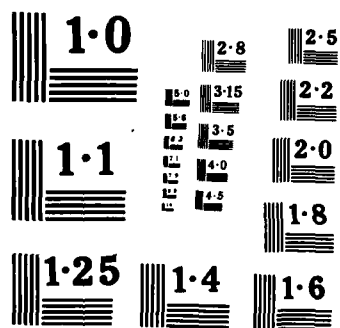


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EXPLOITING 'FAULT LINES' IN THE SOVIET EMPIRE:

AN OVERVIEW

John Van Oudenaren

August 1984

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EXPLOITING 'FAULT LINES' IN THE SOVIET EMPIRE: AN OVERVIEW¹

The failure of the NATO alliance to keep pace with the growth of Soviet and Warsaw Pact military power has prompted discussion in the West of alternative approaches to security in Europe. A small but influential group of American specialists argues that NATO could strengthen its position relative to the Pact by exploiting the vulnerability of the Soviet "empire" to fragmentation along national, ethnic, or other lines. In peacetime, the United States and Western Europe could further their security interests by challenging the Soviet hold on Eastern Europe and seeking to split the USSR from its allies. In wartime, NATO could pursue a counteroffensive strategy aimed at terminating the war on the Soviet-Polish and Soviet-Czechoslovak borders. By announcing a counteroffensive strategy and acquiring the capability to implement it, these experts argue, NATO would improve its deterrent against conventional or nuclear war in Europe.²

These strategies for political offensives and military counteroffensives are all based on the premise that the fault lines or cleavages within the Soviet empire can be identified and exploited.³ This paper will examine this premise and its implications. It will look at the various intra-empire cleavages and analyze their suitability for use in NATO political and military strategy.

¹This paper was prepared for the European-American Institute Workshop on "Fault Lines in the Soviet Empire: Implications for Western Security," Ditchley Park, England, May 18-20, 1984.

²For one statement of this position, see Samuel P. Huntington, "Conventional Deterrence and Conventional Retaliation in Europe," *International Security*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (1983-84), pp. 32-56.

³The term "empire" as applied to the Soviet Union and the states it controls is in some ways appropriate but in others misleading. For a discussion of the appropriateness of this term, see John Van Oudenaren, *The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe: Options for the 1980s and Beyond*, The Rand Corporation, Santa Monica, California, R-3136-AF, February 1984, pp. 86-87.



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IDENTIFYING THE FAULT LINES

Within the Soviet "empire," three kinds of cleavages can be identified and potentially exploited: intra-bloc, intra-leadership, and mass-leadership. The first category includes splits between countries within the Soviet empire. Examples that come to mind include the successful breakaway of Yugoslavia, China, and Albania from the Soviet orbit and the stand-off between Poland and the Soviet Union in October 1956. To the extent that Romania has exerted its independence from the Soviet Union, it too falls in this category. The driving force behind the latent and overt conflicts within the Communist world has always been nationalism, which Soviet ideology proclaims will be transcended under Communism, but which in fact appears to have grown more intense following the establishment of Communist regimes in the various countries of the bloc.

The second category includes splits within the elites or the leaderships of individual countries. These splits are harder to identify than those between countries, and, as the historical record shows, still harder for the West to exploit. Nonetheless, factionalism has been a regular feature of political life in Eastern Europe in the postwar period. In the 1950s, struggles between local and Muscovite factions were particularly fierce, with the latter generally prevailing. The successful breakaway of Yugoslavia, and Romania's move toward relative independence were both associated with the defeat of Muscovite challenges. Factionalism was also a factor in the Czechoslovak reform process of 1968. It was less rife in the 1970s and early 1980s, except perhaps in Poland, where the party was badly split between dogmatists and would-be reformers.

Occasionally, factional splits in individual countries can involve whole organizations and institutions. An obvious example would be a civil-military split, such as is reported to have occurred in Poland in 1970, when the Polish army is said to have ignored commands from Gomulka's deputy to use force against the rioters in Gdansk.⁴ Factional strife can also cut across national borders, with opposing factions

⁴Michael Costello, "The Party and the Military in Poland," *Radio Free Europe Research*, Poland/12, April 26, 1971.

seeking to line up allies in other bloc countries, and particularly in the Soviet Union. In the early 1960s, for example, Khrushchev's rival Kozlov conspired with East German leader Ulbricht against the Soviet Premier. Similarly, in the early 1970s, Ukrainian leader Piotr Shelest is reported to have made common cause with East European leaders who opposed Brezhnev's policy toward West Germany.

The third class of splits includes those between the leaderships of the various countries and the population as a whole, or at least a significant portion of it. Examples of this kind of split include the popular uprising in 1953 in East Germany, the rise of the Solidarity movement in Poland, and the guerrilla war in Afghanistan. In addition to these examples of large-scale anti-government resistance, mass emigration, such as occurred in East Germany prior to the building of the Berlin Wall (and might again occur if restrictions were eased), and the mass outflow of refugees from Afghanistan can also be regarded as a form of mass-leadership split.

Although these classes of splits are analytically distinct, in reality they often occur simultaneously, sometimes reinforcing, occasionally canceling each other's effects. The recent crisis in Poland, for example, was primarily a mass movement of the Polish people against the Polish United Workers' Party (PUWP) and the entire Polish system. It coincided, however, with splits within the PUWP and at least a potential conflict at the interstate level between Poland and the Soviet Union. In Hungary, the mass uprising of 1956 followed a period of regime infighting, while the 1968 crisis in Czechoslovakia began with a split within the ruling party that spilled into the wider public arena.

These historical examples of splits within the Soviet bloc by no means exhaust the set of problems the Soviets might confront in the future. In theory, other kinds of splits could develop that would be at least potentially exploitable by the West.

At the *intra-bloc* level, there are at least latent splits between

- the Soviet Union and each of the individual countries in Eastern Europe

- the Soviet Union plus its "northern tier" allies and the three less militarily exposed members of the bloc (Hungary, Bulgaria, and Romania)
- Romania and the rest of the bloc
- the GDR and the rest of the bloc (over intra-German issues)
- reformist states (e.g., Hungary) and states adhering more closely to the Soviet model.

At the *intra-leadership* level, there could be splits between

- reformers and dogmatists
- "puritans" and corrupt or nepotistic elites
- the military and the party bureaucracies
- party bureaucracies and the secret police.

At the *mass-leadership* level, there are latent and in some cases overt conflicts between the peoples and the leaders in all Communist states. This kind of conflict is most apparent in Poland, but it appears to be a feature common to some extent to all East European states and indeed to the USSR itself.

PROSPECTS FOR FRAGMENTATION IN EASTERN EUROPE

The previous section has outlined in theoretical terms the kinds of cleavages that exist within the Soviet empire. This section will review briefly the current situation in the Soviet empire and analyze the prospects for splits and upheavals in the bloc for the remainder of the decade. The stage will then be set for analysis and discussion of whether any of the theoretical possibilities can be translated successfully into security gains for the West.

Despite Soviet propaganda claims about the "dynamic" character of the bloc, Eastern Europe has experienced almost a decade of economic stagnation. In the 1976-1980 period, its rate of growth (GNP) averaged a mere 1.9 percent per year.⁵ The region experienced negative growth in

⁵Rates of growth for other regions in the same period were: non-OPEC developing countries, 5.5, OPEC, 5.0, Japan, 5.0, U.S., 3.7, EEC,

1981 and 1982, but began a modest upturn (1.0 percent) in 1983. Hardest hit of course has been Poland, where the economy may reattain the levels of the early 1970s only at the end of the present decade. To the extent that the East European states have begun to bring their debt problems under control, they have done so at the expense of future vitality-- by failing to modernize their industrial plants and the overall structure of their economies. The economic picture in Eastern Europe is therefore even worse than macroeconomic statistics indicate.

These economic problems have exacerbated tensions and splits on all three of the levels outlined: between the individual countries within the bloc, within the leaderships in individual countries, and between the masses and the leaderships of the East European states. The failure throughout 1983 of the CMEA states to agree to convene an economic summit was the result of intense haggling among countries under economic strain. Within leadership circles, economic stringency sharpens the tension between would-be reformers and conservative party apparatuses, between "metal eaters" and proponents of improved living standards. Not least, economic stringency increases the disaffection of the populations with their Communist regimes.

The political situation in Eastern Europe is also problematic. There is an absence of strong leadership both in the Soviet Union and in some of the East European countries. With Kadar, Husak, Honecker, and Zhivkov all in their seventies, in the mid- and late 1980s the East European states may undergo succession crises that could coincide with similar crises or periods of weak leadership in Moscow. In contrast to the early and mid-1970s, when there were strong leaders in the USSR and the bloc countries, in the 1980s there may be temporary leadership vacuums in both.

3.1, USSR, 2.3. These data are taken from the statistical appendix of the 1984 *Economic Report of the President*, GPO, Washington, 1984, p. 341. Population growth is also close to stagnant throughout the region. From 1982 to 1983, growth was 0.3 percent in Bulgaria, 0.3 percent in Czechoslovakia, 0.0 percent in the GDR, -0.1 percent in Hungary, 0.6 percent in Romania, and 0.9 percent in Poland. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *World Population: 1983*, July 1983, p. 8.

This weakening of leadership could have mixed effects on the cohesion of the bloc. On the one hand, the historical record shows that periods of weak or divided leadership in Moscow and/or the East European capitals have opened the way to intra-bloc drift and even popular revolt. The 1964-1968 period was one of relatively weak collective leadership in the Soviet Union that encouraged the kind of drift in Eastern Europe that culminated in the Prague Spring.⁶ Similarly, the birth of Solidarity was in part the result of corruption, incompetence, and weakness of Polish regime under Edward Gierek. On the other hand, the disappearance of trusted leaders like Kadar may mean decreased latitude for diplomatic maneuvering and reform efforts on the part of the East European states. Ceausescu's mismanagement of the Romanian economy, his blatant personality cult, and his nepotism have increased the likelihood of a challenge to his authority that would probably benefit the Soviet Union rather than the West.

In addition to the difficulties on the economic and leadership levels, the East European regimes are facing a general malaise at the popular level that dampens economic productivity, undermines the "building of socialism," and could lead to more active anti-regime resistance. None of the East European regimes enjoys true legitimacy in the eyes of its people. To the extent that the regimes in East Germany and Hungary have achieved a higher degree of acceptance than elsewhere, they have done so on the basis of their relative success in raising living standards in the 1970s. These successes are now threatened by economic stagnation and its attendant social ills: loss of upward mobility, widening income disparities, and decline of popular morale.

Although the overall economic and political situation in Eastern Europe is a difficult one from the Soviet point of view, it is unlikely that the Soviets are seriously concerned about losing control in any of the East European countries. The mere passage of time has made overt challenges to Soviet domination seem increasingly unlikely. The 1953 uprising in East Germany and the 1956 revolt in Hungary took place eight

⁶See J.F. Brown, *Relations Between the Soviet Union and Its Eastern European Allies: A Survey*, The Rand Corporation, Santa Monica, California, R-1742-PR, November 1975, p. 13.

and eleven years respectively after the conclusion of World War II. We are now approaching the fortieth anniversary of the end of that war. Participants in these early uprisings were either the younger brothers of or themselves combat veterans, often with experience on the Eastern front. In the late 1980s, the pool of combatants against Soviet domination would have to be drawn in some cases from the children, but for the most part from the grandchildren of World War II veterans. In addition, the external conditions surrounding a possible revolt in Eastern Europe have changed. While in 1956 there was still some expectation that the West might come to the assistance of the East European rebels, there is now widespread cynicism about Western motives.

Although many Western observers cling to stereotypes about the nationalist and religious fervor in Eastern Europe and about the basic Russophobia of its peoples, it is important not to overlook the changes that have occurred in the region and the extent to which the Soviets have factored these changes into their own calculations. In the postwar period, Eastern and Western Europe both have undergone a process of secularization, the international implications of which are not easy to calculate. If the Soviet Union has suffered from the decline of ideological fervor in the Communist parties of Europe as well as in the USSR proper, it has gained from a corresponding decrease in the strength of anti-Communist sentiment rooted in religious, national, or other ideals.

Soviet analysts and ideologues appear to believe that on balance secularization has benefited the East more than the West. The absence of legitimacy in the East, while clearly not desirable, does not in itself pose a major threat to Communist control, provided the national Communist parties remain strong and orthodox. (At the same time, the Soviets speak of the progressive "democratization" of Western societies-- a term that denotes many of the processes associated in the West with secularization. "Democratized" societies are still objectively capitalist, but have few subjective sources of resistance to internal and external pressures from the "working class."⁷) Although the Soviets

⁷These themes are developed in Vadim Zagladin, *The World Communist Movement: Outline of Strategy and Tactics*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1973.

are concerned about Eastern Europe's exposure to Western influences, they may believe that these influences lead to apathy, decadence, and a passive attitude toward "building socialism" rather than to active resistance to Soviet rule. The Soviets may be at least partially right in this regard. The values that the West projects eastward are not necessarily those of patriotism, heroic self-sacrifice, and resistance to unjust rule. Values such as these are probably not transmittable by radio, printed material, or even force of example, but must have deep sources in Eastern Europe itself. What may be transmittable is Western consumerism, abhorrence of war, and commitment to the right to enjoy life not overly disturbed by politics and demands placed on the individual by the state.

Poland may be a partial exception to the general pattern, and as the Solidarity episode suggests, its regime may be more vulnerable to mass resistance. It derives a degree of self-confidence from its large land area, population, and its national traditions. It has experienced rapid population growth in the past several decades and has a relatively young population by European standards. Above all, it is much less advanced in the secularization process that has occurred in other European states. Poles are religious and nationalistic to a degree not found elsewhere in Eastern or Western Europe. The Soviets admit the exceptional character of Poland which they attribute to such factors as the "immaturity" of the Polish working class and the fact that many Polish factory workers were raised as peasants and only entered the labor force in the rapid postwar industrialization. The Soviets seem to assume that over time secularization will weaken the mutually reinforcing bond between nationalism and Catholicism in Poland, and that economic hardship and the lack of hope will compel the Poles to accept a more comprehensive form of integration into the Soviet bloc. The result would be a decrease in the threat to Communist control in Poland. Such expectations on the part of Soviet analysts may be overly optimistic, but they should not be dismissed altogether.

If Soviet optimism about long-term trends proves excessive, severe unrest could erupt in Eastern Europe in the late 1980s. However, even in this case Soviet control would not necessarily be threatened in any serious way. East European armies and police forces are likely to

remain loyal and effective in the face of most internal challenges. Officers of the East European armies are for the most part socially conservative and impatient with prolonged turmoil in society. They are also attached to the special economic privileges that go with their status and that are especially valued in times of economic hardship.

The East European authorities might be less successful in preventing popular unrest at the conscript level and thus unable to use the armed forces against strikers and rioters. But as the December 1981 events demonstrated, the Polish authorities have worked around reliance on the military by building up the ZOMO organization. ZOMO loyalty has been bought with the provision of special privileges to its members, many of whom are poor peasants and some of whom have criminal backgrounds.

Soviet intervention would only come about following a massive failure by ZOMO-type forces to contain popular resistance. In the event of Soviet intervention, the military establishments of these countries might cease to play a system-supporting, conservative role and switch over to an actively (counter)revolutionary one by resisting the Soviet invasion. There might then be a convergence between elite-officer interests and views and those of the conscripts. However, it is unclear how strongly the East European military establishments would resist an invasion. Following the 1968 pattern, the Czechoslovak army probably would not offer any resistance. With regard to Hungary, Herspring and Volgyes report "an increasing cynicism vis-a-vis the utility of military resistance; suggesting that the twenty-four years since 1956 have taken their toll, and that the Hungarians may not be as ready to commit themselves to armed resistance in the future."¹ In any case, the experience of 1956 shows that even when a force is willing to fight the Soviets, well-placed Soviet advisers and collaborators can disrupt coordination and communication and severely limit the effectiveness of any organized military resistance. In East Germany, anything but sporadic resistance is probably unthinkable. With twenty Soviet divisions on GDR territory, East German resistance would invite swift and brutal repression.

¹Dale R. Herspring and Ivan Volgyes, "Political Reliability in the Eastern European Warsaw Pact Armies," *Armed Forces and Society*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (1980), p. 282.

The exceptions are Poland and Romania, although invasion of the latter is unlikely, since its costs would probably not be worth the rewards from the Soviet perspective. The Soviets could more easily feel compelled to go into Poland, where they would almost certainly meet armed resistance. How much is unclear, however. To suggest, as one author has done, that had the Soviets attempted to crush the workers' movement by force, the Polish military would have "resist[ed], and, if necessary...[fought its] way through East Germany to the West" may overstate both the capabilities and the heroism of the Polish armed forces.⁹

EFFECTS OF WESTERN POLICY

In analyzing the effects of Western policy, it is important to keep in mind that the West has (either by default or design) three policies toward Eastern Europe: First, the "normal" policy that it pursues in the hope of promoting certain long-term objectives (elements of this policy include trade, differentiated approaches to the various countries, participation in CSCE, radio broadcasting, and so forth);

1, the ad hoc policies that Western governments are forced to devise during crises in Eastern Europe (Hungary 1956, Czechoslovakia 1968, Poland 1980-81); and third, the policies and strategies, as yet largely hypothetical, that the West might adopt in an actual wartime situation.

Each of these policies poses a fundamental question. First, how can Western policy influence the long-term evolution of the bloc? Second, how can Western policy affect the outcome of East European crises? And third, how can NATO better deter Soviet attack by being prepared to exploit wartime vulnerabilities in Eastern Europe?

⁹Jiri Valenta, "The Explosive Soviet Periphery," *Foreign Policy*, No. 51 (1983), p. 93.

Influencing the Long-term Evolution of the Bloc

Since the early 1960s Western countries have pursued "differentiated" policies toward Eastern Europe. President de Gaulle of France led the way with his efforts to develop ties with Catholic Poland and "Latin" Romania. Before it was abandoned after 1968, West Germany pursued a policy of "small steps" aimed at improving ties with Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and the Balkan states. The United States also adopted differentiation, especially in its dealings with Poland and Romania.

Differentiation assumes that the East European states are not totally subservient to the Soviet Union and have some room for diplomatic maneuver. Although in theory this assumption is valid, in practice it is difficult to determine how much latitude the East Europeans actually enjoy. Two important questions that need to be answered are (1) where can intra-bloc divergences ultimately lead? and (2) what are the risks and pitfalls associated with Western efforts to pursue policies aimed at fostering divergences?

The most extreme form of divergence would be an outright break with the USSR, such as occurred with Yugoslavia in 1948 and Albania in 1960, and such as Hungary tried to accomplish in 1956. There are no candidates in Eastern Europe for such a break. Although rumors have circulated in Eastern Europe that the Soviets are concerned about an attempt by Romania to leave the Warsaw Treaty Organization in 1985 when the 30-year treaty comes up for renewal,¹⁰ even Romania is not a likely candidate to follow the path blazed by Yugoslavia and Albania. The various noises concerning Pact membership emanating from Romania are probably only meant to improve Ceausescu's bargaining power on bilateral and bloc issues.

Even in the unlikely event that Romania were to leave the WTO, its doing so would result in little added security for the West. Romania's independent foreign policy, and in particular its condemnation of Soviet and American INF deployments is an irritant to the Soviet leadership, but not a serious threat. Nor is it likely that such an action by Romania would lead to similar moves by other East European states. The

¹⁰Hella Pick, "Kremlin Keeps Watch on Stirrings in Romania," *The Guardian*, February 1, 1984.

attractiveness of the Romanian model for the other Warsaw Pact states has declined since the early 1970s. The reasons for this decline include the state of the economy, the relative eclipse of the non-aligned movement as a force in world politics (and hence of the benefits of Romanian participation in it), and scorn in other Communist countries for Ceausescu's personality cult and his style of leadership.

There also are costs associated with supporting Romania, which Western governments are forced to re-evaluate from time to time. France, a traditional supporter, felt it could no longer overlook Romania's campaign against exile dissidents on French territory. The United States went as far as to threaten revocation of the country's Most Favored Nation status in protest of an exit tax on emigrants. The actions of both governments point up the costs, risks, and uncertain rewards of differentiated policies toward Eastern bloc countries.

A less extreme type of "break" that the West might seek to encourage over the long term might occur as a result of the gradual, evolutionary drift of one or more countries--a kind of "counterrevolution by osmosis." Hungary is the most obvious candidate. Of course the Hungarian regime goes out of its way to stress that its internal reform process has no foreign policy implications. This is obviously not true, however, as was demonstrated when Hungary reportedly joined the IMF without consulting the Soviets. Although Soviet troops remain in Hungary and the latter's armed forces continue to prepare for their assigned role in a Warsaw Pact-NATO conflict, a strong case could be made that the gradual transformation of Hungarian society has led to qualitative changes that lower Hungary's value for the Soviet Union as an ally. It is difficult to imagine the Hungarians playing the kind of active, proxy role in the third world that has been undertaken by the East Germans and the Czechoslovaks.

It could be argued that Hungary is a special case and that none of the northern tier countries could attempt a similar experiment in relative autonomy. A true test of "counterrevolution by osmosis" would have to occur in Poland, the GDR, or Czechoslovakia. Such a test is in fact underway with regard to the GDR. West Germany, following a strategy set forth by Egon Bahr in his 1966 "change through rapprochement" speech, is following a long-term policy aimed at

transforming the substance of the GDR's relations with East and West, without mounting a frontal challenge to the GDR's ties with the Soviet Union.

There is good reason to be skeptical, however, about what this policy has actually accomplished in the last fifteen years. Despite the recent upsurge in inter-German ties and the sharp criticism by the Soviet Union of Honecker's policy, East Germany shows no sign of drifting away from the Soviet Union. If anything, East Germany has become a more important Soviet ally as a result of Poland's weakness and is using its enhanced leverage with the USSR to stake out a somewhat more independent but by no means adventurous policy. A much stronger case could be made that West German policy has had an effect on the population of East Germany, and has helped to preserve the "substance of the German nation." What these changes in popular perceptions mean for Western security is difficult to say, but it is possible that the growth of positive feelings toward the West Germans in the population of the GDR might make the latter less willing to support Soviet objectives in a war situation.

There is also talk in the West of Poland, by a combination of internal reform and outward assertion, staking out for itself a changed role within the bloc. Such a change might involve the adoption of some form of liberal, internal Hungarian-type reforms, along with assertion of external independence somewhat along Romanian lines. Various massive Western aid packages have been discussed in the West, both as an incentive for the Soviets and as a means to allow the Poles to consolidate their reform. How feasible this scenario--one that would be highly advantageous for the West--is judged depends in part on one's interpretation of the Jaruzelski regime. In the view of some observers, Jaruzelski is a Soviet puppet working for nothing more than the kind of "normalization" that the Soviets desire. Others argue that Jaruzelski is a genuine Polish patriot, whose main concern was to prevent national disaster in the form of Soviet invasion. Over the longer term, they see signs that Jaruzelski might adopt Hungarian-style reforms along with a somewhat "Gaullist" approach to dealings with the Soviet Union.

Leaving aside questions of Jaruzelski's motives--i.e., assuming for the sake of argument that he *wanted* to adopt this policy--it is not clear that he could succeed in carrying it out. The virtual economic collapse and the external debt burden, along with the more competitive international economic situation assure that Poland will not enjoy the kind of "slack" that Kadar was able to use in gradually moving toward reform. More fundamentally, there is reason to question whether the Soviets would ever permit internal reform of such magnitude in a country that they regard as the key to their position in Europe and by implication their very status as a great power. Soviet thinking on these matters appears to be well understood by Jaruzelski, who told a Polish audience in 1982 that the United States was "manipulating" the Polish problem "with a view to attaining definite, global goals."¹¹

In sum, given Eastern Europe's importance to the Soviet Union in a global perspective, prospects that differentiated policies will lead to fundamental changes within the bloc are not promising. (This is not to say that differentiated policies do not have other uses, such as easing the lot of the East European peoples.) In addition, there are also risks associated with differentiation on the Western side. Precisely because the West is interested in differentiation and in pursuing various special relationships with the East European countries, the Soviets can be expected to promote a kind of "pseudo-differentiation" within the bloc that gives the appearance but not the substance of diversity. Romania's active policy toward the outside world is clearly aimed at shoring up its independence. In the case of the other countries, however, ties with the outside world may stem from more ambiguous motives. Although the East European states presumably have a genuine interest in pursuing various special relationships with Western countries, there is also a "division of labor" within the WTO that deliberately aims to exploit these relationships to undercut Western unity.

¹¹Speech to the plenum of the Central Committee of the PUWP, *Trybuna Ludu*, April 26, 1982.

Bulgaria has begun to promote, along with Greece, a Balkan nuclear-free zone. The Soviets have traditionally been suspicious of this Romanian favored plan and we can assume that Bulgaria's new enthusiasm for it was carefully cleared in Moscow. Poland, to give another example, took the lead in promoting the post-CSCE European disarmament conference favored by the Soviets, no doubt in an effort to capitalize on the latent symmetries between Poland's traditional role in Europe and that of France, which was promoting its own European disarmament conference. The most ambiguous relationship of all is the intra-German one. Some evidence suggests that in the fall of 1983 the East German regime deliberately played to the West German peace movement, with Soviet acquiescence. At the same time, it is also easy to detect a genuine East German interest in maintaining ties with the West and a resultant Soviet nervousness about intra-German contacts taking on a life of their own.

Affecting the Outcome of Crises in Eastern Europe

If promoting the evolution of states within the bloc toward independence is at best unlikely to succeed and at worst destructive of cohesion in the West, what about the prospects for profiting from crisis situations? Can revolution succeed where evolution is likely to fail or to at best produce limited successes?

Generally, the West has been afraid to exploit revolutionary situations in Eastern Europe. In 1956, President Eisenhower refused to intervene on the side of the Hungarians. In 1968, President Johnson went so far as to signal acquiescence in the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia before it occurred. Nonetheless, there has been some evolution in Western thinking about crises in the East, as can be seen in the Western reaction to the 1980-81 events in Poland. This evolution has gone in two seemingly contradictory directions. On the one hand, the West has been left with progressively fewer illusions about the prospects for forcing change upon the Soviets. In 1968 it became clear that reform from above, no matter how innocuous appearing to the outside world, would be snuffed out by the Soviets if it appeared to challenge their interests. In 1981 it became clear that even a mass movement of

the magnitude of Solidarity could not compel the Soviets to accept change that they regarded as counterrevolutionary. Far from being "provoked" by the growing extremism of Solidarity, the Soviets set about undermining the Gdansk accords from the moment they were concluded.

On the other hand, even though the West has fewer illusions about forcing change on the Soviets, somewhat paradoxically it has become more active in trying to influence the course of events in Eastern Europe--both "on the ground" and by changing the decisionmaking calculus of the Soviet leaders. Two factors account for the growing Western interest in influencing the course of developments in the bloc: first, the prolonged, slow-motion nature of the crisis in Poland gave the West time to react; and second, detente created an opportunity (or some might argue the illusion of an opportunity) to use the fabric of East-West economic and political ties to influence how the Soviets responded to the crisis.

To assist the East Europeans in achieving a permanent transformation of their status, the West would have to accomplish two objectives: (1) during the crisis itself, deter or dissuade the Soviets from intervening in order to allow domestic reform to take its course; and (2) after the crisis passes its peak prevent the reform process from being whittled away.

In the 1980-81 crisis, the West may have been partially successful in meeting the first of these objectives. The main deterrent to a Soviet invasion was probably the fear of resistance from the Poles themselves, but concern about international repercussions probably had some effect as well. Zbigniew Brzezinski concluded that a Soviet intervention would have

produce[d] a rupture in the political detente in Europe, disrupt[ed] East-West economic cooperation, generate[d] increased NATO budgets, produce[d] severe strains between West European Communist parties and the Soviet Union, further alienate[d] the Non-Aligned Movement from the Soviet Union, possibly precipitate[d] turmoil elsewhere in the Soviet bloc, and probably [would have led] to overt American-Chinese military cooperation.¹²

¹²Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, Farrar, Straus, Giroux,

Whether the reaction of the outside world would have been as forceful as Brzezinski suggests is an open question. But the Soviets no doubt have a genuine fear of isolation--"ghettoization"--as a result of actions that they regard as necessary but that are seen as criminal in the outside world.

While the West may have had some effect in deterring Soviet intervention, it was less capable of controlling the internal whittling away process. Although the United States tacitly supported private (e.g., AFL-CIO) actions to strengthen the independent trade union movement and considered aid packages that might have helped the Poles consolidate the liberalization process, such measures could not bolster the reform process from without. Just as in 1957 and early 1958 the Gomulka regime successfully whittled away the Polish October, so after August 1980 the Polish party began considering ways to nullify the Gdansk accords. In both cases, the ultimate success of government policy underscored the inability of the West to protect the internal process of reform. More importantly, it cast doubt on the value of the "deterrent" against Soviet intervention. While the costs of direct intervention might have made for caution on the Soviet side, the possibility that orthodoxy could be restored by alternative, lower-cost methods also helped to stave off direct Soviet intervention.

Deterring War

Finally, what effect might Western policy have on Eastern Europe during wartime and, in order to deter war, on the calculations about war made by East European and Soviet leaders? Because East European contributions are vital in the short-war scenarios that concern NATO planners, neutralizing the six East German, ten Polish, and seven Czechoslovak Category I divisions, along with three Polish Category II divisions should be a Western objective in wartime or in a prewar

New York, 1983, p. 465. Brzezinski also claims that the United States received assurances from the German ambassador that West Germany would adopt economic sanctions in the event of a Soviet move, and even prevailed upon Indira Gandhi to register India's concern. Lane Kirkland of the AFL-CIO was prepared for a worldwide boycott on Soviet shipment of goods.

crisis. In a long-war scenario, in which more of the Soviet Union's own forces come into play, the role of the northern tier allies is less crucial. However, in a longer war the Soviets would have to worry about the possibility of *active* resistance in Eastern Europe by irregular units or by East European armies that managed to switch sides.

The prospect that East European armies will join in the Soviet war effort (and that Soviet planners will count on East European loyalty in their prewar deliberations) is closely correlated to expectations about the length of the war. In war, governments, commanders, and individual soldiers would be influenced by calculations as to whether prospects for survival would be enhanced or diminished by joining the Soviet war effort. If NATO can mount an effective conventional defense for a long enough period, the odds will grow that the East European armed forces will withhold cooperation or even actively resist the Soviet offensive. But the more NATO grasps at efforts to exploit vulnerabilities in the East out of a sense of its own weakness, the less likely it is that these efforts will succeed.

The appeal of an immediate counteroffensive, such as Huntington has proposed, is that it would not require the East Europeans to wait for NATO to successfully hold the line for a period of weeks before making their choices. In some places, the Soviets would seize Western territory, while in others the West would seize parts of the GDR and Czechoslovakia. Huntington's political calculation (which leaves aside the question of whether what Huntington is proposing is militarily feasible) is that an asymmetrical trading of territory in this manner would benefit the West rather than the East, since the latter is more likely to disintegrate under threat of counterattack. However, the operational and political problems that such a strategy entails make its adoption by the alliance extremely unlikely.

Short of adoption by NATO of a counteroffensive strategy, however, developments in Eastern Europe and to some extent Western peacetime policies can influence the role that the East European forces are likely to play in war. Political crises in Eastern Europe already have taken a heavy toll on the military establishments of the affected countries. The Czechoslovak army has never fully recovered from the events of 1968. The ability of the Polish army to play its former role in the "coalition

warfare" strategy of the Soviet Union has been damaged since 1981. Army units have been diverted to internal security and administration, training has been curtailed, and morale has suffered. The Soviet Union has delayed the introduction of the most up-to-date equipment into the East European armies, in part out of concerns about reliability. Lack of modernization pays double dividends for NATO: it not only renders the East European forces less effective, but engenders resentment that could affect loyalty and morale in war.¹³ A sense that the Poles were being sent into battle on behalf of the Soviet Union with inferior weaponry could be a factor influencing the loyalty of the Polish army.

Because of manpower and economic constraints, Eastern Europe's contributions to WTO "coalition warfare" capabilities have already peaked and will decline in the 1980s.¹⁴ Questions about military reliability will further undermine East European contributions to a Soviet war effort and raise costs for Soviet planners. The Soviets are constructing an enormous ferry from the USSR's Baltic coast to Ruegen in East Germany in order to bypass Poland in time of crisis. The Soviets also incur higher costs by maintaining their own independent logistics and command and control systems in order to minimize dependence on potentially unreliable allies. Although it is as yet too early to tell, rising tension in East Germany and the growing web of intra-German contacts could further erode the morale and capabilities of the East German forces. Growth in the East German peace movement, an increase in conscientious objection, and even modest levels of emigration could weaken the GDR's contribution as a military ally.

Developments in NATO nuclear policy, although undertaken for other reasons, also could have subtle effects on the willingness of the East Europeans to join in the Soviet offensive. The West European peace movement has made much of the parallel fates of East and West Europe--and especially the two Germanys--caught between the two nuclear

¹³This resentment is documented in A. Ross Johnson, Robert W. Dean, and Alexander Alexiev, *East European Military Establishments: The Warsaw Pact Northern Tier*, The Rand Corporation, Santa Monica, California, R-2417/1-AF/FF, December 1980, p. 38.

¹⁴A. Ross Johnson, *The Warsaw Pact: Soviet Military Policy in Eastern Europe*, The Rand Corporation, Santa Monica, California, P-6583, July, 1981.

superpowers. In the long run, however, the INF controversy and the Soviet responses to it may work against Soviet interests in Eastern Europe. The deployment of U.S. nuclear weapons in Western Europe capable of striking the Soviet Union is intended to recouple Europe to the U.S. strategic deterrent. The effect of this recoupling may be to lessen NATO's dependence on battlefield nuclear weapons. NATO in fact has taken the lead in removing weapons that threatened Eastern Europe but not the Soviet Union. The Soviets, out of a political need to counter NATO actions, have moved in the opposite direction--they have increased the number of their nuclear weapons in Eastern Europe, thereby creating considerable unease in East Germany, Czechoslovakia and Hungary.

CONCLUSIONS

In peacetime, attempting to further highly visible political splits between the Soviet Union and any of its three northern tier allies, or attempting to induce splits within the USSR is probably not feasible. In dealing with the USSR, Poland, the GDR, and Czechoslovakia, the West can probably only hope to weaken the capabilities of these countries without expecting fundamental change in either the form or the substance of current political, military, and economic relationships.

In the case of Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria, it is probably also not practical to try to promote visible breaks between these countries and the Soviet Union. However, in these cases, it may be possible for the West to undermine the substance of Soviet control while leaving its outward trappings largely intact. In addition to internal liberalization, the development of external ties with the non-Communist world could play a role in "civilianizing" these countries. Hungary's decision to join the IMF, which was taken, it is believed, without the prior consent of the Soviet authorities, can be seen as an effect and in turn a further cause of a certain distancing on the part of Hungary from the Soviet Union and CMEA methods of economic integration.

A note of caution is in order, however, concerning how beneficial to Western Europe even highly successful efforts to encourage splits in the bloc are likely to be. NATO could improve its security by neutralizing Polish, Czechoslovak, and East German contributions to the

Pact's coalition warfare strategy. However, the Soviet Union, even if separated from its allies--or indeed stripped of all its non-Slavic territories (a highly unlikely prospect in any case)--would remain by far the largest country in Europe. In the broad historical and geopolitical picture, the basic fact remains that the USSR has some 270,000,000 people (even if all the non-Slavs broke away, it would have some 200,000,000) under centralized control, and the political will to utilize these people to maximize its security and power. Although there is reason to expect that some of the 200,000,000 Slavs (particularly among the Ukrainians) would not be loyal to the Soviet state and might seek to exploit a crisis to get out from under Communist control, it would be going too far to expect that disaffection would be decisive in an East-West conflict. It is often pointed out that World War II showed the disloyalty of large segments of the Soviet population. It also showed the ability of the Soviet system to mobilize and control the majority of its large population.¹⁵

In light of this fundamental structural disparity in Europe, the only real "solution" to Western Europe's security dilemma is the creation of a unified West European counterweight to the Soviet monolith. At present, however, no such unity is in prospect for Western Europe. In the absence of a change West European priorities, even successful efforts to exploit Soviet "imperial" vulnerabilities will at best have limited effects on the European power balance.

If we assume that the Soviet leaders retain their fundamental Eurocentrism, it is likely that efforts to exploit splits in the USSR's European empire will be countered by additional inputs of Soviet manpower and equipment. In 1968, the Soviets lost the services of the Czechoslovak army as a result of the invasion. The Soviets quickly compensated for this loss by "temporarily" stationing forces of their own in the country. While this diversion of forces presumably meant a lowering of Soviet capabilities elsewhere and a raising of costs, it certainly did not result in added security for Western Europe.

¹⁵The political scientist J.P. Nettl, in his study of political mobilization, concluded that in World War II, of the major combatants, "Russia was clearly the most intensely mobilized country, followed by Britain rather than Germany..., followed by America and finally France...." *Political Mobilization*, Basic Books, New York, p. 301.

Unlike what occurred in the 1968 crisis, the Soviets have not introduced new troops into Poland, although this was an option discussed in the West in 1981. To what extent the events in Poland and doubts in Moscow about the reliability of the Polish army have changed the disposition of forces inside the USSR is not clear. Iran and the Persian Gulf may be somewhat more secure as a result of Soviet diversions of manpower. But certainly Western Europe is no more secure, and would in fact be less secure if the Soviets stepped up deployments either in Poland or in the Western districts of the USSR in order to compensate for the lessened reliability of the Polish army.

The real beneficiary of efforts to undermine the Soviet empire in Europe might not then be Western Europe, but third areas, where the USSR might have to scale back its activism. In view of what appears to be a growing West European desire to pursue an "islandized" detente with the Soviet Union in Europe, efforts to exploit fissures in the Soviet empire, particularly because Europe itself might not be the beneficiary of these efforts, will almost certainly run into strong opposition from political leaders in Western Europe and especially in West Germany.

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