Washingtonpost.Newsweek Interactive, LLC

Detente under Soviet Eyes
Author(s): Adam B. Ulam
Source: *Foreign Policy*, No. 24 (Autumn, 1976), pp. 145-159
Published by: Washingtonpost.Newsweek Interactive, LLC
Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/1147982
Accessed: 06-08-2018 14:07 UTC

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at https://about.jstor.org/terms

Washingtonpost.Newsweek Interactive, LLC is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Foreign Policy*

This content downloaded from 86.158.69.236 on Mon, 06 Aug 2018 14:07:13 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

DETENTE UNDER SOVIET EYES

by Adam B. Ulam

"What is the answer. . . . What is the question?" It would be well if these immortal words of Gertrude Stein were pondered by every politician, editorial writer, and public-minded citizen who turns his mind to the excruciating dilemmas of U.S. foreign policy in this election year. In fact, much of the trouble we have had in dealing with the Soviet Union during the last 30 years has resulted from our propensity, and here I speak of our statesmen as well as public opinion, to explode with answers before formulating the question.

What precisely has been the nature of the Soviet, or, as it is sometimes put, Communist challenge, to counter which we have constructed a network of worldwide alliances, spent billions upon billions of dollars, and expended thousands of American lives in areas far away from the Soviet Union as well as the United States? Some of the answers—policies we adopted—turned out to be highly beneficial, e.g., the Marshall Plan; some, like the massive intervention in Vietnam, disastrous. But in both cases we failed to ask the real question: How would the given policy offset the challenge posed by the Soviet Union and/or Communism? What passed for analysis was, most often, rhetoric: Communism, declared President Truman in enunciating the doctrine which bears his name, spreads in "the evil soil of poverty and strife." The Russians, it was asserted in the 1950s, respected only strength. In the 1960s we set out to demonstrate that "wars of liberations" don't pay. At times we rushed into conclusions about the Soviets' intentions and capacities which not only expert knowledge but sheer common sense should have pronounced as unreasonable. In the late 1940s and early 1950s it

This content downloaded from 86.158.69.236 on Mon, 06 Aug 2018 14:07:13 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

was widely believed that it was only the American monopoly and overwhelming superiority in nuclear weapons, that kept the Red Army from racing to the English Channel. Hardly anyone asked whether the Soviet Union, which had lost 20 million people in World War II and which was trying to rebuild its shattered economy, could have even considered the possibility of an armed conflict with the power which produced close to half of the industrial production of the world. And, paradoxically, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, many in the West became firmly convinced that the now infinitely stronger Soviet Union was now no longer a threat. Burgeoning Soviet "consumerism" and "troubles with China" were bound to make the Kremlin behave, even with the United States torn by the reverberations of Vietnam and Western Europe still disunited.

"The primary cause and purpose of détente . . . was for the Kremlin to prevent a too close rapprochement between Washington and Peking."

And so with détente. Without trying to understand what it has actually meant in terms of Soviet policies, some in this country have already condemned it as a euphemism for appeasement, while others cling to it as "the only alternative" to a cold, if not indeed hot, war. In the rhetoric of the primaries, détente has been blamed for the Cuban intervention in Angola and that country's subsequent fate. The Soviets' unpleasant practices with their dissidents and Jews violate the spirit of détente and of corollaries such as the famous "third basket" of the Helsinki accords. Contrariwise, many who are by no means pro-Soviet protest that our policies fail to adhere to the new spirit of U.S.-Soviet relations.

Such claims on behalf of and against détente must arouse a great deal of amusement, but also a certain impatience, within

This content downloaded from 86.158.69.236 on Mon, 06 Aug 2018 14:07:13 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

the Kremlin. Détente, Brezhnev and his colleagues must feel, has never been presented by them as implying that the Soviet Union would refrain from extending its influence wherever it was safe and profitable for it to do so; still less that the Soviet internal system should be changed to reflect the wishes of the editorial board of *The New York Times*, the AFL-CIO, or various senators.

Détente in the Soviet view has meant a new type of *relationship* with the United States, but this relationship does not *automatically* put the Soviet Union under an obligation to pursue policies Americans would approve. Détente was never assumed by Moscow to mean a specific agreement or a series of agreements, not to mention an alliance. It was meant to provide a framework within which the two powers could seek agreement; an atmosphere conducive to political bargaining free from threats of war, enabling both sides (the Russians obviously hoped primarily themselves) to gauge more accurately each other's interests and intentions. But the mere existence of détente does not, the Russians feel, put any restraints on their policies, even though they are pleased when the State Department feels it does put restraints on America's.

But that is precisely what he has suspected, an irate American critic of détente would exclaim. At best, this wretched French word stands for a meaningless charade of state visits and summit meetings, at worst it is a cover-up, allowing the Russians to go on doing what they damn well please, while we, fearful of damaging that precious détente, let ourselves be bamboozled. But a brief look at the postwar history of U.S.-Soviet relations will suggest that détente does not have to be a one-way street, and if it continues to be so, we will have no one but ourselves to blame.

The Dark Age of the Cold War

The dark age of the cold war is explained by the revisionist historians as being caused by America's imperialist strivings which led

This content downloaded from 86.158.69.236 on Mon, 06 Aug 2018 14:07:13 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

the Kremlin to become justifiably apprehensive, and, not quite so justifiably, repressive in Eastern Europe and at home. What might be called the orthodox school sees the source of the Soviet policies of that period in Stalin's admittedly unpleasant and overly suspicious personality. But while the first thesis is absurd, the second is based on an oversimplification. Whoever ruled the Soviet Union in those days would have had to feel as Stalin did that America's vast strength and Russia's relative weakness made it imperative for the latter to assume the posture of an ominous isolation. A more affable Soviet Union would have been pressured and conceivably compelled by the United States to modify its policies in Germany and Eastern Europe. In contrast, Moscow's harsh rhetoric and its uncompromising attitudes on practically all issues of international life persuaded the West's leaders that any attempt to tamper with the Soviet Union's sphere of interest risked war. In fact, they breathed with relief when the Soviet blockade of West Berlin was not extended to its air approaches, and when American intervention in the Korean conflict did not lead to a Soviet countermove. It was widely (and falsely) believed that the Soviet army had been hardly reduced from its wartime strength, and that since the Russians apparently did not realize the vast destructiveness of the atom bomb—witness Stalin's nonchalant attitude on the subject—it might not be a deterrent to their unleashing millions of soldiers westward.

The cold war then represented a virtual cessation of diplomatic intercourse between the two superpowers. Nor would Stalin's basic premises allow any other form of close relationship with the West. How could the Soviet Union have afforded the kind of contacts which would have been necessitated by her association in the Marshall Plan? Even today in Brezhnev's Russia, much more powerful and prosperous and much less repressive than Stalin's, such contacts are still a major source of worry for the regime.

This content downloaded from 86.158.69.236 on Mon, 06 Aug 2018 14:07:13 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

Granting the essential soundness of Stalin's basic premises, his technique of dealing with the United States still was, his successors were to feel, unduly risky and, in certain cases, counterproductive. They lacked his self-assurance and skill in brinkmanship that for several years masked Russia's real debility and persuaded the Western powers that they were much weaker vis-à-vis the Soviet Union than in fact they were. In addition, the menacing appearance of the Soviet Union prior to 1953 occasionally frightened the West into the kind of policies Moscow had hoped to prevent, such as the creation of NATO and the series of moves which culminated, after Stalin's death, in the decision to rearm the German Federal Republic. Also, the virtual absence of meaningful negotiations between 1946 and 1953 on occasion cost the Soviet Union very dearly. It did not require much imagination for Stalin's heirs to realize that Communist China was bound to become their number one problem. And it is just conceivable that had the United States and the Soviet Union agreed prior to 1948 that Mao's realm should be confined to Northeast China, the Chinese Communists would have had to adhere by that decision and would be, today, docile allies of the Soviets.

With the sorcerer gone, his disciples would try for the next 20 years to dismantle or to domesticate the monstrous apparitions which he had conjured, but that they no longer were confident they could control. They would proceed to reduce the intolerable level of tension with the West, attempt first to appease Mao's China and then to prevent her from becoming a nuclear power, and offer concessions and greater autonomy to their satellites in Eastern Europe.

The Soviet Search for Détente

The Soviet search for détente may be said to have begun with the August 8, 1953 speech of Malenkov. Along with other declarations designed to lessen world tensions, the Soviet premier abandoned the tone of

This content downloaded from 86.158.69.236 on Mon, 06 Aug 2018 14:07:13 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

bristly hostility which had so often characterized Stalin's and Molotov's references to the United States. Instead he said, "We stand, as we have always stood, for the peaceful coexistence of the two systems." And Malenkov amazed as well as heartened public opinion throughout the world by allowing that a nuclear conflict would result in *universal* destruction, rather than as the Communist spokesman had hitherto insisted (even when their own stock of nuclear weapons had been puny when compared with that of the United States—as in fact it still was) in the doom of capitalism alone. In fact, the relief felt in the West because of this admission of the Soviet leader must have been judged to be excessive by his colleagues. Future Soviet statements would return to the old refrain that terrible as a new war would be, it would signal the end of capitalism and the worldwide triumph of Communism.

"The Soviets . . . are technological snobs."

The story neatly illustrates the difficulty the Soviets have had in reversing the Stalinist pattern of diplomacy and entering upon meaningful negotiations with the West. The image of the Soviet Union as ruled by people who, unaware of or underestimating the power of the new weapons, might plunge the world into the unthinkable calamity of a nuclear war, was still, in the Kremlin's view, an important psychological asset in dealing with the West. The tragicomedy of West-East relations between 1953 and the late 1960s lay in the fact that while seeking an understanding with the West, the Soviets did not wish to have their fears and aspirations understood too well by their antagonists. Unlike the situation before 1953, the Soviet Union now sought negotiations and a dialogue with the United States; in fact, Khrushchev's penchant for summitry verged on an obsession. At the same time, once in

This content downloaded from 86.158.69.236 on Mon, 06 Aug 2018 14:07:13 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

a conference room, the Soviet negotiators were almost invariably incapable of formulating concrete proposals, since to do so would have meant to reveal their fears and hence the weakness of their position.

One of the main goals of Soviet foreign policy during the Khrushchev era was to prevent both Bonn and Peking from developing and possessing nuclear weapons. It is quite conceivable that had this objective been stated plainly, the United States and the Soviet Union could have reached a nonproliferation agreement sometime in the 1950s, with Washington undertaking to exact nuclear self-denial from Bonn and Moscow promising to the same thing vis-à-vis Peking. (How effective the Soviets would have been in extracting such a pledge from the Chinese is another matter, but as late as 1959 Chou En-lai still endorsed Khrushchev's slogan of making "The whole Pacific Ocean area . . . a zone free of atomic weapons.") But to spell out such proposals the Soviets believed, would have put them at a fatal disadvantage at the conference table. The United States might feel inclined to bargain the nuclear-free Free Republic against an alteration in the status of East Germany. Any public admission as to the actual condition of the "unshakable unity of the Soviet and Chinese peoples" would have had a dire effect on the Soviet standing throughout the world and would have led to a break with China even more drastic than the one which eventually took place, without necessarily securing an agreement with the United States.

The whole poignancy of the futile charade which characterized U.S.-Soviet relations for so long is well epitomized in the story President Eisenhower related about his talk with the Soviet leader during his visit to Washington in 1959. Khrushchev asked him if he wanted to discuss China. "I answered that I thought there was little use to do so, for the simple reason that Red China had put herself beyond the pale insofar as the United States was concerned. He took my refusal in

This content downloaded from 86.158.69.236 on Mon, 06 Aug 2018 14:07:13 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

good part. . . . He did add . . . that allegations of differences between the Soviets and Red China . . . were ridiculous by their very nature. He and Mao were good friends; the two nations would always stand together in any international dispute."[1]

The fatal flaw of Khrushchev's search for détente was his inability to tell his American interlocutors what he really wanted, and thus persuade them that it was in their own interest as well. Instead, he embarked on a sinuous and dangerous method of accomplishing his purpose, through threats and *faits accomplis*. It is clear that the Berlin crisis was but a lever with which he hoped to pry out a Western agreement to a German peace treaty, with its essential provision being a ban on nuclear armament for West Germany. And most likely those Soviet missiles in Cuba were to be used as a bargaining chip. Had the United States agreed to a German treaty, and perhaps also a nuclear arms free zone in the Pacific, the missiles would have been withdrawn. But he was not only oversubtle but unlucky in what his successors were to characterize as "harebrained schemes." The nuclear test ban agreement was but a small residue of that many-sided accommodation with the United States into which Khrushchev had hoped to scare the Americans.[2]

Washington's Folly

The Brezhnev-Kosygin team did not have to resort to Khrushchev's dangerous improvisations. Washington's folly handed it a most valuable bargaining asset: Vietnam. Few now recall this, but the fact is that the main rationale for our original decision to intervene massively in Vietnam was to stop the alleged expansionist tendencies of *Chinese* Communism. The Soviets, some mem-

[1] *Dwight D. Eisenhower*, Waging Peace, 1956-1961 *(New York: Doubleday, 1965), p. 445.*

[2] *This hypothesis is developed in my* Extension and Coexistence, *2d ed. (New York: Praeger, 1974), pp. 620-621 and pp. 661-667.*

This content downloaded from 86.158.69.236 on Mon, 06 Aug 2018 14:07:13 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

bers of the Johnson administration evidently hoped, would see our intervention as directed against Peking, and possibly help us out of any predicament in Southeast Asia.

The Chinese Communists had from the beginning a truer perception of the role the Vietnamese war played in Moscow's calculations, even if they formulated it with some exaggeration. The Russians, thundered the *Peking Review* on November 12, 1965, "in giving a certain amount of aid to North Vietnam are trying to keep the situation under their control in order to gain a say on the North Vietnam question and to strike a bargain with U.S. imperialism. . . ." Of course, it is hard to gauge how far the Soviet Union could or would have pressured Hanoi to call off the civil war in the south had "U.S. imperialism" approached the Soviet Union with some quid pro quo, say a German peace treaty in 1964 or 1965. But afterward it would have been not only indecorous but illogical for the Soviets to help America; the U.S. overcommitment and failure in Southeast Asia was working in their favor, enabling the Soviet Union to realize some of its most cherished postwar policy goals. North Vietnam, from having been a Chinese preserve, now became dependent on the Soviet Union. Some of the things for which the Soviets would have bargained a few years before now fell in their lap, e.g., West Germany's renunciation of nuclear arms through her signing the nonproliferation agreement and the legitimization of Communist rule in East Germany and of Poland's western frontier under Chancellor Brandt's Ostpolitik. America's European allies, largely as a result of Vietnam, now sought an accommodation with the Soviet Union with such, from the Kremlin's viewpoint, profitable by-products as increased trade and credits, as well as the general loosening of their ties with Washington.

But this pleasant state of affairs could not continue indefinitely. By 1971-1972, the Soviets realized that they had already drawn their maximum benefit out of the Vietnam-

This content downloaded from 86.158.69.236 on Mon, 06 Aug 2018 14:07:13 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

ese conflict and America's general discomfiture in world affairs. Not to seek a détente now risked the possibility that the United States would draw much closer to Communist China. The primary cause and purpose of détente (apart, of course, from minimizing the possibility of a nuclear conflict) was for the Kremlin to prevent a too close rapprochement between Washington and Peking. The value and actual meaning of détente oscillates in the Soviets' eyes not only according to what the West can do and is doing for them, but also according to what it might do for Communist China. If, as at present, China is experiencing political turbulence, which judging by the tenor of the speeches at the Twenty-Fifth Party Congress the Soviet leaders consider more serious than we do, they feel much less inhibited about seizing new opportunites, be it in Angola or anywhere else. By the same token, a united leadership in Peking actively seeking American technological and economic help would have a near magical effect in making the Soviet Union observe what is called in the West the "spirit of détente."

"But no matter who occupies the White House in 1977, he will find the Soviets at the doorstep, still bearing détente."

The other dimension of Soviet decision making is, of course, their appraisal of the strength, purposefulness, and alertness of the other side. The reasons, as North Vietnam's General Dung has recently spelled out with admirable candor, that were decisive in its decision to launch a drive in the south in 1975, were undoubtedly similar to those which persuaded the politburo to authorize the Cubans' descent on Angola: "The internal contradictions within the U.S. administration and among U.S. political parties had intensified. The Watergate scandal had seriously affected the entire United States . . . [It] faced economic recession, mounting in-

This content downloaded from 86.158.69.236 on Mon, 06 Aug 2018 14:07:13 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

flation, serious unemployment, and an oil crisis."[3] It is probably genuinely incomprehensible to Brezhnev and his colleagues that anyone can seriously believe that in 1976, détente places them under the same obligations it did in 1972. Then the Soviets had undoubtedly used their good offices to clear the path to the Paris agreement of 1973. But three years later, as a Philippine Communist indiscreetly blurted out at the Twenty-Fifth Party Congress, "The confrontation of socialism with imperialism in Indochina has demonstrated that with the help of the Soviet Union, one can achieve national liberation without threatening either world peace or détente."

This dialectical view of détente clashes with the usual American interpretation: a series of specific agreements on the one hand, and an undertaking by both superpowers to act responsibly, i.e., not to try to change the balance of power through unilateral action, on the other. But, the balance of power *has* changed to America's disadvantage, and the Russians are not to blame for the vagaries of American domestic politics and the disunity of the West on such issues as the oil crisis and the Third World.

Brezhnev's View

Were Brezhnev to formulate candidly his rationale for détente, it would probably run something like this: "Détente is a process rather than a specific agreement, or sets of agreements. It enables the two superpowers, through increased contacts and more amicable discourse, to avoid the dangers inherent in the previous era when both of them would resort occasionally to drastic measures, without any possibility of gauging whether they would trigger off a violent reaction on the other side, e.g., the Soviet Union sending missiles to Cuba and the United States initiating the bombing of North Vietnam. The actual nature of this process depends entirely on the circumstances.

[3] The New York Times, *April 26, 1976.*

This content downloaded from 86.158.69.236 on Mon, 06 Aug 2018 14:07:13 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

If, as it is likely, the West continues to decline in strength and cohesion, détente would enable the Soviet Union to keep this decline from being accompanied by violent convulsions which might set off a nuclear conflict. If the West recovers from its faltering course and there is a new spirit of realism and resolution in U.S. policies, then under the umbrella of détente we can strike some mutually profitable deals. To resume the old way of dealing with the United States, i.e., to try to outshout and outscare the Americans, would profit no one but Peking."

In reviewing the course of détente to date, the Soviet leaders are unlikely to feel that they have in any sense tricked the Americans. On the contrary, like most politicians, they tend to credit themselves with a great sense of generosity. If at times they've enjoyed an upper hand, this has been due to certain peculiarities of the American political system, and hence Washington's frequent inability to bargain realistically. It is clearly unreasonable, though understandable, that the United States displays so much interest in the treatment of dissidents and Jews (especially) in the Soviet Union. The Kremlin undoubtedly considers that it has catered to this rather childish preoccupation of American policy-makers to an extent unimaginable under Khrushchev, not to mention Stalin. But while the whole subject must be quite painful emotionally to the Soviets, with their intense nationalism and their usual lack of introspection, since they feel that they have been subjected to foreign interference in their internal affairs, there is, on the other hand, probably a certain amount of relief. The Americans' preoccupation with this subject keeps them from being more tenacious about things which really matter: armaments, the terms of trade, the games the Soviets play in Africa and elsewhere.

SALT

Strategic arms limitation has been considered by the United States as the very keystone of détente. This in itself made sure,

This content downloaded from 86.158.69.236 on Mon, 06 Aug 2018 14:07:13 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

quite apart from the awesome intricacy of the problem, that the negotiations over SALT I and SALT II would be long-drawn, with the Soviets constantly airing new demands and creating new complications. If the other side wants something badly, it is obviously advisable to appear *almost* intractable on this subject, thus increasing the probability that it will seek to mollify you on another, to you perhaps more important, issue. Witness Stalin's obduracy over procedural problems and membership in the United Nations in 1944-1945. Very early in the first SALT talks, the Russians wanted to bring in the problem of China.[4] In fact, since their primary objective—virtual nuclear parity with the United States—has been achieved, the Soviets must feel as eager as anyone else to prevent a further arms race.

Increased trade with the West, and with the United States in particular, probably ranks as high as nuclear arms control on the list of benefits the Soviets hope to derive from détente. This at first may appear surprising, since even with the heavy sale of grain in 1973, imports from the United States constituted but a tiny proportion of the Soviet gross national product, and so they still would if this trade tripled or quadrupled. But the Soviets don't see the problem as a strictly quantitative one. The dream of mastering the most advanced industrial techniques by importing them from the leading capitalist country has been with them since Lenin's time. Perhaps they have an exaggerated estimate of America's economic achievements as compared with those of West Germany or Japan, but then they are what might be called technological snobs. Unwilling, or unable, to effect major structural changes in their own economy, they believe that even a quantitatively small infusion of technology from the United States would work miracles, especially with con-

[4] "*The Soviets, in effect, were proposing no less than a superpower alliance against other nuclear powers.*" *John Newhouse,* Cold Dawn: The Story of SALT *(New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1973), p. 189.*

This content downloaded from 86.158.69.236 on Mon, 06 Aug 2018 14:07:13 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

sumer goods. The regime, determined to preserve the full rigor of the police state and not to permit even such modest departures as had occurred under Khrushchev, feels that it can maintain this policy without undue risk only if it continues to improve the lot of the Soviet consumer.

The secondary reason for the emphasis on trade lies in the Soviet conviction that détente thereby gains an important ally in American businessmen, the class they believe still most influential in determining policies of the republic. And, perhaps, the reaction of American farmers to a recent temporary suspension of grain sales to Russia does demonstrate that "leverage" can work both ways.

Does détente have enemies within the Soviet establishment? We simply have no evidence to answer precisely. Usually we learn about a Soviet leader's dissenting views (and at that not always truthfully) only after he has been fired, and that is why it is unreasonable to assign this or that position to the "military," Suslov, etc. At times, the Soviets privately encouraged such games, saying, in effect, "hurry up and sign with us, or the hard-liners will take over," or sponsoring rumors that Shelest or Shelepin were dismissed because they were enemies of détente.

It is reasonable to assume that various aspects of détente do lead to disputes within the politburo; for example, should the Soviet Union declare *publicly* its readiness to allow a specified number of Jews to migrate? Some will fear that perhaps the Soviet Union still might not get extensive credits, and the next thing the Americans might demand is the establishment of a two-party system. The Soviets have always been fearful of ideological pollution from abroad, somewhat paranoid about contacts and ties with foreigners, and apprehensive about any type of association, whether for themselves or their protégés, with people of a different creed. In fact, this phenomenon goes back to the grand duchy of Moscow. It is thus idle to ask whether they are enthusiastic or fearful about the prospect of the Italian Communists

This content downloaded from 86.158.69.236 on Mon, 06 Aug 2018 14:07:13 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

coming to power. They are both. And so it is natural that there should be people in high position who fear that the new relationship which détente implies is full of uncertainties and dangers, that when no longer in a posture of menacing hostility vis-à-vis the West, the Soviet Union will no longer inspire the same fear and respect among its satellites and clients. Some of the latter might attempt to play off one superpower against the other, as occurred with Egypt. Even mere rhetoric, such as the Helsinki declaration about human rights, is likely to have a demoralizing effect on the domestic front. And for all the insistence that détente does not mean the end of class struggle, friendlier relations with the West, even when limited in scale, have always led to the lowering of ideological vigilance and to Soviet society being exposed to some of the ailments of the capitalist world.

But such voices must be in a decided minority. Nothing indicates that the concept of détente as sketched above is a serious bone of contention among the 20 or so people who rule the Soviet Union. They must view with amusement, but also with some concern, how in the current political imbroglio in the United States this innocuous term itself has become a dirty word, and how the Americans blame it for their own sins of omission and commission. Being deeply conservative, the Soviet leaders would undoubtedly prefer to have U.S. foreign policy continue to be directed by those they have come to know. To be sure, they have not been very helpful to the current administration in recent months. But perhaps they have tried. It must have been somebody in Moscow, a man with a sense of humor, who recalled President Nixon's "Vietnamization" program, and who thought up a way to mollify the Americans over Angola by promising to withdraw the Cubans in small installments. Perhaps between now and November we will see some other gestures of this kind. But no matter who occcupies the White House in 1977, he will find the Soviets at the doorstep, still bearing détente.

This content downloaded from 86.158.69.236 on Mon, 06 Aug 2018 14:07:13 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms