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Executive Summary

Since World War II the most serious military challenge to the United States has come from the Soviet Union. The postwar subjugation of Eastern Europe by the Soviet army posed a direct threat to U.S. allies and was the fundamental impetus behind the 1949 formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. NATO's defense was built on a combination of conventional forces and U.S. nuclear capabilities. NATO faced the combined forces of the corresponding alliance of the Soviet Union and its East European client states, the Warsaw Pact.

That uneasy situation prevailed for 40 years; U.S. forces were structured to meet a Soviet challenge that had become increasingly global. Even during the conflicts in Korea and Vietnam, the focal point of U.S. force planning remained the defense of Western Europe. That strategy necessitated stationing more than 300,000 U.S. troops there and controlling the Atlantic sea-lanes to maintain the capacity to rapidly move reinforcements to Europe.

In the last several years, the threat to Western Europe has eased dramatically. Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev initiated a program of perestroika--restructuring--that decreased the role of the Soviet military, reduced its resources, constrained the offensive aspects of its doctrine, actively promoted arms control, and unilaterally cut force levels. Those changes culminated last year in dramatic transitions in the governments of all the East European Warsaw Pact members, changes that have fundamentally altered the military situation in Europe. This paper examines the underlying reasons for those changes, their inherent irreversibility, and their dramatic implications for U.S. force posture.

The recent changes reverse 30 years of Soviet military build-up dating from the 1962 Cuban missile crisis. President Kennedy's strong reaction forced the Soviets to back down, which demonstrated their inferiority to the United States in a direct confrontation. That bitter experience spurred a military expansion that within a decade gave the Soviet strategic forces rough parity with U.S. forces. By 1971 Foreign Minister Gromyko could boast that on the world scene "no question of any significance could be decided today without the Soviet Union or in opposition to it."⁽¹⁾

The Soviet military expansion ran unabated through the Brezhnev years while the post-Vietnam syndrome battered the U.S. military establishment. By the early 1980s the new Soviet navy was operating globally. A refurbished and expanded Soviet army was stressing a dynamic offensive doctrine, which raised serious concerns about NATO defenses, and was fighting a determined war in Afghanistan. In the Third World, support of client states came to include the direct application of instruments of Soviet power: Soviet advisers and military supplies were used to assist incumbent regimes in Ethiopia, Angola, Vietnam, and Nicaragua. Gromyko's premature boast had become reality--the

Soviet position on any question of global significance was indeed crucial; the Soviet Union shared superpower status with the United States.

Troublesome Trends

Unfortunately for the Soviets, however, their super-power status was one dimensional; their imposing military presence in the world was coupled with an insignificant economic presence.⁽²⁾ Derided as a Third World country with rockets, the Soviet Union, after a decade of minimal economic growth, ceased to have any attraction as an economic model for developing nations. By the time Gorbachev was consolidating his position in the mid-1980s, strong negative trends were evident in all economic sectors, in the military drain on increasingly scarce resources, in the decreasing relevance of the military dimension of global competition, in the changing situation in Eastern Europe, and in the debilitating conflict in Afghanistan. Those trends had major implications for Soviet military posture.

The Internal Soviet Economy

The very core of legitimacy of the Soviet regime, with its ideology rooted in Marxist economics, rests on the claim that its economic system is more efficient than capitalism. For decades the Soviet leadership bought itself time with promises that it would, in Khrushchev's words, "'bury capitalism' in the sense that socialism would inevitably replace that moribund social system."⁽³⁾ Slow progress was blamed on the need to defend the Soviet Union against U.S. imperialism and German revanchism.

By the 1970s economic progress had come to depend on increased productivity.⁽⁴⁾ Worker motivation was promoted by awards, privileges, vacations, and the moral satisfaction of advancing socialism--incentives that cost relatively little. Nevertheless, worker morale deteriorated, alcoholism became ever more pervasive, and the regime turned to the monetary incentives of higher pay and bonuses. As Gorbachev noted, "The world of day-to-day realities and the world of feigned prosperity were diverging more and more."⁽⁵⁾ Savings grew, but output stagnated. Any real improvement in productivity became dependent on providing better material incentives--real goods, not promises or paper money. The regime was caught in a vicious circle: it could not produce more goods until it could provide more. And the provision of goods depended on abandoning the central controls that had fostered staggering inefficiencies in the Soviet economy--a reform the Soviets were reluctant to make.⁽⁶⁾

Some breathing space was provided by foreign trade, which brought in needed goods, including grain. But in a new information age, foreign trade ties increased awareness of domestic backwardness. In such a situation, increasing shortages could provoke widespread discontent and even call the very legitimacy of the regime into question. So there was an urgent need to increase the resources allocated to the civilian sector of the economy.

The Military and the Economy

The exact size of the Soviet military budget is hotly debated in the West, and even the Soviet leadership itself does not have a clear picture of military spending. In the Soviet command economy, most prices are arbitrarily set, and wages are artificially low because food and housing are heavily subsidized. Further, conscript pay is so low that military personnel costs are a relatively modest portion of the overall military budget. So real costs are hard to judge, even from inside the system. The Central Intelligence Agency estimates the Soviet defense burden at 15 to 17 percent of gross national product, while a European specialist puts it at 22 to 30 percent.⁽⁷⁾ Defense spending represents some 6 percent of GNP in the United States, 3 to 4 percent in most other NATO nations, and 1 percent in Japan. Even 15 to 17 percent of GNP is an extraordinary defense burden, particularly for a country that has trouble feeding itself and whose entire industrial establishment is based on outmoded technology.

The only exception is the military sector. For years Soviet military industry had the best equipment, the best engineers, and first claim on scarce inputs. The military industry was a double drain on the overall economy--not only did it get the lion's share of all resources, it got an overwhelming proportion of the most modern, highest quality resources.⁽⁸⁾ In addition, a massive industrial espionage effort allowed the Soviets to draw on western research and development as a resource for their military industry.⁽⁹⁾ The priority afforded military production and the acquisition of western technology allowed an otherwise archaic economy to compete successfully in the high-tech world of modern weaponry.

The situation, however, became increasingly complicated by the late 1970s. Sophisticated military technology could no longer be neatly separated from civilian technology. In the United States manufacturers of military equipment draw on thousands of civilian suppliers for a wide variety of highly technical inputs. Such suppliers simply do not exist in the Soviet Union. So when a design is stolen or an advanced piece of military hardware is obtained in the West and given to specialists to reverse engineer, it is not just a matter of producing the components; the shop that can make the components must also be built.

Building shops requires obtaining western equipment, which involves a second hurdle--controls on the flow of western technology to the Soviets.(10) In actuality, the extensive Soviet effort to obtain western technology has never been very efficient. Soviet agents typically act covertly without direct interaction with process engineers or technical representatives of western equipment producers, and that builds delays and frustrations into the very heart of Soviet military production. In the most advanced areas of modern technology, especially computers, the Soviets were falling further and further behind in the late 1970s.(11) Competing in high-tech weaponry was becoming increasingly difficult.

The situation was made worse by three associated developments. First, Soviet hard currency receipts fell dramatically. They had been heavily dependent on petroleum sales, but world prices sagged at the same time that growth in Soviet crude oil production leveled off.(12) In addition, the Soviet Union had large commitments to supply client states, particularly in Eastern Europe, with crude oil at bargain prices. Increasingly scarce hard currency was badly needed to buy grain and other foodstuffs to compensate for the dismal output of Soviet agriculture. Financing even legal technology acquisition became more and more difficult.

Second, the Soviet military build-up had finally spurred the United States to a build-up of its own, undermining the political benefits of the Soviet Union's hard-won military prominence. Trying desperately to stave off modernization of U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe, the Soviets mounted a major propaganda effort that fell short of the mark when the NATO ministers voted to support the U.S. effort; Pershing IIs and ground-launched cruise missiles were deployed in the mid-1980s.

To counter the more robust Soviet forces, the West was also harnessing a whole range of emerging technologies, including remotely scattered mines with a variety of sensors and missiles with smart submunitions capable of destroying entire tank units.(13) At the same time, the performance of Soviet high-tech weapons in regional conflicts was less than encouraging. In Lebanon the Israelis first used electronic deception to confuse and decimate Syrian air defenses based on Soviet missile systems and then downed more than 80 Syrian MiGs without losing a single plane.(14) In a world of increasingly sophisticated weaponry, just to stay even in the race it had fostered would severely strain the already overextended Soviet military industrial effort.

But the third key development made just staying even a difficult task. That development was President Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative, a conglomerate of ultra-sophisticated technologies that threatened to neutralize the Soviet parity in strategic nuclear forces and simultaneously open whole new fields of advanced weapons. Yuri Andropov, then general secretary of the Soviet Communist party, promptly objected that such an effort "would actually open the floodgates of a runaway race of all types of strategic arms, both offensive and defensive."(15)

Since then, Soviet spokesmen have consistently pictured the SDI as a destabilizing U.S. attempt to attain strategic superiority, an attempt that in Gorbachev's words would "thwart disarmament talks" and "dramatically increase the threat of a truly global, all-destroying military conflict."(16) Strategic arms talks virtually came to a halt, while the Soviets bravely spoke of their determination to respond with "both offensive and defensive" military measures.(17) But, in reality, the Soviets were in no position to engage in such an expensive competition; their industrial base was simply inadequate to support a highly sophisticated military sector. By spurring an arms race, they had undermined the military superpower status they had worked so hard to achieve. Military growth had not led to intimidation of the West or greater detente but to greater confrontation in a game that, given their economic weaknesses, the Soviets could no longer afford to play.

The Military and Global Competition

The threat to Soviet military status was coupled with decreasing utility of military power in world affairs.(18) To be sure, it still played a large and often distressing role in regional conflicts, but the U.S military build-up had neutralized many concerns in other countries that had been alarmed by the Soviet build-up. Major nations turned their attention to economic issues, and economic power increasingly became the currency of international status and influence. The economies of the Far East burgeoned, and Western Europe focused on the integration of the European Community's economies, particularly the elimination of internal tariffs scheduled for 1992. Even the massive economy of the United States was weakened by its military build-up, and attention turned more and more to issues of international competitiveness.

Economics was becoming the new international battlefield, and the Soviet position in that arena was dismal--not only was its own economy a shambles, the quality of the few goods it could export invariably fell below world standards, forcing the Soviets to foist them on increasingly reluctant clients. Gorbachev summed up the situation:

In the last fifteen years, the national income growth rates had declined by more than a half and by the beginning of the eighties had fallen to a level close to economic stagnation. A country that was once quickly closing on the world's advanced nations began to lose one position after another. Moreover, the gap in the efficiency of production, quality of products, scientific and technological development, the production of advanced technology and the use of advanced techniques began to widen, and not to our advantage.(19)

The world no longer looked in awe at the Soviet military colossus; rather, it came more and more to ignore it.

Changes in Eastern Europe

That was particularly true in Europe. Western Europe became rather blasé about the threat from the East, especially as conditions in Eastern Europe moderated and the utility of force diminished. From the Soviet point of view, even when force worked, as it did in the invasion of Czechoslovakia, political objectives still remained difficult to achieve. When turmoil in Poland threatened to undermine Communist party rule in 1980-81, the Soviets were clearly hesitant to make good their threat of invasion. Instead, they prompted the client government in Warsaw to impose martial law, which squelched the growing opposition and eliminated the need for direct Soviet intervention.

Martial law gave the Polish government control of a country of sullen and dissatisfied workers. Yet Poland's 15 army divisions accounted for more than half of the non-Soviet Warsaw Pact forces in the northern tier and were a major element of the pact threat to NATO. Most of the Polish divisions required mobilization before they could be used in any pact attack. But the very thought of the beleaguered Jaruzelski government's attempting to mobilize troops seemed somewhere between farfetched and ludicrous. Although the reliability of the non-Soviet pact forces had been debated for years, the question had come to be one of availability, not only in Poland but in Hungary as well. There was little reason to expect that even the hard-line governments of Czechoslovakia and East Germany would actively support a pact invasion of the West.

The Soviet-dominated Warsaw Pact high command could certainly have initiated the movement of the non-Soviet divisions that did not require mobilization, but that would have invited immediate turmoil, especially in Poland where 500 miles of critical lines of communication connect the western USSR with the European theater. A Soviet attack west would have required not only East European acquiescence but East European support. As a result, although those governments could not force changes in the stance of the pact, they could effectively veto a major offensive. So although force counts did not change appreciably, the sense of impending menace in Western Europe certainly decreased. Whatever political return the Soviets were receiving from intimidation of the West had passed its zenith, even while it was becoming more and more expensive to maintain.

Afghanistan

The debacle in Afghanistan exacerbated all three of the other problems. It was a constant drain on resources, with costs reaching several hundred million dollars a year. More important, by poisoning any chance for improved relations with the West, it blocked the chance for increased flows of badly needed goods and technologies. Internationally, the struggle was a constant embarrassment, especially in the Muslim world where it was a barrier to efforts to widen

Soviet influence in the Middle East.

Whatever hope there was of winning, or of forcing some sort of stability on the battered Afghan nation, evaporated in the mid-1980s when the rebels received more advanced weapons. Hand-held Stinger anti-aircraft missiles changed the entire character of the war. As soon as they became available in quantity, they began costing the Soviets as much as a warplane a day, and such losses forced the abandonment of close air support and made the war in the countryside clearly unwinnable.(20) The Soviet regime was faced with the prospect of interminable losses with no offsetting gains.

The influence of events in Afghanistan extended to Europe--the troubles in Afghanistan were undoubtedly one reason the Soviets were hesitant to invade Poland in 1980-81. One quagmire at a time was enough. But more fundamentally, Afghanistan reaffirmed the lesson of history that hostilities are much easier to start than to finish. The continuing problems were a stark verdict on the judgment of the Soviet high command, which had apparently expected a rapid resolution of the Afghan situation.(21) Now the Politburo had to be considerably more skeptical about the success of an invasion of Poland, not to mention a much more complex invasion of Western Europe. The Soviets were not the only skeptics. Western Europeans, watching the frustration of the Soviets in Afghanistan, realized how exaggerated the capabilities they had attributed to the Soviet war machine had been. No wonder Western Europe became more sanguine about the Soviet threat.

The Afghan situation also undermined the military's claim to an exclusive right to provide advice on military questions. With their fallibility so obvious, it was hard for Soviet military leaders to reject the political leadership's use of outside specialists. As noted below, non-military personnel began to comment authoritatively on military issues. By helping to push the nation into an increasingly unpopular war that it was unable to bring to a conclusion, the military had set in motion its own decline.

The internal effects of the war were probably the greatest of all, though they are the hardest to judge. Official rationalizations for the war lost credibility as a steady stream of coffins came home. Some half million veterans returned to their villages with eyewitness reports of what was by any account a grim war.(22) While the economic burden of the war may not have been clear to the populace at large, the human costs certainly were. And those costs were made even more vivid by the growing number of veterans who were disenchanted and angry, as had been earlier groups of Vietnam veterans in the United States.(23) Popular regard for the military was undermined. When troops were sent into riot-torn Azerbaijan in early 1990, an outpouring of popular disapproval forced almost immediate abandonment of emergency mobilization. Perhaps for the first time ever, Soviet military operations were realigned to meet popular demands.(24)

The Moment of Truth

By the mid-1980s the return on Soviet military expenditures was clearly falling. With its economy grinding to a halt and a global surge in economic development threatening to pass it by, the Soviet Union could no longer ignore the situation. Military prominence was proving illusory while a restless population demanded better living conditions. Economic renewal became critical for internal stability as well as for continued military growth. Soviet foreign policy stressed peaceful intentions; indeed, that was almost an imperative as the Soviets sought western grain, goods, technology, and credits. The Soviets were being forced to choose between obtaining benefits by military intimidation or by broader cooperation.

Cutting the Gorbachevian Knot

Gorbachev attacked that tangled knot with a single clean cut: a clear focus on industrial modernization with a sweeping program of perestroika. Instead of stressing the virtues of Soviet military power, he called for "priority development of the social sphere" and decried the arms race as "diverting huge resources from other priorities."(25) Specific measures he instituted included a strong affirmation of political control over the military; withdrawal from Afghanistan; reductions in the military budget with consequent decreases in personnel levels, equipment procurement, and overseas deployments; realignment of military doctrine to emphasize defense; fundamental restructuring of East European political and military institutions; and new readiness to reach arms control agreements.

Political Control

Through the entire history of the Soviet state, the military has clearly and unequivocally acknowledged the primacy of the political leadership. In 1957 when Marshal Grigory Zhukov began to exhibit political ambitions, he was promptly sacked and retired to obscurity. A less dramatic action of the same type came in September 1984. The out-spoken chief of the Soviet general staff, Marshal Nikolay Ogarkov, was suddenly and unexpectedly replaced by his deputy, Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev. At the time, the significance of the move was widely debated in the West, particularly since Marshal Ogarkov's new posting was apparently to command a new theater-level headquarters poised to counter NATO.(26) Nevertheless, it now seems clear that the demotion was real and that it was politically motivated. It presaged a whole series of similar moves.

When a young West German landed his light plane in Red Square on May 28, 1987, his act was more than the symbol of peace that he meant it to be. It also served as the immediate pretext for replacing both the minister of defense and the commander in chief of the Soviet air defense forces--a conspicuous assertion of civilian control over the military. The series of replacements came full circle on December 7, 1988. As Gorbachev was preparing to announce major military cuts, a foreign ministry spokesman disclosed that Marshal Akhromeyev had resigned; he was soon replaced by a virtually unknown officer, Colonel General Mikhail Moiseyev. Since coming to power, Gorbachev has replaced virtually the entire leadership of the armed forces.(27)

The political subordination of the military extends beyond the reaffirmation of party control. Senior officers are now accountable to the new Soviet legislature, the Supreme Soviet, elected in 1988. Within months of its constitution, the Supreme Soviet gave the world the highly unusual spectacle of hearings to confirm the Soviet defense minister, General Dmitri Yazov. More recently, General Yazov has had to defend his approval of the use of military force to suppress riots in Georgia.(28)

Finally, the supreme military organ of the Soviet Union, the shadowy Defense Council, also appears to be taking on a new role. Although its function and membership have never really been made clear, since the time of Stalin it has apparently been chaired by the general secretary of the Communist party and has made all major decisions on defense planning. In the 1977 Soviet constitution it is described as subordinate to the Supreme Soviet, not to the party. More recently, Gorbachev has stated that it includes senior industry and military staff, and he claims to have given it broader powers to decide Soviet military policy.(29)

The Withdrawal from Afghanistan

The beginning of Gorbachev's tenure in office generally coincided with a decided worsening of the situation in Afghanistan as more western equipment, particularly anti-aircraft missiles, reached the resistance. It became clear that a military solution was out of the question, and Gorbachev entered into discussions in Geneva with the United States and Pakistan on ending the intervention. An accord, finally signed on April 14, 1988, stated that Soviet forces would be withdrawn from Afghanistan by February 15, 1989. That withdrawal was carried out on schedule, despite widespread expectations that it would result in the prompt collapse of the Najibullah government in Kabul. To the world's surprise, the government has continued to function, though it has ceded most of the countryside to the rebels. Apparently, one reason for its survival is continued high levels of Soviet support. The overall costs to the Soviets of that support, however, have certainly dropped, and the biggest costs are clearly gone: the stream of casualties returning home and the constant diplomatic challenges abroad.

The final chapter, however, is far from written. Afghanistan has been the subject of heated internal debate since the first session of the new Supreme Soviet. An emotional, day-long series of rebuttals and counterrebuttals was set off by a veteran who attacked Andrei Sakharov for his earlier criticism of the war.(30) Veterans' groups continue to press for more recognition, and widespread problems, such as drug abuse and severe hazing, exacerbated by the war, have become matters of public concern.(31) The current debate can only further damage the military's already tarnished image and undermine its claim to economic resources.

Military Reductions

Gorbachev himself, speaking before the United Nations on December 7, 1988, announced planned reductions of

500,000 troops and 10,000 tanks. More important, he addressed western concerns about the Soviet attack potential by specifying that the reductions would include withdrawing 6 tank divisions and 5,000 tanks from Eastern Europe, along with airborne assault troops and river-crossing equipment-- other targets of western criticism. After that announcement, other commentators provided additional details about planned cuts in the military budget of 14.2 percent over several years and a 19.5 percent reduction in arms production.(32) By the end of the year, the defense minister had announced a planned 50 percent reduction in tank production, Gorbachev had abolished the student draft,(33) and a slowdown in strategic weapons programs was noted.(34) Such reductions are the visible results of the new military policies. Unfortunately though, not all of the results are that visible. The base lines are not clear, and the changes themselves are hard to monitor.

As noted above, Soviet military costs have always been difficult to judge. The official military budget has been only a fraction of the true military budget. Tentative indications of actual budget reductions began to appear only at the end of 1989.(35) There are some indications of increased production of civilian goods within the defense complex and of decreases in production rates of certain military items, including Blackjack bombers and Typhoon submarines.(36) Some withdrawals of troops from Eastern Europe and Mongolia have also been noted.(37) Conversion to production of civilian goods, of course, is not easy. It is like turning an underway supertanker. Commands to change course may seem to have no initial effect at all; only after an interminable wait does the system respond, slowly and begrudgingly.

Although actual changes in Soviet military posture are still difficult to document, preliminary indications are encouraging. Those changes are, after all, at the very crux of the matter, for it is the military drain on the economy that has been the basic driver behind perestroika. Ultimately, changes in the scope of the Soviet military industrial complex could be both the most significant and some of the most visible of all the military changes.

Military Doctrine

Some of the most striking changes have been in military doctrine. The Soviets have rejected the concept of a winnable nuclear war and have begun stressing prevention of war as the central mission of the armed forces. Speaking at the 27th Party Congress, Gorbachev stressed political accommodation rather than expansion of military power as the solution to East-West military competition.(38) On the face of it, that amounts to a fundamental reassessment of the utility of the military and a new willingness to accept as legitimate western concerns about Soviet force levels.

The new doctrine has "reasonable sufficiency" as its central technical concept; that concept was formally adopted by the Warsaw Pact in its May 1987 declaration. Since then, the Soviet minister of defense has characterized it as the basis of a concrete program for structuring pact forces and explained that

the essence of sufficiency for the strategic forces of the Soviet Union is determined by the necessity of not permitting a nuclear attack without retribution under any, even the most unfavorable, circumstances. For conventional forces, sufficiency involves a quantity and quality of armed forces and arms capable of reliably assuring the collective defense of the socialist community.(39)

The new concepts are not yet institutionalized; they are still at the center of a complex debate. A number of military analysts have stressed the importance of parity and even argued that "reliable defense" is the key requirement, a far cry from Gorbachev's statement that no country can provide its security by military defense alone. Civilian analysts, such as Yevgeny Primakov, have tied the new thinking on sufficiency directly to the magnitude of the task of economic reform. Three civilian scholars at the Institute of U.S.A. and Canada have further expanded on the concept, stressing that sufficiency does not necessarily imply equaling an opponent's capabilities.(40)

It may be a long time before a fully integrated new doctrine is developed, and even longer before it is implemented in new force structures.(41) Nevertheless, even in its present form, the new doctrine represents a rejection of the long-standing effort to intimidate Western Europe by confronting it with high levels of offensive forces.

Rescinding the Brezhnev Doctrine

Gorbachev and others have repeatedly rejected the Brezhnev doctrine. A Warsaw Pact statement formally condemned the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia, and delegates to the Supreme Soviet proposed a similar resolution. Soviet

officials have also joined in ceremonies posthumously honoring Imre Nagy, whom they deposed with their 1956 invasion of Hungary and subsequently treacherously seized and had executed. Soviet leaders have repeatedly assured U.S. officials that they will not intervene with military force to stop the political reorientation of Eastern Europe.(42)

By the end of 1989 new reformist governments had been installed in all the Soviet client states of Eastern Europe. While clearly concerned about the possibility that changes in governments may get out of hand, the Soviets have not only not opposed the changes, they appear to have actively promoted them. Regardless of the genesis of the changes, the fact remains that Soviet political control of Eastern Europe decreased dramatically in 1989.

The political changes in Eastern Europe have been accompanied by military changes that have made it increasingly difficult to imagine a Warsaw Pact offensive. Following the Soviet lead, East European countries announced their own military reductions. Hungary promptly announced cuts of 11,400 military personnel and has since expanded the reduction to include cutting as much as a quarter of its army, scrapping many offensive weapons, and regrouping its troops away from its western frontier. Poland and Bulgaria have also announced cuts, and Czechoslovakia has even begun dismantling border fortifications. The East German army, once considered the best non-Soviet army in the Warsaw Pact, appears to be in total disorder, with desertion rife and a demoralized officer corps.(43)

In conjunction with reductions in their own forces, several of the new East European governments are pressing for the withdrawal of Soviet troops. The Soviets have already withdrawn 10,000 troops from Hungary and have agreed to withdraw the remaining 50,000 troops, a move the Hungarians want completed by 1991 regardless of progress in East-West negotiations.(44) Czechoslovakia has also obtained an agreement on the withdrawal of the 75,000 Soviet troops that are stationed there by mid-1991. Similarly, Lech Walesa has made the early removal of Soviet troops a condition for building a new relationship between Poland and the Soviet Union.(45)

Arms Control Negotiations

Although avoiding war is the primary reason for engaging in arms control negotiations, avoiding unnecessary military expenses provides another strong motivation, particularly for the Soviets. Such negotiations have certainly been energized by the Gorbachev government.

At the beginning of Gorbachev's tenure, the diametrically opposed U.S. and Soviet positions on the SDI stymied negotiations; Gorbachev even made several veiled threats that the Soviets would walk out of the Geneva meetings. When President Reagan refused to budge on the SDI at the November 1985 summit, Gorbachev countered with a proposal that included the elimination of all Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) in Europe. Reagan promptly gave a positive response. Shortly afterward, the Chernobyl accident put the Soviets on the defensive, and a comprehensive study by Soviet civilian scientists indicated that a total SDI shield was not feasible and that effective countermeasures to more limited versions of that shield were available. Those considerations helped promote progress in the negotiations, including Soviet acceptance of some types of SDI research. By the time of the Reykjavik summit in October 1986, there had been progress on a number of issues but no resolution of the SDI dispute. Although the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) had resulted in an agreement in principle to a 50 percent cut in strategic offensive weapons, development of a START treaty ground to a halt.(46)

In 1987, apparently impelled by a need for arms control results and improved East-West relations, Gorbachev further softened his position. At the December summit, he signed the INF treaty and agreed to a new framework for START in return for a vague agreement that both sides would continue to "observe" the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty. In signing the INF treaty, the Soviets not only accepted larger reductions (867 missiles versus 283 for the United States) but also agreed to unprecedented verification measures. Each country will have verification teams permanently stationed within the other's territory. The momentum continued through the Malta summit, at which Gorbachev and President Bush agreed to seek prompt conclusions to both START and conventional arms talks.(47)

Overall, the Soviet arms control approaches have become much more innovative and forthcoming, and there is good potential for real progress. The ultimate test will be an agreement on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE).(48) Those negotiations, too, have been proceeding apace; a proposal made by President Bush at the end of January 1990 is serving as a basis for agreement on sharp reductions in military forces. That agreement would limit both Soviet and U.S. troops in Central Europe to 195,000, and the United States is also allowed an additional 30,000 troops on the

periphery. That would require the removal of at least 370,000 Soviet troops from Poland, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, and Hungary. The United States, on the other hand, is only required to withdraw a total of some 80,000 troops, mostly from West Germany, Denmark, Belgium, and the Netherlands.(49) Thus the Soviets are making a significant concession.

In addition to the reductions sought in the framework of formal negotiations, West Germany has announced a 20 percent cut in its forces by the mid-1990s.(50) Although that might seem precipitate to some, it can be an important first step toward arms reduction. Final reductions will come not from negotiated changes but from the simple force of events and the logic of economics--cutting military elements that are judged no longer useful and putting those resources to positive social uses. Encouraging such moves in the East means pushing the Soviets and even more so the East Europeans to implement the new doctrines of sufficiency and defense, but it also means being willing to do the same in the West.

Unilateral but balanced reductions do not require an extended arms control bureaucracy and can be quickly implemented, but they lack the verifiability of negotiated reductions and associated requirements to destroy or dismantle equipment. And they afford no means of formal redress if other countries reverse the trend toward arms reduction. So significant nonnegotiated reductions are unlikely until an atmosphere of greater confidence has been created.

The Withering of the Threat

Soon after Gorbachev came to power, Soviet spokesmen were saying that it was the Soviet intention to deprive the West of the threat it had so long used to justify its own high levels of military expenditures. The steps discussed above have done much to achieve that goal.

Strategically, actually fighting a nuclear war has seemed pure madness for a long time--a perception that has been reinforced by analyses of "nuclear winter," the ecological disaster that could follow a nuclear war and exterminate most of mankind.(51) In the West, such analyses buttressed arguments for minimal nuclear deterrence, but the doctrine of the East continued to speak in disturbing terms of winning such a war. The new Soviet doctrine, which rejects that approach, is certainly more reassuring, and civilian scientists and diplomats have promoted concepts of minimum nuclear deterrence that are essentially identical to western concepts.(52) That shift is matched by a new willingness to conclude arms control treaties that incorporate significant reductions in strategic nuclear weapons.

While premeditated nuclear war had certainly seemed unattractive to rational analysts for years, there was nevertheless concern that events somewhere in the world could somehow get out of hand and spark an unwanted conflict, much as the mobilizations before World War I practically preordained that conflict. Europe was generally considered the area in which such a fatal train of events would most probably start: the stakes were higher there for both superpowers, the largest concentration of forces in the world was there, and both sides had announced their readiness to use nuclear weapons defensively.

Given the reductions called for by the INF treaty and the changes in East European forces, the NATO conventional defense no longer appears as inadequate as it used to. Current reassessments indicate that NATO could expect longer warning times and might even be able to win a war in Europe without using nuclear weapons.(53) More important, none of the new governments in Eastern Europe has any quarrel with the West. Any sizable Soviet attack on the West would depend heavily on lines of communication across Poland and Czechoslovakia, and those lines could not be kept open without the support of the local governments, an unlikely occurrence under current conditions.

In addition, the new East European governments have been claiming a larger voice within the Warsaw Pact: its top policymaking body will be replaced with a new group, presumably composed of heads of state, and its command structure will be realigned and will take into account recent decisions of Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, and East Germany to require parliamentary approval of military combat.(54)

Another factor that reduces the threat of war is increased travel by Westerners in more parts of the East. Previously, NATO was concerned about the possibility of a sudden attack, a "bolt from the blue," by Soviet forces in Eastern Europe, possibly supported by some East European elements. Surreptitious troop movements and clandestine

mobilization played a big role in such scenarios. For that reason, a focal point of earlier western efforts to stabilize the European situation was the integration of anti-surprise measures into the confidence-building agreements instituted under the auspices of the Commission for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Exchanges of observers and notification of large troop movements were essential aspects of those agreements.

Now those agreements are being reinforced by the widespread presence of western visitors in the East, even in many remote areas of the Soviet Union. Under such circumstances, achieving surprise becomes all the more difficult thanks to "diffusive intelligence"--steady flows of unregulated observations from all corners of the Eastern bloc. As a result, mounting a surprise attack has become less and less possible, which adds more stability to the European situation.

Overall, the changes in Eastern Europe have dramatically reduced the threat to Western Europe.(55) The prospect of war in Europe has declined significantly and with it the potential for strategic nuclear war.

The Third World

In the past few years the Soviet presence in the Third World has been significantly altered and Soviet clients have generally become more conciliatory. The Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan has been mirrored by a Vietnamese withdrawal from Cambodia. Most Cuban troops have been withdrawn from Angola, and negotiations are in progress. Similarly, the Mengistu regime in Ethiopia is now negotiating with rebel forces, and Soviet advisers appear to be playing a much less active role.(56)

In the Western Hemisphere, however, the situation remains murky. Castro, still preaching revolution, continues to draw large subsidies from Moscow. The Soviets apparently still support the rebel forces in El Salvador. They have also continued to send military materiel to Nicaragua, though that situation will undoubtedly change as the newly elected Chamorro government takes control. Overall, Soviet actions in the Caribbean remain the largest anachronism in the Soviet military posture.(57) They are important not as a direct threat to the United States but as a warning that the old Soviet thinking has not entirely disappeared.

The Diminished Threat

The threat faced by the United States and the other free-world nations is at the moment significantly smaller than before and declining. Thanks to the growth of real autonomy in Eastern Europe, progress on arms control, modest reductions in Soviet forces, and changes in Soviet doctrine, the prospect of war between the superpowers is at the lowest point in many years.

The Reversibility of Change

In early 1957 Mao Zedong called for reform, for letting a "hundred flowers bloom." The lessening of restrictions brought a rapid outpouring of disparate voices, and hundreds of new ideas did indeed blossom. Taken aback by the strength of the movement he had spurred, Mao quickly turned to repression, harvesting the new flowers into his prison system. In early 1989 Deng Xiaoping made a similar policy reversal that led to the tragic events in Tiananmen Square. On a lesser scale, the Khrushchev thaw of the late 1950s promoted widespread dissidence that subsequently met with intensified repression as hundreds were sent to the gulag or forcibly treated in psychiatric hospitals.

The Perils of Perestroika

Khrushchev's fall was a sobering reminder that the Soviet system protects itself. By undermining the privileged position of the party elite, Khrushchev laid the groundwork for his own demise. While Gorbachev is certainly well aware of Soviet history, he has nonetheless taken many steps that have clearly undermined the privileged position not only of the party elite but also of the military, and he has apparently severely restricted the KGB's domestic operations. By allowing the rise of separatist movements in the Baltic states, Moldavia, the Caucasus, and Central Asia, he has doubtless alienated many Russians, by far still the dominant ethnic group. Most important, the tremendous changes that have taken place have yet to provide many tangible benefits to the average Soviet citizen, a problem that has been labeled explosive by members of the Congress of People's Deputies and is now forcing shifts of assets to consumer industries.(58)

Against such a background, it is not unthinkable that some leadership coalition or the eruption of widespread discontent could topple Gorbachev. What then? How reversible are the changes he has set in motion? Could the Soviet threat be resurrected? Those questions will be assessed in terms of the internal Soviet situation and the situation in Eastern Europe.

Internal Politics--The Decisive Consideration. It is hard to envision a military coup in the Soviet Union. The entire history of the state and its underlying philosophy would mark such an action as illegitimate. However, the present ferment in the Soviet world is clearly unsettling to many who grew up in an atmosphere of stability and predictability. The feeling that a strong leader is needed is apparently widespread. A coup is not totally unthinkable.

A new regime could form spontaneously within the leadership elite or be cobbled together in the face of widespread unrest. Such a regime, reflecting the overwhelmingly ethnic Russian composition of the elite and growing dissatisfaction among ethnic Russians, would very possibly be driven by conservative Russian elements.(59) The new leadership would have to reassert control over the historically subservient but now vigorous Supreme Soviet and its parent Congress of People's Deputies. It would almost certainly include a conservative military faction bent on restoring its position of prominence within Soviet politics. Its first move might well be to reaffirm the capitalist threat and suspend any ongoing arms control talks. It would naturally insist on restoring discipline within the country and reversing military budget cuts.

However, even such relatively modest internal goals would not be easy to achieve. Repressing the new Congress would immediately call the legitimacy of the regime into question and alienate many of the intelligentsia whose efforts would be badly needed to spur economic growth. On the other hand, not dismissing the new Supreme Soviet with its broad collection of activists and reformers would guarantee continued political turmoil, hardly what a new government would want.

But the most difficult obstacle to reversing cuts in the military budget would be the fact that it was not Gorbachevian whims but economic imperatives that forced the cuts in the first place. Putting a new man at the helm would hardly reverse the underlying economic forces. Nor would fewer goods and more discipline create an atmosphere conducive to the increased productivity and creativity necessary to provide for even basic domestic needs, much less continued high levels of military spending.

Increasing nationalistic sentiments would add another complicating factor to any attempt to set back the clock. Nationalist groups have grown enormously during the short time that perestroika has been in effect. Many of them have demanded, and received, increased autonomy in local affairs. In the case of the Baltic republics, the Moscow government has all but acknowledged the illegality of their original annexation and apparently expects their eventual departure from the Soviet Union.(60) Troops were sent into Azerbaijan to quell anti-Armenian rioting as nationalist groups appeared to be on the verge of overthrowing the local government.(61) Reasserting strict control would be at the very least a demanding task, which would be all the more difficult if the new leadership rallied support by appealing to traditional Russian elements at the expense of other ethnic groups.

In summary, a return to internal repression is possible, but it would be an uphill struggle for a new government. Gorbachev's use of troops in Azerbaijan was generally accepted as necessary because of the violence there. However, wider use of troops, especially to reverse political changes, would be an essential repudiation of perestroika. A return to repression, for whatever reason, would be more likely to lead to internal conflict or disintegration than to a cohesive, productive, and obedient nation.(62) It would also keep troops engaged in internal policing roles, thus reducing their availability for external tasks.

Eastern Europe--Could Control Be Reasserted? It is difficult to see how even a retrograde Soviet leadership could seek to reassert control in Eastern Europe if it had not first solidified its position at home--a formidable task that would probably demand the total concentration of any regressive government. Such a government would have its hands more than full with internal problems. It would seem to be foolhardy to take on the East European quagmire at the same time. Nevertheless, leaderships, especially beleaguered ones, do not always act rationally. Perhaps a new leadership would use a "threat" of East European disintegration as a rallying point to promote internal cohesion, particularly if regional anarchy were developing. Or a new leadership might find the headlong rush toward German reunification

unsettling and seek to abort it with the bulk of the Soviet forces in Eastern Europe, which are still stationed in the German Democratic Republic. Or the Soviet internal struggle might somehow be resolved more easily than now seems probable. At any rate, unforeseen events might impel a conservative Soviet leadership to reassert its primacy in Eastern Europe, using whatever control it still had over the Warsaw Pact military structure. What then?

Obviously, there is no real answer to such a hypothetical question. Much would depend on how the East European situation evolved between now and the time of crisis. To the extent that the new governments were able to gain the confidence of their citizens and move forward with constructive economic programs, a concerted political opposition to Soviet coercion could be expected. Doubtless, western governments would join in the effort, stressing constructive and conciliatory responses.

Failure of that effort could plunge Eastern Europe into bloody turmoil, with dozens of major imponderables. The Soviet people, well aware of the costs of a war, might immediately protest, as they did the mobilization for the police action in Azerbaijan. Soviet field officers might oppose such an order; some might even mutiny. The troops, particularly the non-Russians, might be so demoralized by the events in Eastern Europe and so aware of the push for democracy at home that they would desert in droves. The Poles and Czechs could sever the Soviet lines of communication.

Most important, NATO forces could become embroiled. Would West Germany, for example, stand aside if Soviet forces began massacring East Germans? Although a desperate Soviet attempt to reassert primacy by force of arms might subdue Eastern Europe, at least temporarily, it could hardly reconstitute an integrated Warsaw Pact force ready once again to threaten Western Europe. It could, however, spark events that might mushroom out of control. The new threat from the East is a convulsive eruption of a disintegrating system.

Summary

Gorbachev's analysis is essentially correct--the Soviets no longer have the option of being a military superpower and threatening to conquer the West. In the post-war period, they expended their limited resources in military efforts and used the coercive basis of their society to protect the privileged position of the elite. That has brought Soviet society to the brink of economic ruin. The badly outmoded Soviet industrial sector can no longer support an overgrown military machine. Nor can it maintain the already low civilian standard of living, a failure that threatens to produce an explosive public reaction. Modernization is imperative, and the needed resources can only come from a drastic cut in military spending.

The Soviet economic system has proved to be woefully inadequate. By stifling initiative, it has squandered a large part of its human resources and alienated many citizens, a problem made worse by the subjugation of dozens of non-Russian nationalities. Its visible economic failure has discredited the system in the eyes of both Soviet citizens and the world--other nations no longer desire to follow the Soviet model.

Gorbachev has been trying to salvage what he can, protecting his own position and that of his colleagues while trying to move his nation forward. Given the size and complexity of the problems he faces, that may well be the biggest task that a leader has ever faced. He has been forcing his nation to face the task ahead by making the road backward too difficult, particularly by dismantling the systems of controls in Eastern Europe and the monopoly on information and discussion at home.

Consequently, a failure to move forward would not mean returning to the old situation. The engine that drove that system--the autocracy that could force subservient citizens to produce at least a minimally satisfactory product--is gone. Now the only way to get the economy to work is to get the workers to work, to really work, to work with initiative and dedication, to work in ways that are beyond the reach of coercion. The resources are simply not there to reconstitute the awesome military machine of a few years ago.

Nevertheless, a desperate try at reversion is possible. Most of the military forces and much of the old guard are still in place, clearly distressed at the flow of events. Such an attempt could have a tremendous cost in blood, and the West could spontaneously and involuntarily be drawn into it. The consequences could be incalculable. Although no rational leader would unleash a nuclear war, desperation or fury can blind reason. Would Hitler, facing suicide in his bunker,

have pressed a button to destroy Paris, London, and Moscow had it been in his power? Such a replay of history is not unthinkable. There are Hitlers in every society, perverse fanatics like malevolent viruses, ready to attack the defenses of the body politic. The defenses usually sweep such fanatics into oblivion, but in times of stress they can spark a sudden fever, impelling the body to wild and even suicidal actions--nuclear blackmail, for example, or some reckless military challenge.

This is a time of stress for the Soviet Union, a time when violent and impulsive things become possible. For the United States, the threat of war, and even annihilation, is now much greater from some unforeseen chain of erratic events than from a planned Warsaw Pact attack. A premeditated plan set in motion by rationally weighed decisions poses less of a threat than spontaneous events driven by an emotional backlash to the changes that are occurring. Deterrence must now be based on strengthening stability and a fundamental realignment of military objectives--retaining enough strength to ensure that military options are not attractive to the Soviets, but promoting force reductions as rapidly as possible to eliminate the potential for a sudden flare-up of hostilities.

Implications for the United States

The United States obviously has a large stake in supporting peaceful change within the Soviet Union; indeed, the new president of Czechoslovakia in his address to the U.S. Congress stated that "you can help us most of all if you help the Soviet Union on its irreversible but immensely complicated road to democracy."(63) Although our ability to do so is necessarily limited, given the economic basis of the current Soviet crisis, the West's influence is certainly greater now than it has ever been. Realigning our own national objectives, however, is difficult. History often moves in lurches, but bureaucracies handle lurches poorly. That is particularly true now for the United States. Whereas many West European nations have been preparing for years to rebuild economic and social ties with the East, the United States has been taken by surprise and caught unprepared.

The immediate problem is to stabilize the situation in Eastern Europe so that growing frustration does not impel regressive changes in the Soviet Union accompanied by a desperate bid to reassert control over Eastern Europe. Germany, with its headlong rush to reunification and with the specter of a "German menace" still haunting the East, is a most likely "flash point." The largest concentration of Soviet forces is there, facing NATO's largest concentration, including the two U.S. corps. The high force levels greatly complicate the problem. The concern about Germany has been underlined by the new Polish prime minister's declaration that the universally despised Soviet forces should remain in Poland until the "German problem" is resolved.(64)

German reunification is a priority political issue, both within NATO and in East-West relations. The rush to reunification has slowed somewhat in the aftermath of the East German elections, and the reunification talks, involving the United States, the Soviet Union, France, and Great Britain as well as the two Germanys, which got under way in March 1990, are expected to result in a reunification scheme that is acceptable to all interested parties.(65) But reunification can be stable only if troop levels are rapidly decreased.

A prompt and orderly withdrawal of Soviet forces is the key to such a decrease, and Gorbachev has already begun unilateral reductions and negotiated withdrawals with Hungary and Czechoslovakia. But significant unilateral Soviet withdrawals could very well intensify whatever misgivings Soviet conservatives already have, heightening danger rather than lessening it. Consequently, Soviet reductions must be accompanied by NATO reductions, especially in U.S. and German forces. That makes progress in CFE very important--it can provide the Soviets strong reaffirmation of U.S. readiness to reduce forces while committing the Soviets to early withdrawals of the attack elements most bothersome to NATO, to destruction of much of the military materiel withdrawn, and to reductions in total force levels.

However, the pace of reunification is overtaking the CFE process. As noted above, the initial CFE agreement envisions major reductions of Soviet forces with relatively minor U.S. reductions. However, any Soviet reductions, unilateral or negotiated, should be met by some corresponding NATO reduction. West Germany cannot be thought to be positioning itself to fill a coming power vacuum, and the United States must dramatize its willingness to make deep cuts. A key principle is common security--a mutual sensitivity to the security needs of the other side. Only very recently have the Soviets accepted that principle, recognizing that they cannot achieve security at the expense of the insecurity of their

neighbors.

One major element of common security is a defensive force orientation. As noted above, the Soviets have proclaimed such an orientation as a basic tenet of their new military doctrine. But characterizing forces is problematic; attempts to define criteria for differentiating defensive from offensive forces have left many questions unanswered.(66) Although the work to date indicates that there are clearly no absolutes, a number of factors have been identified as useful for rating the offensive potential of a force. A heavy proportion of armored vehicles, for example, certainly increases offensive potential, whereas a preponderance of equipment designed to defend a specific territory decreases it. Size is certainly important: a small armored force may function as a local counterattack force, but it would be totally inadequate as a deep strike force. Logistic support may be even more important. Without a well-structured logistic tail, an armored force is incapable of deep operations.

The capability for deep mobility is probably the single most important characteristic of an unsettling offensive force. Reductions in that capability need to be encouraged on both sides. NATO, for its part, needs to put new stress on such defensive aspects as countermobility preparations to undermine any residual Soviet confidence in a rapid move deep into the NATO rear. A shift to territorial defense forces can also help NATO--or a Western European successor to NATO--to maintain a strong defense without posing any credible threat to the East.

The changes that are taking place call for a fundamental reassessment of the West's strategy and posture. A basic consideration is the role of U.S. forces when there is no massive Soviet presence looming over Western Europe. In the initial stages of reductions, U.S. equipment sites could be maintained while some full divisions were reduced to cadre or reserve divisions. Those reductions would provide flexibility along with annual savings that the Congressional Budget Office estimates at \$40 billion.(67)

As the situation in Eastern Europe stabilizes, Western Europe should be perfectly capable of constructing a reliable defense, with the United States providing some air and naval reinforcements but no massive ground reinforcements. Consequently, there would no longer be a need to ensure continuous control of the Atlantic sea-lanes. Such a reshaping of western defenses needs to be done in consultation with the NATO allies, with U.S. troop withdrawals undertaken not as a "neo-isolationist decoupling," in President Bush's phrasing,(68) but as a part of a shift to economic and cultural ties as the primary basis for U.S. involvement in Europe.

In Eastern Europe, stabilization means encouraging the new governments to reduce the attack potential of the Warsaw Pact. In some cases, it might be appropriate to obtain specific agreements, perhaps as a quid pro quo for certain types of western aid. In other cases, it might be more appropriate to push quietly for continued change, encouraging progress as it occurs. Immediate actions by the new governments could include

- lobbying actively within Warsaw Pact councils to firmly implement defensive doctrines,
- asserting strong control over the deployment and activities of their own forces,
- implementing clearly defensive force postures within individual East European countries, and
- converting military industrial and other assets to civil economic use.

U.S. strategic programs, including the SDI, helped force the reorientation of Soviet priorities and set changes in motion. Now, as the changes in Europe are eliminating what was traditionally considered the most likely spark to a nuclear war, the danger is that a war between the superpowers will be set off by some unforeseen erratic chain of events, perhaps including disintegration of the Soviet Union. That threat cannot be countered by constructing new strategic weapons systems. Instead, mutual troop reductions and stabilization of the situation are needed. Continued emphasis on the START talks is therefore essential. Stability needs to be promoted not only in Eastern Europe but in other potentially incendiary parts of the world, such as the Middle East and the Soviet Union itself.

A central concern is that resources devoted to new strategic weapons systems will undercut the resources needed to face the new challenge of global economic competition. Halting procurement of such new systems would have few short-term consequences because of the large existing forces. The United States would remain in the wide band of

rough strategic parity, though it would rely on older weapons. More important, halting procurement could release another \$40 billion annually(69) to be used to address the broader national security challenges facing the nation.

The United States is in a position to assert global leadership in the changed world of the 1990s. But it has not yet begun to define its new role, and its basic defense planning still approaches the world in terms of the old realities.(70) It needs to reassess the role of force, not only in Europe but globally, and it needs to develop a clear sense of the kind of relationship it wants with its allies and with the East.

The challenge with the Soviets is twofold: helping them to avoid an economic collapse that could destabilize the entire globe and encouraging them to put into practice the principles of mutual security and democracy that they now proclaim as their own. Internally, that means continued progress toward greater human rights, for practical as well as moral reasons--a free people and open debate are the surest checks on military adventurism. Externally, it means putting into practice the principles of the Helsinki Final Act, including free flow of information and facilitation of personal and professional travel among nations.

Overall, the most critical of the military changes are not those taking place in the Soviet Union itself but those taking place in Eastern Europe. There is no potential for a pact attack westward without the support of the East European governments, and the new governments are all actively seeking cooperation with the West. The immediate task for the West is to stabilize the situation so that a solid peace becomes really possible. Economic stabilization is essential, for an Eastern Europe plunging into anarchy would certainly be perceived as a threat by the Soviets and could set calamitous events in motion. Prosperity with an invitation to join in would be irresistibly attractive.

Recent events have drastically decreased the traditional threat, but a backlash is certainly possible. Although a backlash would not reconstitute the old threat, it could create a dangerous new one. Preempting a new threat calls not for more military power in the West but for more economic power, focused on transforming societies, ours included, to be more productive, cooperative, and integrated into a dynamic international economy.

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