization was initially scheduled to last for only 20 years (with provision, however, for an automatic 10-year renewal). It is difficult to recall that, to a degree, the creation of the Pact represented a "liberalizing" trend of sorts in Soviet policies—not toward the West exactly but toward Eastern Europe and the kind of "viability" referred to above. Its founding represented a departure from former Stalinist policies aimed at Soviet control and direction of Eastern European affairs through largely informal, bilateral mechanisms.[7] The rise of Khrushchev to power in the Soviet Union coincided with the rise of the Pact. For a variety of external and internal, propagandistic and practical reasons, he undertook to direct its early development away from the course of development for Eastern Europe originally charted by Stalin.

In the external context, Khrushchev used the establishment of the Pact to dramatize and protest the entrance of West Germany into NATO, to punctuate Soviet calls for a European security conference and general disarmament, and to have something to dissolve in the event that such calls were heeded. Although the creation of the Warsaw Treaty Organization failed to achieve these Soviet diplomatic objectives at the time, the Pact's inception did have the incidental effect of providing a new legal basis for the presence of Soviet military forces in Hungary and Romania. Formation of the Pact, however, brought little immediate change in the military potential of the Eastern bloc. Apart from improving joint air defense arrangements in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union made no major effort to weld the Warsaw Pact into an integrated military alliance during its first five years, "being content to treat it largely as a political and propagandistic answer to the inclusion of West Germany in NATO."[8]

Coincident with rising tension in Europe over Berlin in the early 1960's, with the deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations, and with Khrushchev's general preference for nuclear weapons over conventional ground forces in the military posture of the USSR, the Soviets began to stress closer military cooperation with the other Pact members, to reequip and modernize indigenous East European forces, and to initiate measures designed to improve the collective military forces of the Pact. The new policy line toward Eastern Europe gave Khrushchev:

> . . . an additional rationale for trimming back Soviet theater forces on the grounds that a larger share of the European military burden and its costs could now be borne by Moscow's partners.[9]

These changes under Khrushchev, however, did not go very far. Soviet ground forces deployed in Eastern Europe were never

reduced to less than 26 divisions. Soviet military circles would not accept less, nor would they accept that the improved caliber of indigenous Eastern European forces might justify a reduction in their own theater force requirements. Moreover, they continued to assume that in wartime the other Pact forces would be subordinated to direct Soviet command.[10]

The changes in external relationships under Khrushchev, however, served additional purposes beyond the ostensible one of reorganizing Pact military capabilities for conducting joint operations in Europe. In the internal context, these changes combined with further efforts by Khrushchev to distance the Pact from its Stalinist antecedents. His campaign to do so, however, was dealt a severe blow by the rebellions in Hungary and Poland in the fall of 1956, even though these events could and would be interpreted as delayed reactions to Stalin's repressive legacy. The crushing of the Hungarian rebellion by the Soviet Army, in fact:

> . . . not only tarnished the image of a socialist military alliance based on common goals but also left room for friction and disagreement as to how far a treaty, ostensibly meant to counter NATO, might be stretched to cover Soviet policing actions in Eastern Europe.[11]

Following these events, Khrushchev had to mend some fences within and around the Warsaw Pact. He convened a "unity" meeting of Eastern European Communist leaders in Budapest in January 1957, promoted a series of discussions with East European delegations in Moscow, and concluded new bilateral agreements between the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies that included "economic concessions as well as status-of-forces arrangements aimed at blunting East European resentment [of] the Soviet military presence in the area."[12] Khrushchev may have hoped that cultivation of such joint arrangements in the military sphere would accomplish what the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA), set up to counter the Marshall Plan in 1949 and reactivated after the disruptive events of the fall of 1956, had failed to do by way of drawing the bloc closer together. His accent on closer economic and military integration:

> . . . apparently was meant to convey a political image of Soviet bloc solidarity and to promote greater cohesion within the Warsaw Pact in the face of 'polycentric' trends that had become increasingly manifest in East Europe by the early sixties. Evidently, Khrushchev saw in the Warsaw Pact a potentially useful organizational instrument through which to offset such tendencies and to help maintain discipline and political unity within the Soviet bloc.[13]

The overall effect of Khrushchev's efforts was to foster a sense of viability and a kind of liberalization in Eastern Europe, at some cost to the Soviets, however, in terms of internal cohesion and control. Externally, the latter-day image of the Warsaw Pact as an offensively oriented tool of Soviet foreign policy was slow in developing because, internally, Pact members such as Hungary and Poland—and later Romania and Czechoslovakia—asserted their distinctiveness to a degree that was impossible under Stalin. Even though Khrushchev may never have intended to foster more than a semblance of independence, he did much to create:

> . . . a situation in which Eastern European leaderships, the composition of several of which he helped to change, developed some degree of autonomy and even of bargaining leverage in their relations with the Soviet Union.[14]

As a result, the Warsaw Pact began to assume "some of the features of stress, strain, and bargaining that have characterized traditional alliances throughout history."[15]

THE POST-KHRUSHCHEV ERA

One result of this development, indirectly at least, was Khrushchev's own departure

from power in October of 1964, the rise of new leadership in the USSR, and the onset of a new era in the history of the Pact. For the sake of clarity and brevity, the several principal developments of this era can be presented in summary fashion, as follows.

With regard to external relationships, three military force posture changes affected both NATO and the Warsaw Pact:

- Soviet repudiation of Khrushchev's preference for nuclear (as opposed to conventional) forces, but anticipation—partly as a result of his programs—of eventual nuclear parity with the West and, thus, of increased possibilities for conventional warfare or the threat of it in Europe. This was accompanied by the Soviet commitment to programs geared toward improving the offensive capabilities of Pact ground forces.
- NATO's adoption in 1962 of the doctrine of flexible response (as opposed to massive nuclear retaliation) in Europe.
- Modernization of indigenous Eastern European forces and numerical increases in strength within the area, especially following the Pact's invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 and the subsequent retention of five extra Soviet divisions there.

Additional developments with regard to external relationships are seen in the political and economic efforts in the wake of the Czech invasion designed to further a Brezhnev-sponsored policy of detente aimed at reducing immediate tensions with the West:

- Renewed emphasis upon earlier Soviet calls for an all-European security conference and general disarmament.
- Acceptance of a 1972 Quadripartite Agreement on Berlin.
- Agreement to participate in the MBFR talks in Vienna and to discuss lowering the levels of forces confronting each other in central Europe.
- Realization of the opening in 1973 of East-West negotiations on security and cooperation in Europe and signature of the CSCE Final Act at the Helsinki summit in 1975.
- Repeated overtures to the West for additional trade, credits, loans, and other forms of increased but selective economic interchange.

With regard to internal relationships, the following developments were significant:

- Reemphasis on pro-Soviet cohesion (rather than viability) as the primary objective in intra-Pact relations—particularly in connection with and as a result of the Czech crisis of 1968—and effective demonstration of the Pact's continuing ability to limit deviationism.
- Attempts to restore the semblance of ideological and political orthodoxy both within and beyond the Warsaw Pact. These included steady pressure on Romania as well as on other European Communist parties to recognize the hegemony of the Soviet Union in the ranks of international Communism; convocation in 1976 of an often-postponed European Communist party congress; and further elaboration of the Pact's political consultative mechanisms for coordination of views (with those of the Soviets) on matters of foreign policy.
- Employment of Soviet economic resources to reinforce dependence and maintain compliance with the broader objectives of the Soviet Union.

In the post-Khrushchev era, therefore, the external relationships of the Warsaw Pact began to assume their current distinctive form, a form characterized by political and—to a lesser extent—economic offensives, as well as by military forces capable of providing any necessary offensive support. Cohesion reasserted itself as a central objective in the context of the Pact's internal relationships, at least as far as the Soviets were concerned. The Prague Spring of 1968, the Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia the following summer, and the Brezhnev doctrine spawned by these events confirmed one anticipated outcome of Khrushchev's

emphasis on increasing viability within the Pact. Khrushchev's successors could blame the Czech crisis on existing policies largely attributable to Khrushchev, somewhat as Khrushchev had been able to attribute the Hungarian uprising to the legacy of Stalin. Moving after 1968 as Khrushchev had after 1956, but in a different direction, Brezhnev and company fashioned new military, political, and economic policies within the Pact aimed at preventing further rebellion against and promoting greater compliance with the objectives of the Soviet Union. The qualities of a genuine alliance, which the Warsaw Pact had seemed to be acquiring in the preceding era, began to fade.

Thus the Pact, as already observed, can be characterized more accurately in its current "Brezhnev era" as an organization but not an alliance. Internally, it is a complex of unequal partners increasingly linked by ties of military, political, and economic necessity and by tensions and fears, some real, some imagined. Externally, it represents a powerful military machine of suspicious intent and offensive configuration poised against NATO and Western Europe. Although it regularly avows a willingness to engage in military as well as political detente, its professions in this regard are highly suspect, if only because its military capabilities have proven to be so necessary for the maintenance of internal political controls.

THE PACT TOMORROW

Insofar as developments in the past and realities in the present can tell us anything about the future, one can offer the fairly confident surmise that the recurrent problem of cohesion with viability will continue to plague the Pact. Cohesion will continue to be tested by the often questionable reliability of individual Pact members. No single issue has troubled the Soviets so much in the 23-year history of the Warsaw Treaty Organization, and events in recent years suggest that Moscow's domination of the Pact will continue to be an uneasy one. Bargains will continue to be struck within the Pact that call for Soviet economic and, perhaps, political support internally in exchange for uneasy support of the Soviets' external objectives.

The extent to which this uneasiness will affect the offensive capabilities of the Warsaw Pact will be difficult to determine, but it will nonetheless remain a key factor in any evaluation of the Pact's military effectiveness. The Soviets, of course, are well aware of this problem. This awareness helps explain, in part, the Soviets' efforts over the years to streamline the organization of the Pact and make it more responsive to their direction. However, the looming prospect of future economic and other internal difficulties—such as the determination of Brezhnev's successor—does not augur well for the success of continuing Soviet efforts to maintain cohesion without resorting to violence.

As long as a perceived Western threat remains plausible in the eyes of its Pact associates, Moscow's task will be easier. Relaxation of tensions in East-West relations, however, could make the Soviets' job more difficult. In the future, therefore, the West must determine where its own best interests in this connection may lie. These interests might very well dictate the promotion of prudent efforts to relax tensions, provided they are carefully conceived and orchestrated. If so, and if such efforts do indeed help alter the internal and external posture of the Warsaw Pact, NATO may find that it has an actual alliance to deal with, rather than the current, all-imposing organization.

NOTES

1. J. F. Brown, *Relations Between the Soviet Union and Its Eastern European Allies: A Survey*, R-1742-PR (Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, 1975), p. 2.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
5. Harold Brown, *Department of Defense Annual Report, Fiscal Year 1979* (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1978), p. 75.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 76.
7. Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, *The Soviet Bloc: Unity and Conflict* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), pp. 137-38, and *supra*.

8. Thomas W. Wolfe, *Soviet Power and Europe, 1945-1970* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), p. 148.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 152.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 152, 170.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 149.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 82.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 151.
14. J. F. Brown, pp. 11-12.
15. *Ibid.*