Gorbachev and Obstacles Toward Détente

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The November 1985 Geneva summit meeting between General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev and President Ronald Reagan has revived the hopes of many for a United States–Soviet détente similar to that of the early 1970s. Reagan administration officials indicate privately that they see the summit as showing Soviet readiness for rapid progress toward agreements substantially reducing strategic nuclear weapons on both sides, while foregoing their previous insistence on a simultaneous ban on the United States' Strategic Defense Initiative. The Soviet willingness, expressed just prior to the summit, to reunite a few Soviet citizens with their American spouses raises expectations for wider cooperation on humanitarian and emigration issues. While a persuasive case can be made that many opportunities for a lasting improvement in significant areas of U.S.–Soviet relations were indeed missed in the 1970s,[1] it is a mistake to believe that Gorbachev's approach to relations with the United States, whether the issue be arms control, economic relations, human rights, or almost any other foreign policy question, will bear but a superficial similarity to that of the Brezhnev regime in the early 1970s. In fact, this article argues that Gorbachev's deeply held perspectives, assumptions, and beliefs reflect a sea change in Soviet conceptions of what is possible and desirable in U.S.–Soviet relations. This change is away from notions of superpower partnership and toward greater

[1] Raymond Garthoff makes such a case in *Detente and Confrontation: American-Soviet Relations from Nixon to Reagan* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1985).

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nationalist self-reliance and competition with the United States. Thus, the hopes raised by the summit are likely to prove largely ill-founded and illusory.

Contrary arguments see Gorbachev as a pragmatic politician for whom solving concrete problems will take precedence over any personal beliefs or predispositions. Indeed, the problems Gorbachev faces at home to maintain Soviet military prowess and expand consumer welfare as a stimulus to increased productivity in the face of a sluggish, technologically backward, and unresponsive economy may well create pressures to pursue reductions in U.S.–Soviet tensions, and also to increase economic cooperation as a means of buying time.[2] If similar, but far less severe pressures encouraged Leonid Brezhnev to pursue U.S.–Soviet détente in his time, why shouldn't we expect Gorbachev to support an analogous policy now?

Of course, pragmatic responses to pressing practical problems must and do influence Gorbachev's foreign policy. Gorbachev's foreign policy tactics of summitry, smiles, and calls for renewal of détente do bear a surface resemblance to Brezhnev's style of the early 1970s, but his overarching strategy and underlying assumptions emphasize so much more strongly than Brezhnev the competitive aspects of the relationship that this must cast serious doubts on expectations of a Soviet policy more accommodating to U.S. interests and concerns. Moreover, as under Joseph Stalin and Nikita Khrushchev, we are once again witnessing the emergence of a Soviet leader determined and increasingly able to shape Soviet policy according to his own preferences. Thus, Gorbachev's deeply held perspectives are likely to be more decisive in shaping Soviet policy toward the United States than those of any Soviet leader for the past twenty or more years. Gorbachev's clear and forceful articulation of his own domestic and foreign policy program raises the prospect that, to paraphrase Richard Nixon's first inaugural address, Soviet foreign policy may have passed from an "era of negotiations to an era of confrontation."[3] This transformation represents not simply a change in the personalities of the leaders, but rather a fundamental shift in the prevailing outlook among the ruling Politburo. This shift may be characterized as movement from the moderate, outward, and western orientation of the Brezhnev era to a tough, uncompromising, predominantly inward, nationalist or self-reliant perspective that is reminiscent of the late-Stalin era.

At the same time, it must be appreciated that these changes in outlook are expressed by alterations in approach, tactics, and strategy, rather than in objectives. Indeed, the Soviet leadership as a whole since at least the end of World War II has sought to achieve for the Soviet Union the status, recognition, and acceptance of a global superpower with all the privileges they believe this status entails. All Soviet leaders clearly agree that military power at least equal to that which potential opponents may be able to bring to bear in any part of the world

[2] For an important statement of essentially this position, see Jerry F. Hough, "Gorbachev's Strategy," *Foreign Affairs* 64 (Fall 1985): 33–55.

[3] Richard M. Nixon, Inaugural Address, *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*, 27 January 1969, 152.

is the foundation of superpower status. Indeed, Brezhnev and now Gorbachev both champion the growth of Soviet military power. Gorbachev differs from Brezhnev, however, over how to realize the global influence that this military power should produce, and at what cost.

The question of Soviet superpower status has two dimensions: how to achieve the pace of economic and technological growth essential to sustained military and economic competition with the West, and how to relate to the other superpower, the United States. For both Brezhnev and Gorbachev, a particular foreign policy design is linked to the leader's assumptions about the nature of Soviet economic and domestic problems and about how best to resolve them. Brezhnev's own world view, combined with his desire to avoid political controversy at home, led him to a foreign policy based on détentist, internationalist assumptions. Gorbachev, perceiving the Soviet Union as threatened abroad by a resurgent "imperialism" and at home by a stagnant economy, has articulated a defensive, strongly nationalist foreign policy designed to protect the Soviet Union during a lengthy period of domestic rebuilding.

Gorbachev's Response to the Soviet Economic Slowdown

Gorbachev in 1985 certainly faces economic problems of a far more acute nature than those with which Brezhnev had to deal in the late 1960s and early 1970s. With an overall growth rate of 4 to 5 percent per year, Brezhnev could count on steady growth of the military sector while assuring a continuing, if modest, rate of increase in the Soviet standard of living. By 1982 this rate had fallen to near 2 percent. Even the high pressure discipline campaigns of Yuri V. Andropov succeeded in raising the growth rate to only 3 percent by Soviet estimates.[4] Gorbachev has demonstrated a clear understanding of the long-term consequences of these trends. If Brezhnev and Konstantin Chernenko articulated the comfortable view that history and time are on the Soviet side, that the global correlation of forces is moving inexorably in the Soviet favor, Gorbachev stresses that "the historic fate of the country and the positions of socialism in the modern world depend to a large extent on how we manage things from now on."[5] In a speech not intended for publication, Gorbachev was even more straightforward: What is at stake "is insuring the consolidation of the USSR's positions on the international scene and enabling it to enter the new millenium in a manner worthy of a great power."[6]

It is not the Soviet Union's superpower status alone that is threatened by the

[4] See Gorbachev's statement at a meeting with workers in Leningrad on 17 May 1985, where he said, "Of late the rate of increase in national income has been about 3 percent, more or less." Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Soviet Union Daily Report*, 22 May 1985, R4; (Hereafter cited as *FBIS*.)

[5] *Pravda*, 24 April 1985.

[6] Quote is from secret speech to ideology conference, delivered 10 December 1984, *FBIS*, 28 March 1985, R1.

Soviet economic slowdown, but, at least in Gorbachev's view, perhaps the future of the regime itself. In laying out his own program of ideas to guide preparation for the 27th Party Congress, Gorbachev pointed to steadily increasing living standards as "a most important source of political stability."[7] Showing his determination to avoid the cruel dilemma of choice between superpower status and domestic tranquility, Gorbachev declared unequivocally, "There is no alternative to raising the economy to a minimum of 4 percent annual growth."[8]

While the acuteness and thus the immediacy of the consequences of the Soviet economic slowdown are certainly greater today than fifteen years ago, the sources of low growth rates have remained essentially the same over this period. Most observers agree that they include: declining productivity of investment; technological stagnation; slow growth of labor supply and labor productivity; and energy production shortfalls, particularly in coal and more recently in oil.[9] These problems are made more difficult to resolve, in the view of both Soviet and western observers, by an excessively centralized and inflexible administrative and planning apparatus.[10]

While total agricultural output has increased substantially over the past twenty years even on a per capita basis,[11] production of many agricultural products, particularly meat and vegetables, lags far behind consumer demand. The consistent failure of the agricultural economy to achieve planned levels of output, however, has occurred in spite of fundamental changes in investment priorities in favor of agriculture. Thus, since 1971 Soviet agriculture has received between 26 and 27 percent of all investment.[12] To make up for these shortfalls and to provide for its minimal meat production goals, the Soviet Union increased food imports from some $5 billion in 1974 to over $15 billion in 1980, a program which continues under Gorbachev.

The Brezhnev regime's earliest response to its economic problems was the so-called 1965 Kosygin reforms, which stressed profit as the main plan indicator of economic success. By 1970, however, the reforms had made little impact on economic performance. Rather than face the political and bureaucratic turmoil that thoroughgoing implementation of the Kosygin reforms would entail, the Brezhnev regime appears to have made a deliberate choice to favor a vast expansion of foreign economic relations, especially technology transfer, as a substitute for domestic reform.[13]

[7] *Pravda*, 24 April 1985.

[8] Speech to Leningrad workers, 17 May 1985, reported in *FBIS*, 22 May 1985, R4.

[9] See Joint Economic Committee, *Energy in Soviet Policy* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 11 June 1981).

[10] For a broad review of the political sources of these economic problems, see Robert C. Tucker, "Swollen State, Spent Society: Stalin's Legacy," *Foreign Affairs* 60 (Winter 1981–82): 414–35.

[11] Karl-Eugen Wadekin, "Soviet Agriculture's Dependence on the West," *Foreign Affairs* 60 (Spring 1982): 883.

[12] Ibid., 894.

[13] See Roger A. Blough and Philip D. Stewart, "The Soviet Leadership and the Soviet Economy: Economic Reform in the 1970s," *Comparative Political Studies* (forthcoming 1986).

If the Brezhnev regime sought to alleviate Soviet economic problems within established modes of operation, Gorbachev outspokenly argues that unless significant structural changes are pushed through, "it will not even be possible to preserve what has been achieved."[14] Rejecting the Brezhnev decision style of accommodation, Gorbachev openly lays the blame for the current economic malaise on this very approach by his predecessors. "The main reason" for the current problems, Gorbachev declared in his programmatic address to the Central Committee, laying down his guidelines for the 27th Party Congress documents, is that "they were not appraised in the required way at the right time." "What is particularly important," he stressed, alluding to the way in which the 1965 Kosygin reforms were allowed to flounder on bureaucratic opposition, "there was no persistence in either working out or implementing reform measures."[15] Gorbachev's nationalist outlook is found even in his attitude toward approaches to reform. Whether of the Hungarian or Chinese variety, not to speak of ideas developed in the West, Gorbachev seems to have little patience for "foreign" ideas on economic reform. As he has observed, "Socialism must achieve this advance in its own way—or to put it concretely, by Soviet methods."[16]

Gorbachev has already proposed the broad outlines of his program for achieving a significantly accelerated rate of growth. This program reflects a determination to bear whatever costs are required to bring about an economic transformation relying on Soviet bloc political and economic resources. At the center is "intensification" of the economy and speeding up scientific-technical progress.[17] The major mechanism for growth is to be increased efficiency in the use of all productive resources. To bring this about, Gorbachev seeks to transform the Soviet scientific establishment's evolutionary approach to technological change into one that seeks "revolutionary," fundamentally new solutions to technological problems.

Rigid discipline and abandonment of Brezhnev's "respectful" and relaxed policy toward Party and economic leaders comprise Gorbachev's approach to assuring that his economic program does not become blocked by inertia and the reluctance of the bureaucracy to adapt. In a manner reminiscent of Stalinist times, Gorbachev's speeches are permeated with praise of the virtues of discipline and order. The implications of this approach for cadres policy he states without equivocation: "Those who do not intend to adjust and who are an obstacle to solving these new tasks must simply get out of the way, not be a hinderance."[18] For enthusiastic support of his new directions, Gorbachev is counting on his appeal to youth and to greater sexual equality. "One must open the path to leadership to young people and to women," he declared in an address on cadres

[14] Quote is from secret speech to ideology conference delivered 10 December 1984, *FBIS*, 28 March 1985, R1.

[15] *Pravda*, 24 April 1985.

[16] *Pravda*, 8 May 1985.

[17] *Pravda*, 24 April 1985.

[18] *FBIS*, Moscow Domestic TV, 22 May 1985, R10.

policy.[19] Gorbachev's removal from the Politburo of most of the Brezhnev old guard, including rival Gregory V. Romanov, significantly strengthens Gorbachev's hand and provides everyone with the unquestionable message that Gorbachev intends to brook no opposition to his domestic economic program.

Where the Brezhnev regime adopted an internationalist strategy to relieve Soviet economic problems, Gorbachev expresses a willingness and even a preference for self-reliant approaches. It is true that in his programmatic address, Gorbachev advocates "fruitful and all-round economic and scientific-technical cooperation," including the development of "new forms of economic ties," but primarily with western Europe and Japan.[20] Yet, in seeking such ties, Gorbachev displays none of the flexibility or readiness for compromise of Brezhnev in the early détente years, which even then was insufficient to assure the desired flow of technology. In discussing prospects with British businessmen, Gorbachev reflected his nationalist orientation when he emphasized: "We are confident of our potential to solve for ourselves issues arising from our national economy."[21]

If Gorbachev has his way, western nations wishing to expand trade will do so strictly on Soviet terms. These include, as Gorbachev emphasized, "removal of discrimination," including anti-dumping laws; no use of "economic levers as a means of political pressure" or for "interference in internal affairs."[22] In short, Gorbachev has made it quite obvious that there are unlikely to be any political trade-offs for increased trade, whether in the form of Jewish emigration, better treatment for dissidents such as Andrei Sakharov, any loosening of the Soviet grip on eastern Europe, or any one-sided limitations on Soviet behavior in other parts of the world.[23]

Gorbachev's View of Détente

From the early 1970s, the Brezhnev regime sought to alleviate its economic problems in part and to realize the benefits of its superpower status through a policy of détente with the West. This policy was based on several assumptions: America's entanglement and eventual "defeat" in Vietnam were seen in Moscow in the early 1970s as incontrovertible signs that the era of American global dominance had come to an end.[24] From now on, the United States' power and global influence would be on the wane. In the Brezhnev view, Nixon's proclamation of

[19] Ibid., R10.

[20] *Pravda*, 24 April 1985.

[21] *TASS*, 20 December 1984, cited in *FBIS*, 20 December 1984.

[22] Ibid.

[23] This viewpoint was evidently also repeated in the Gorbachev-Baldridge talks on improving U.S.–Soviet economic relations. *Krasnaya Svezda*, 21 May 1985, 1.

[24] See, for example, Brezhnev's remarks in Kharkov, reported in *Pravda*, 14 April 1970. See as well his speech commemorating the signing of the Paris Peace Accords on Vietnam, where Brezhnev noted that the "Victory of Vietnam shows how the possibilities of imperialism have dwindled in our day. Imperialism has no means to turn history back." *Pravda*, 30 January 1973.

"an era of negotiation" was a signal that segments of the American leadership had come to a "sober-minded" acceptance of these "realities."[25]

On the other hand, as a result of the Soviet attainment of strategic parity with the United States and in the context of substantial if not superior Soviet conventional capabilities, the leading western powers were now believed ready to accept the Soviet Union as an equal superpower and to deal with her on that basis.[26] It was these perceptions of reality that provided the foundation for the Brezhnev approach to détente, which intended to result in the following gains for the Soviet Union: vastly expanded economic cooperation by the West with both the Soviet Union and eastern Europe; full western acceptance of the "results of World War II," or Soviet domination of eastern Europe; arms control agreements with the United States, which would assure preservation of Soviet strategic parity while limiting western, but not necessarily Soviet, ability to shift the balance further in the Soviet's favor; an enlarged Soviet role in the settlement of regional conflicts, which would ensure western acceptance of the legitimacy of the Soviet presence in these regions.

While Gorbachev does accept some of the aspirations of the Brezhnev détente, he clearly believes that most of the assumptions on which the earlier policy rested are valid no longer. For Brezhnev, relations with the United States constituted the centerpiece of his foreign policy.[27] Brezhnev's aspirations to a global superpower role,[28] to the unchallengeable right to military equality with the other superpower, and his hopes to achieve intensive economic growth through large-scale technology imports all depended on working out a kind of partnership with the U.S. It was for these reasons that Brezhnev attributed such importance to the May 1972 agreement on "Basic Principles of Relations" and the June 1973 agreement on the prevention of nuclear war.[29]

Gorbachev's approach reflects his very different assumptions about how to assure the Soviet global role and the economy necessary to support it. In Gorbachev's view, U.S.–Soviet relations should no longer be the central axis of Soviet foreign policy. As he explained to his electors in February 1985, "while the Soviet Union attaches great significance to the normalization of relations with the United States," at the same time, "we never forget for a minute that the world is not limited to that country alone but is a much bigger place."[30]

[25] See, for example, Brezhnev's speech in Alma Ata, reported in *Pravda*, 28 August 1970.

[26] For an important explication of this view, see Raymond L. Garthoff, "Mutual Deterrence and Strategic Arms Limitation in Soviet Policy," *International Security* 3 (Summer 1978): 112–47.

[27] See Brezhnev's observations on the importance of U.S.–Soviet relations made prior to the first summit, *Pravda*, 21 March 1972.

[28] See his statements on the Soviet Union's superpower status in *Pravda*, 27 June 1972.

[29] See Brezhnev's address accepting the Lenin Peace Prize, *Pravda*, 7 November 1973.

[30] *Pravda*, 21 February 1985. This same concept was reiterated in a May 1985 interview with the Indian News Agency, PTI, when Gorbachev stated that "the Soviet Union has never looked at the world in the context of U.S.–USSR relations alone." *Pravda*, 20 May 1985; see also Gorbachev's statement on his proposed INF deployment moratorium, *Pravda*, 8 April 1985.

Looking at the larger pattern of Gorbachev's foreign policy pronouncements and activities it is apparent that rather than a U.S.–Soviet "partnership," underlying Gorbachev's approach is the notion that the United States can and should be relatively isolated and outflanked by a Soviet-led international "peace movement." What is new in Gorbachev's approach is not the elements of this strategy. They have been component themes of Soviet foreign policy since the revolution and constitute the essence of what may be called a "Leninist-internationalist" outlook. Rather, what is novel and significant is the prominent place that mass movements and the international communist movement occupy in Gorbachev's approach. This emphasis becomes particularly striking in the context of the diminished significance, in comparison with the Brezhnev era, Gorbachev appears to attach to direct negotiations with the United States for the purpose of reaching mutually acceptable agreements through compromise.[31]

Arms control negotiations with the United States, of course, continue, but Gorbachev personally as of mid-summer 1985 seems little committed to their success. Even after the January 1985 framework for strategic arms negotiations had been agreed upon and when Andrei Gromyko expressed cautious optimism about the talks' prospects, Gorbachev spoke darkly about "activities which sow doubts" as to U.S. intentions.[32] As with U.S.–Soviet economic relations, Gorbachev seems to be saying that if agreements are to be reached, it will be on Soviet terms. The details of Gorbachev's proposal in autumn 1985 to reduce Soviet and U.S. strategic nuclear weapons by 50 percent and his offer of direct talks with the Europeans so far appear consistent with this approach, particularly where, as in the definition of strategic weapons, these proposals revive long-abandoned Soviet positions.

If we are to comprehend Gorbachev's approach, it is essential that we recognize that these views of U.S.–Soviet relations reflect more than temporary tactics or negotiating strategy. They arise from an outlook that is reminiscent of the Stalinist two-camps era, a perspective that envisages the United States as the implacable enemy, the source of all evil, and the Soviet Union as the protector of all civilized values. As a means of mobilizing domestic audiences, and perhaps his own elite cohorts, behind a campaign of vigilance and discipline and of uniting external mass movements and Third World nations under Soviet leadership, this conflict is depicted by Gorbachev as likely to erupt into nuclear war at any minute. Comparing the present-day situation to that on the eve of World War II, whose cause Gorbachev described as "the Munich policy" of the western powers, the General Secretary argued that "it must be fully and clearly realized" where the "menace to mankind" comes from: the United States. Ominously, he added, "the Soviet Union is saying this as forcefully as it did before the war, thus warning of the imminent danger."[33] Quoting Chernenko in his February 1985

[31] See Brezhnev's assessment of the May 1972 summit in a speech welcoming Fidel Castro to Moscow, *Pravda*, 28 June 1972.

[32] Pravda, 21 February 1985.

[33] *FBIS*, 9 May 1985, R13.

election speech, Gorbachev expressed his two-camps viewpoint with remarkable clarity. "People realize increasingly clearly where the watershed lies between the two main political courses—the policy of peace and the line of preparing for war."[34]

Consistent with the most conservative segments of the Brezhnev leadership, and quite contrary to the views of Brezhnev himself, Gorbachev expresses a uniformly and harshly critical assessment of the entire course of postwar U.S. foreign policy. For him, current trends are not merely the aberration of a particular administration or electoral campaign, as it was frequently argued under Brezhnev,[35] but arise from the United States's "imperialist nature." Gorbachev argues that the U.S. has been the "spearhead" of attempts at "historical revenge" and "rolling back the positions of socialism" since the end of World War II. Since then, Gorbachev declared in his Victory Day speech, "American imperialism has been at the forward edge of the war menace to mankind." Today, in his view, the United States "has become a constant negative factor in international relations."[36] The two examples most often cited by Gorbachev to illustrate the "evil designs" of the United States are American "attempts to undermine the military-strategic balance," and its "reanimation" of West German "revanchism."[37]

The most direct source of Gorbachev's concerns about the military-strategic balance are undoubtedly the major increases in U.S. military spending during the past five years, which have resulted in a real increase of more than 50 percent in the U.S. defense budget. However, as Gorbachev's writings suggest, it is the implications of the long-term Soviet economic slow-down in the face of growing U.S. military and economic power together with his belief that the United States no longer accepts the principle of strategic parity, the fundamental element of Brezhnev's détente, that worry Gorbachev. In Gorbachev's view, the United States "is counting on superior force that would subordinate the rest of the world."[38] What is at stake is the potential loss of the favorable military-strategic balance as a result of Soviet economic weaknesses as well as American strength. Serving as the basis of Soviet claims to superpower status, it is little wonder that Gorbachev argues that "this parity must be cherished by all possible means."[39]

It is not only the American economy's apparent capability to support increased military growth that is perceived as a threatening challenge by Gorbachev. What he describes as "the broadening and intensification of the economic expansion of the United States," including its "blocking" of the

[34] *Pravda*, 21 February 1985; see also Gorbachev's 1984 election speech, *Izvestia*, 1 March 1984.

[35] Typical is Brezhnev's 24th Party Congress speech where he observed, "Relations with the U.S. are complicated by the frequent zig-zags in American foreign policy which are, evidently, connected with some expedient domestic maneuvers." Nevertheless, he added, "We proceed from the fact that improvement of relations between the USSR and U.S. is possible." *Pravda*, 30 March 1971.

[36] *FBIS*, 9 May 1985, R16.

[37] For examples, see *FBIS*, 9 May 1985, R15; Gorbachev's letter to West German "peace activists," reported in *FBIS*, 28 March 1985, G1; *Pravda*, 8 April 1985; and *FBIS*, 8 May 1985, G1.

[38] *FBIS*, 9 May 1985, R16.

[39] *Pravda*, 24 April 1985.

"economic decolonization process" and "political limitations on trade" with the Soviet bloc are seen as nearly-as-worrisome sources of threat.[40] In short, Gorbachev sees these and other current trends shifting the global "correlation of forces" against the Soviet Union, a balance which Brezhnev confidently viewed as growing inexorably in the Soviet favor. This sense of seige is reinforced by the increased assertiveness of U.S. foreign policy, whether in Lebanon, Grenada, Nicaragua, Afghanistan, Kampuchea, or most recently in lifting congressional restrictions on aid to Angolan rebels. As expressed by Gorbachev, "One does not need special political vision in order to see how imperialism has intensified its subversive work and coordinated its activities against socialist states in the course of the last few years. This applies to all areas: political, economic, ideological, and military."[41]

It is this sense of the dangers to Soviet power, combined with a view of the world in which the assumptions of Brezhnev's détente are seen as no longer valid, that imparts a sense of urgency to Gorbachev's domestic economic program and that shapes his approach to U.S.–Soviet relations. To buy time for the Soviet Union to rebuild its economy and its military power, Gorbachev seeks to limit as much as possible America's military growth and its influence and capability for action in Europe and other regions of the world. His preferred strategies for bringing this about are mobilizing mass movements in Europe and the United States and strengthening anti-American and anti-western pressures in the Third World. This general approach is well summed up in Gorbachev's Victory Day speech:

> Of course, special responsibility for the destiny of the world today rests with the nuclear powers and primarily with the USSR and the U.S. However, the Soviet Union has never looked at the world in the context of USSR–U.S. relations alone. We are deeply convinced that all states can and must be involved in a search for realistic solutions to urgent problems and in efforts to ease international tensions. The voices of millions of people in various countries, raised in favor of effective measures to end the arms race and reduce arms stockpiles, against attempts to use negotiations as a cover for the continuation of this race, is of tremendous importance.[42]

Gorbachev's objectives of using mass pressures to impose limits on U.S. military programs and international action are stated clearly. In his election speech, he calls on "the peace-loving peoples," including "in western countries" to take "vigorous action to avert nuclear war and to isolate the forces of aggression and militarism."[43] In his programmatic address, noting that "no single people desires war," Gorbachev urged that this "huge reserve and potential" be used to "do everything in order that the forces of militarism and aggression do not gain the upper hand in international relations."[44] "There is no doubt that the antiwar

[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid.
[42] *FBIS*, 9 May 1985, R16.
[43] *Moscow Pravda*, 21 February 1985.
[44] *Pravda*, 24 April 1985.

movement will continue to grow, thus effectively rendering the adventuristic actions of the forces of aggression more difficult," Gorbachev declared in his Victory Day speech.[45] To appeals by a group from the Socialist International for a constructive Soviet approach to the current negotiations, Gorbachev responded by urging "effective efforts" by the International, using its "political leverage and influence" in the "struggle against the threat of war." He pledged that the Soviet Union would "cooperate vigorously with all peace-loving public forces."[46]

In contrast to his high hopes for mass movements, but consistent with his nationalist tendencies, Gorbachev appears to have modest expectations and has made only limited public commitments with respect to the Third World. His statements about this region stress only Soviet "sympathies"[47] and "solidarity."[48] Gorbachev has not even made any of the usual general commitments of "all-round" or "political and economic" support.[49] While he has emphasized Soviet interest in expanded trade with the Third World, his comments stress the importance of diminishing the economic role of western states in the Third World and assuring the Soviet Union of reliable access to essential Third World economic resources.[50]

Irrespective of Soviet commitments to provide Nicaragua with oil and other necessities, Gorbachev's own statements appear strikingly noncommital. Thus, in his April 1985 program speech, probably his most important policy pronouncement to date, after noting the "threats to the heroic people of Nicaragua," Gorbachev limits himself to noting that "solidarity . . . is a matter of principle for us." Appearing to weaken this statement further is the added comment, "Here our line is as clear as it always was."[51]

What does Gorbachev expect in return from the "liberated" world, as he consistently labels Soviet-oriented Third World nations? Gorbachev speaks of two kinds of policies he desires from his Third World friends: rejection of economic, political, and especially military cooperation with the United States and the West and active participation in the Soviet "peace campaign."[52] Underlying these limited commitments and expectations is a rather skeptical view of the potential of the Third World:

> Intense changes in the postwar world are also due to the downfall of colonialism. Tens of independent states have emerged in the place of former colonies and semi-colonies. True, their development has not been even and it has had, and continues to have, its ups and downs, achievements and tragedies. True, the developing countries must still tackle far from simple problems, both those inherited from the past and those created

[45] *FBIS*, 9 May 1985, R16.
[46] *Pravda*, 23 March 1985.
[47] Gorbachev's acceptance speech, *Pravda*, 12 March 1985.
[48] *Pravda*, 24 April 1985.
[49] *Izvestia*, 26 June 1984.
[50] See Gorbachev's statement before the November joint meeting of the Supreme Soviet Foreign Affairs Commission, *Pravda*, 12 March 1985
[51] *Pravda*, 24 April 1985.
[52] See his speech to Rajiv Gandhi, *Krasnaya Svezda*, 22 May 1985, 1.

by the policy of neocolonialism. But, it is also true that the system of colonialism has been almost completely eradicated now . . . . With the active support of the socialist countries they persistently struggle for a new, more just world economic order. The Nonaligned Movement has become an important factor in present-day world affairs.[53]

The Roots of Gorbachev's Outlook

It would be tempting and perhaps even persuasive to argue that the transformation of the dominant Soviet foreign policy perspective from a moderate internationalist to an essentially nationalist outlook is primarily the result of Soviet reactions to the failures of détente during the 1970s. If this were true, then presumably a change in U.S. policy toward accommodating the most serious Soviet concerns should result in more constructive Soviet behavior. If, on the other hand, these shifts in perspective are due to deeper trends in Soviet political society, then U.S. leverage may be more limited.

In their own assessments, the Soviets blame the U.S. for being an "unreliable partner." The litany of complaints is all too familiar: the U.S. "refusal" to negotiate arms agreements on the basis of "equality and identical security" after accepting this concept in the "Basic Principles" agreement of 1972; the "exclusion" of the Soviet Union from the Middle East peace process; the "overthrow" of Salvador Allende in Chile; the attempts to "interfere" in Soviet internal affairs on the pretext of support for "human rights;" the imposition of "unacceptable" conditions on trade and technology transfer to the Soviet Union; American attempts to "blame" the Soviet Union for "inevitable" revolutionary changes in the Third World, from Angola to Nicaragua; U.S. efforts to undermine Soviet friends and allies, from Afghanistan to Poland; and American attempts to overturn "strategic parity," so as to "dictate" to the Soviet Union.

These arguments cannot be wholly ignored in any explanation of the shifts occuring in Soviet foreign policy outlooks, for undoubtedly they contributed to the loss of credibility within the Soviet political context of the very assumptions of détente. A careful review of statements about détente by all members of the Politburo over the 1970s reveals clearly that vocal support for détente, in fact, did increase gradually after 1970.[54] The high point for expectations about relations with the U.S. came right after the signing of the Vladivostok Accords in November 1974. Already by the next month, following the Soviet decision to reject the conditions of the Jackson-Vanik and Stevenson amendments to the U.S. 1974 trade act, tying Most-Favored Nation status and U.S. government-guaranteed credits to Soviet emigration policy, Soviet doubts about the assumptions of détente began to be expressed ever more frequently. The only slight upturn came in 1979 at the time of the signing of the Strategic Arms Limitations Treaty (SALT II). However, by the point when final decisions were being made on sending So-

[53] *FBIS*, 9 May 1985, R14.

[54] These arguments are based upon my forthcoming monograph, *From Brezhnev to Gorbachev: Soviet Foreign Policy Perspectives.*

viet troops to Afghanistan, the dominant mood in Moscow was that the impact of this act on U.S.-Soviet relations need not even be taken into account because, by late fall 1979 "there was nothing left worth saving."[55] Indeed, Alexei Kosygin was the only Soviet leader to publicly oppose this view.[56] President Ronald Reagan's policies of rebuilding and reasserting American strength, as seen from Moscow, probably would have made anything but a propaganda approach to détente politically untenable under the weak and ill Soviet leaders between 1981 and 1985.

It could be argued that if American behavior were more forthcoming and accepting of Soviet "equality," the Gorbachev leadership would respond appropriately. However, analysis of the perspectives of the Brezhnev Politburo suggests that what we are witnessing is not a matter of tactical adjustments. Rather, perspectives that always distrusted, if they did not reject outright, the assumptions of Brezhnev's détente and that were articulated throughout the Brezhnev era have now become dominant in the Soviet leadership. The Soviet explanations for the failure of détente are important to this shift in perspectives, because they strongly reinforce the predispositions and expectations of those critical of Brezhnev's détente from its inception. The Soviet leadership's experience of détente as seen through the prisms of nationalist and Leninist-internationalist perspectives, therefore, makes unlikely the revalidation of the assumptions supporting Brezhnev's détente policy.

An important source of the explanation of the roots and the political credibility in Moscow of Gorbachev's outlook on U.S.–Soviet relations lies in the nationalist and Leninist-internationalist outlooks expressed during the Brezhnev era. An intensive and systematic study of nearly all the writings and speeches of the Politburo since 1970,[57] reveals three distinctive outlooks or approaches to foreign policy that found expression throughout the Brezhnev regime. The dominant view, a moderate internationalist perspective, most clearly describes the outlooks of Brezhnev, Kosygin, and Gromyko. A second major tendency is a Leninist-internationalist orientation articulated by Mikhail Suslov, Vladimir Shcherbitsky, Viktor Grishin and Dmitry Ustinov. The third approach represents a nationalist outlook reflected by Yuri Andropov, Grigory Romanov, Andrei Grechko, and Konstantin Chernenko.

While these tendencies showed themselves in divergent approaches to significant foreign policy issues, there are two issues on which there existed an overwhelming consensus: Soviet military power and Brezhnev's consensual style. Politburo attitudes toward Soviet military power stand out from attitudes to all

[55] This observation is based on in-depth conversations with Soviet policy advisers in May 1980.

[56] *FBIS*, Moscow Radio report, 21 February 1980.

[57] For a detailed report, see Philip D. Stewart, Roger A. Blough, and James W. Warhola, "Conflict and Consensus in Soviet Foreign Policy: Politburo Priorities and Attitudes in the 1970s," mimeo, The Ohio State University, October 1982; see also Philip D. Stewart, James W. Warhola, and Roger A. Blough, "Issue Salience and Foreign Policy Role Specialization in the Soviet Politburo of the 1970s," *American Journal of Political Science* 28 (February 1984): 1–22.

foreign policy issues in two respects. First, leadership orientations to Soviet military power are more positive than those toward any other foreign policy issues, including the liberation movement, détente, the class struggle, or arms control. Second, there is less difference among Politburo members respecting the value of military power at least equalling that of the U.S. for the entire period of the 1970s than on any other foreign policy issue, with the exception of the equally strong consensus around the Politburo's concern about and hostility toward western military power. This finding reflects both the unanimous commitment to Soviet superpower status and the recognition that military power is the Soviet Union's only meaningful basis for this claim. Politburo differences are over how to sustain and how to realize the benefits of this status.

The Brezhnev regime's near-unanimous commitment to an accommodationist style of policy making may account as much as or perhaps more than any other factor for the failure of Brezhnev's détente to attain most of its objectives in relations with the United States. However, prior to elaborating this argument, it is necessary to understand the two main competing sets of policy orientations to which substantial accommodations appear to have been made in the Brezhnev years.

The Leninist-internationalist outlook has its intellectual roots in Lenin's *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, the "Congress of the Peoples of the East" of 1921, and in the Comintern. It emphasizes the messianic mission of the Soviet Union. The national-liberation struggle, having as its objective the elimination of western political and economic influence from the Third World, is seen as a major instrument and priority of Soviet foreign policy. In the past decade, Soviet military assistance has come to be viewed as a main factor in the advancement of the liberation movement, through arms sales and the use of proxy or even Soviet troops. While this outlook does reflect a concern about preventing general war, its adherents tend to display a substantially higher regard for Soviet military capabilities and a lower estimate of western military strength and political will than either the moderate internationalists or the nationalists. Arms control and relations with the United States in general are conceived by Leninist-internationalists primarily as means of limiting American capability and will for Third World interventions. In this sense, U.S.–Soviet relations are of secondary priority and are valued primarily to the extent they facilitate the growth of Soviet influence in the Third World. These estimates in turn may lead Leninist-internationalists to see the risks associated with an activist Third World policy as lower than their moderate-internationalist colleagues.

In conducting relations with western Europe, Japan, and the United States, this outlook places more emphasis on links with and action through local Communist parties, the "working class movement," and other "mass movements," which may put pressure on bourgeois governments to accede to Soviet proposals, than it places on direct negotiations based on mutual interest and compromise. While this perspective does reject many of the assumptions of the moderate-internationalists, its principal spokesmen, however, do express support for a particular kind of détente: one that would create more propitious conditions for the

liberation struggle as well as for the relative growth of Soviet military power, rather than placing much hope in mutual arms limitations, joint economic benefit, or even in a greater shared global role.

The most striking trait of the nationalist outlook is a deep and abiding distaste for and distrust of the western capitalist world and a general suspicion and discomfort in dealing with the non-Communist world. The nationalists part company with the Leninist-internationalists in their rejection of a high priority for the liberation movement and even the class struggle. The nationalists show isolationist tendencies in their suspicion of foreign entanglements outside the Soviet bloc, in their concern about the "setbacks" the Soviet Union has experienced in the Third World, and with their general doubt about the long-term benefits of influence in backward Third World nations ultimately beyond their control. At the same time, the nationalists emphasize the valuable role of the general anti-imperialist orientation of the nonaligned movement and do stress the importance of mobilizing this force as a means of pressure on the West.

Whereas both moderate internationalists and Leninist-internationalists support one kind of détente or another, nationalists tend to see no lasting benefits accruing to the Soviet Union from either the political or economic interdependence this policy entails. The "positive" program of the nationalists seems to include the following elements:

First, the two main interests of the Soviet Union, the security and stability of the Soviet bloc and the growth of the Soviet Union's great power role, can be protected effectively and advanced with certainty only by reliance on the strengths of the Soviet Union and its bloc allies.

Second, Soviet military power is the only effective guarantee of these interests. From this position follows continued high priority for military growth at home, with all that may imply for aspirations for revision of domestic priorities. This implication gains strength from three findings: the nationalists tend to see the West as more threatening than either the moderate internationalists or the Leninist-internationalists do, and nationalists see Soviet capabilities as relatively weaker vis-à-vis the West than leaders sharing internationalist outlooks. At the same time the nationalists appear to have faith in the capacity of an essentially autarchic, self-reliant Soviet bloc economy to compete successfully in an arms race with the West.

Third, nationalists tend to see war as a decisive factor in history through which the historic struggle between socialism and capitalism will be resolved. In principle, the nationalists do not appear persuaded that a new general war would spell the end of socialism. If prepared adequately, the Soviet Union could win and survive. It is important to note that Gorbachev gives no evidence that he holds this view. In fact, he emphasizes the catastrophic consequences of nuclear war for mankind. However, it is the views of these isolationists, expressed with considerable frankness prior to 1977, that form the basis for this argument.[58]

[58] It is important to note that Gorbachev gives no evidence that he holds this view. In fact, he emphasizes the catastrophic consequences of nuclear war for mankind. However, it is the views of these

Fourth, this does not mean that nationalists are more likely than Leninist-internationalists to engage in actual military conflict, in the short-term at least. Indeed, perhaps because they tend to see war as more decisive than the Leninist-internationalists, and because they see current capabilities as more evenly balanced between East and West, or even favoring the West, the nationalists are apt to urge considerable caution in the actual employment of military force. This may be, in part, what is behind Gorbachev's insistence that "the outcome of the historical competition between the two systems cannot be determined by military means."[59] In his view, the rate of "scientific and technical progress" and "economic competition" is where this "historic struggle" will be decided "to a decisive degree."[60]

Fifth, the essential foreign-policy program of the nationalists comes down to mobilizing mass movements to support defensive "peace" campaigns, a propaganda approach to negotiations, and a no-nonsense, no-concessions approach to foreign economic relations. At home it includes a continuing build-up of military power and "vigilance" against domestic and foreign enemies.

While it is too early to know the extent to which Gorbachev's own Politburo as a whole will reflect the nationalist views he himself so clearly articulates, his intolerant statements about those who "stand in the way" or are "incapable of adjusting" suggest strongly that his preference is to avoid the compromises in foreign and domestic policy that characterized the Brezhnev regime.[61] Indeed, what is remarkable about the Brezhnev regime is not the persistence of diverse policy perspectives, but the extent to which Brezhnev's own expressed policy preferences were undermined internally by his accommodationist style of policy making.

Disillusionment With Brezhnev's Détente

Analysis of the Brezhnev era, supported by clues emerging from Gorbachev's speeches, suggests that one consequence of the strong consensus in support of this decision style was that *how* decisions were made may have become more important than what the consequences of any particular choice may have been.[62]

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nationalists, expressed with considerable frankness prior to 1977, that form the basis for this argument. For an elaboration, see Richard Pipes, "Why the Soviet Union Thinks It Can Fight and Win a Nuclear War," *Commentary*, July 1977, 21–34. For an important alternate interpretation, see Robert L. Arnett, "Soviet Attitudes Toward Nuclear War: Do They Really Think They Can Win?" *Journal of Strategic Studies* 2 (September 1979): 172–91.

[59] *FBIS*, 9 May 1985.

[60] *Pravda*, 8 May 1985.

[61] See Gorbachev's speech to Leningrad workers, where he lays out his cadres policy in no uncertain terms, *FBIS*, 22 May 1985, R10.

[62] Gorbachev's statement that current economic problems are due to lack of timely "appraisal" and inadequate "persistence" in developing and implementing major measures, *Pravda*, 24 April 1985, constitutes indirect but clear criticisms of the accommodationist decision style. For another credible report suggesting this same style in foreign policy making, see Arkady Schevchenko, *Breaking with Moscow* (New York: Knopf, 1984).

In short, maintaining the appearance of consensus and cohesion within the Brezhnev leadership appears often to have taken priority over the attainment of particular policy objectives.[63] The Brezhnev style deliberately sought a balance between the dominant leader (Brezhnev) and decision processes that provided access for and protection of other interests and perspectives within the leadership.

Four elements of Soviet policy and behavior contributed crucially to undermining the level of American public and political interest in détente upon which attainment of the main elements of Brezhnev's hopes for U.S.–Soviet relations depended: the steady growth of Soviet strategic and conventional capabilities following the signing of SALT I during a time when real U.S. spending on defense declined steadily; the Soviet refusal to make firm commitments on emigration and the treatment of dissidents in exchange for Most-Favored-Nation and U.S. Eximbank credits; the massive Soviet support for Cuban intervention in Angola in 1974 and Ethiopia in 1977–78; and Soviet unwillingness or inability to play an honest-broker role in the Middle East both in 1969–70 and following the 1973 war. In each of these instances there is ample evidence to argue that the Soviet leadership reasonably could have been expected to understand and calculate the consequences of its choices for long-term U.S.–Soviet relations. Yet, in each instance choices were made that appear most consistent with the preferences of either or both the Leninist-internationalist or the nationalist outlooks, with consequences which undermined prospects for what appear to have been Brezhnev's own hopes for U.S.–Soviet relations.

Brezhnev certainly cannot be accused of wishing to diminish Soviet military potential. That is not the issue. The issue is Brezhnev's apparent commitment to negotiated, interdependent security through which relatively stable levels of armaments could be attained by negotiations that on the basis of compromise take account of the real security interests of both sides[64] versus the objective of seeking simple one-sided advantages, as seems to have characterized Soviet negotiating behavior since the death of Brezhnev. There were numerous occasions in both the SALT I and SALT II negotiations when it appears Brezhnev did push agreements through the Soviet leadership apparatus that supported the first set of assumptions. Yet, at the same time, because he underestimated the consequences or because this was the price for the trade-offs reached at the bargaining table or perhaps because he thought he could get away with it, Brezhnev did not stop testing and deployment of the SS-17, SS-19, and SS-18 or later the intermediate range SS-20. Nor did he permit his negotiators to meet American concerns over these missiles, developments which gave birth to the "Committee on the Present Danger" and ultimately undermined SALT II and led to U.S. deployments of intermediate-range nuclear forces in Europe. The reason for this

[63] See Blough and Stewart, "Soviet Leadership and Soviet Economy."

[64] As evidenced in the antiballistic missile (ABM) treaty, SALT I, and particularly the difficult compromises that made SALT II possible. See John Newhouse, *Cold Dawn: The Story of SALT* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973); and Strobe Talbot, *Endgame: The Inside Story of SALT II* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979).

behavior most consistent with the analysis presented here is that these were limitations on his policy that Brezhnev accepted in order to avoid potential discord and disruption in the leadership. This seems to be one of the factors Gorbachev had in mind when he criticized previous regimes for not "appraising" problems in good time and not showing "persistence" in working out solutions.[65]

From the early days of détente in 1969 and 1970, it became quite clear that influential segments of the American public were unwilling to encourage, in fact would do everything possible to disrupt, closer U.S.-Soviet relations unless this were to be accompanied by some significant alterations in Soviet treatment of dissidents and emigration policies. These concerns were voiced publicly and privately to the Soviet leadership and its advisers. It can only be assumed that the actual policies adopted on dissidents and emigration reflected the leadership's consideration of these issues and their consequences and thus the limits of what the Politburo consensus would tolerate. In fact, considerable although ultimately inadequate and temporary liberalization of emigration did occur and some dissidents were given the more "humane" treatment of forced emigration and denial of citizenship. Judging from the public statements of the Soviet leadership on these issues in the 1970s, opposition to any "concessions" as the "price" for economic relations with the U.S. must have been intense. Both the Leninist-internationalist and the nationalist perspective are uncomfortable with the very idea of compromise with "imperialists."[66] While compromises might be necessary on specific issues under negotiation, demands for compromises on matters that are "strictly internal affairs" and which, moreover, question the "humaneness" of the Soviet system, let alone provide opportunities for "anti-Soviet" acts against the state, cut deeply against the grain of these two outlooks.[67]

The most credible Soviet explanation for the intervention in Angola, an act which deeply angered those American officials who had risked the most in moving détente forward in the early 1970s and markedly diminished their willingness to pay further costs for this policy, emphasizes the difficult choice between rescuing from almost certain defeat by South African tanks a movement with which the Soviets had been aligned for more than a decade, and watching their position and credibility in Africa and among Soviet-oriented liberation movements everywhere sink to new lows. Already the Soviet Union frequently was being accused by supporters in the Third World of selling out their interests in order to improve relations with the United States.[68]

[65] See *Pravda*, 24 April 1985.

[66] Gromyko doubtless had this group in mind when, at the 24th Party Congress, he posed the question of agreements this way: "Sometimes the question is asked: How realistic is the meaning of agreements with some states if those agreements are not always honored by them? This question is sometimes posed in a different, bluntly speaking, directly provocative way, and any agreement with capitalist states is said to be almost a plot!" *Pravda*, 4 April 1971

[67] See, for example, Gorbachev's remarks to U.S. Secretary of Commerce Malcolm Baldridge, *Krasnaya Svezda*, 21 May 1985, 1.

[68] This view was expressed most articulately by a Soviet policy adviser during an extended conversation with the author in December 1975.

This formulation makes particular sense because it emphasizes recognition of the potential conflict between two competing sets of Soviet goals and orientations. It is entirely possible that the decision to go ahead with an action to which powerful Soviet interests were deeply committed was made in the belief that there indeed might be only limited costs in the U.S.-Soviet relationship. After all, shouldn't Africa have the same low priority for American supporters of détente as it seems to have had for Brezhnev and the moderate internationalists?[69] Thus, the Soviet Union could have it both ways, or so it may have seemed. Nearly a decade later, reflecting on these events, as well as the consequences for détente of Ethiopia and Afghanistan, a leading Soviet policy analyst noted in a conversation with this author that if ever a new détente were to be constructed, the impact on U.S.-Soviet relations of events occurring in the Third World must be more fully taken into account by both sides.

One of the benefits of the recognition of superpower equality in the Brezhnev perspective was to be an equal role in the settlement of regional conflicts, particularly the Middle East. This desire found expression in public statements, in several U.N. Security Council resolutions,[70] and in the 1 October 1977 Joint Statement on the Middle East. Ultimately, however, these beginnings never bore their anticipated fruits. While Soviet officials blame American duplicity and desire for "separate deals," the underlying reasons have much more to do with the Politburo's unwillingness or inability to adopt positions at any significant variance with those of their most radical Arab friends. Brezhnev's aspirations to the U.S.-Soviet partnership were sacrificed in the interests of placating "anti-imperialist" groups within the Soviet leadership and in the Middle East.

This analysis of the consequences of the Brezhnev consensual policy-making style suggests that at a number of critical junctures, interpersonal and institutional harmony within the Soviet leadership, a live and let-live attitude to ultimately incompatible policies and approaches, were given priority over or served to limit a consistent or coherent approach to what appeared to be the dominant Soviet policy objectives of the time, détente with the United States.

By the end of the Brezhnev regime, then, not only had the Brezhnev program of economic and technological renewal at home and realization of the privileges of great power status abroad based centrally on détente with the United States largely failed to be realized, but most of the assumptions of Brezhnev's approach had lost whatever political credibility they may have had among a leadership increasingly weighted toward Leninist-internationalist and nationalist perspectives. The way was well paved for the emergence of the kind of nationalist foreign policy articulated by Gorbachev.

[69] In a conversation with U.S. Secretary of State Alexander Haig in September 1981, Gromyko expressed total disbelief that Angola could ever be important enough to actually undermine U.S.-Soviet relations. Gromyko added, probably reflecting his own sense of Soviet priorities, "The Soviet Union has no interests in sub-Saharan Africa!" This conversation was reported in a private briefing with Secretary Haig in which this author participated.

[70] UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, November 1967 and December 1973 respectively.

The U.S.-Soviet Summit: A Test of Gorbachev's Perspectives

The central thesis developed here is that, although Gorbachev smiles pleasantly and evokes images of the Brezhnev détente, his approach to U.S.-Soviet relations is based upon such different assumptions that to the extent these predispositions are reflected in actual Soviet policy and behavior, the United States should be very cautious in its expectations for revival of even the limited accommodations and compromises that made possible at least a temporary détente in the early 1970s. Moreover, the perspectives underlying Gorbachev's approach to U.S.-Soviet relations are neither transient nor simply tactical. We cannot be certain whether the views articulated by Gorbachev reflect his own personal preferences, or simply a program which he finds politically credible and useful. But the political appeal of the nationalist approach as an "explanation" for Soviet weaknesses and failures abroad and as a basis for sustaining vigilance and discipline at home suggests that this trend in Soviet foreign policy is likely to persist for some time. This view is reinforced by Gorbachev's image of the Soviet Union as at the threshold of a long period of reconstruction and rebuilding.

Now, nearly two months after the Geneva summit, it is possible to compare the actions of Soviet policy with the expectations created by Gorbachev's own perspectives. At the level of rhetoric and attention to issues, Gorbachev, it must be admitted, seems more similar to Brezhnev of the early 1970s than to the leader described here. Thus, the question of improving U.S.-Soviet relations across a broad front—from arms control to trade to cultural relations—has come to occupy the center stage in Gorbachev's foreign policy activities.[71] Moreover, Gorbachev seems to recognize more clearly than in the early months of his tenure the central "responsibility" of the United States and the Soviet Union for peace and the "nature of world development," as he put it in his report to the USSR Supreme Soviet shortly after Geneva.[72] On 11 December, Gorbachev spoke with eloquence about the mutual benefits of extensive U.S.-Soviet economic contacts to the Soviet-American Trade and Economics Council meeting in Moscow.[73] But, as Gorbachev himself is the first to admit, the real test of policy is in deeds, not words.[74]

At the level of actions there is little reason to believe that Gorbachev is prepared to make the hard choices that might make genuine compromise and agreement possible across the range of outstanding U.S.-Soviet issues. On the crucial issue of arms control, a question which Gorbachev identified as the central issue in U.S.-Soviet relations, there is little reason for optimism. While it is true that the Soviets have put forth a proposal envisaging reductions in strategic arms of 50 percent, not only do the Soviet definitions of the categories to be reduced ig-

[71] Two-thirds of his report to the Supreme Soviet was occupied with these issues. *Pravda*, 28 November 1985.

[72] Ibid.

[73] *FBIS*, 11 December 1985.

[74] See his comment to this effect in his Supreme Soviet speech, *Pravda*, 28 November 1985.

nore many of the agreed positions in SALT II, but they revive previous one-sided positions long ago abandoned by the Soviet Union, thus making progress on strategic reductions even more difficult than in the past. Most critically, even though he must know that the United States can never accept this position, Gorbachev has become increasingly adamant that there will be no strategic reductions unless the U.S. agrees to "completely ban" the strategic defense initiative. In short, Gorbachev is holding out attractive promises but making them hostage to impossible demands on the U.S.

Gorbachev has offered substantial increases in U.S.–Soviet economic relations. However, as in his 1985 remarks in Britain, Gorbachev insists as a prior condition not only that all "obstacles" be eliminated by the U.S., including removal of restrictions on Most-Favored-Nation status and credits, but also guarantees against any future boycotts or embargoes and assurances of Soviet access to the latest American technology. In return, Gorbachev offers no concessions on Jewish emigration, human rights, or any other issue. The only positive incentive he creates is the suggestion that "new forms of production and scientific-technological cooperation are possible."[75]

The only improvement in Soviet human rights practice since the summit has been the reluctant Soviet follow-through on the promise to reunite up to ten Soviet citizens with their spouses and the granting of permission for Sakharov's wife, Yelena Bonner, to travel to the U.S. for needed heart surgery. Soviet emigration remains at pre-détente levels.

Consistent with Gorbachev's desire to avoid open-ended entanglements abroad, the General Secretary appears to be searching for means for an honorable withdrawal from Afghanistan. But here, as in other aspects of his foreign policy, Gorbachev seems unable or unwilling to make the kinds of commitments such a withdrawal would require. Gorbachev's aims appear to be nearly identical to those of Brezhnev in December 1979 when Soviet troops first entered Afghanistan: to secure guarantees from Pakistan and other nations, including the United States, that they will cease all support for Afghan freedom fighters in return for a stable, pro-Soviet regime in the country. In short, Gorbachev is willing to withdraw Soviet troops so long as he is not required to accept a genuine political settlement within Afghanistan.

I have argued that Gorbachev's preferred strategy in dealing with the United States is to utilize instruments of propaganda and mass mobilization to create a climate of public opinion sufficiently supportive of Soviet goals that the Soviet government can attain objectives not otherwise achievable through direct, official negotiations. It is not only the contrast between Gorbachev's soothing and even attractive rhetoric and his policy behavior that reinforces my view that most of the summit and its aftermath were designed more for public effect than for paving the way to mutually acceptable agreements. This view is reinforced by the fact that Gorbachev chose to fill two of the six principal positions in his delega-

[75] *FBIS*, 11 December 1985.

tion to the summit with propaganda officials, rather than, for example, his arms control negotiators.

What kinds of evidence would create the necessity for a reassessment of Gorbachev's policy toward the United States? In the arms control area, indications of a willingness to seriously contemplate proposals, some of which already have been put forward privately, could provide the Soviet Union with meaningful assurances against space testing or rapid deployment of the Strategic Defense Initiative. This could make possible substantial reductions in existing nuclear arsenals. A Soviet willingness to renegotiate verification provisions of the Threshold Test Ban treaty, even along lines to which Gorbachev has given public support, and greater forthrightness in dealing with U.S. concern over SALT II violations would make Gorbachev's call for a complete nuclear test moratorium credible.

Greater Soviet responsiveness to deeply felt American concerns over human rights issues, demonstrated by substantial increases in emigration of many who have long been refused exit visas, would indicate Gorbachev has come to value U.S.–Soviet trade and understands the actual political requirements for a new opening in this arena. Similarly, signs of Soviet readiness to consider a settlement in Afghanistan in which all forces could participate in determining the political future of the country would provide evidence of a serious interest in withdrawal of Soviet troops from that nation. So far, the evidence suggests that Gorbachev's words may appear to be ushering in a new "era of negotiation." But his actions reflect an outlook more likely to evoke a new "era of confrontation."*

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