

STUDY PROJECT

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THE SOVIET THREAT: IS IT DECLINING?

BY

LIEUTENANT COLONEL WILLIAM H. CAMPBELL

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THE SOVIET THREAT: IS IT DECLINING?

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

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U.S. Army War College
Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania 17013
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ABSTRACT

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THE SOVIET THREAT: IS IT REALLY DECLINING?

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Over the last several years, General Secretary and President Mikhail S. Gorbachev has captivated the world's attention with his proposals for the future of global peace and for sweeping changes within the Soviet Union. Ever hopeful for peace, the world's people have been entranced by his pronouncements and accomplishments. However, as former Defense Secretary Carlucci reported to Congress in February 1988:

Over the past year, we have seen an intensifying Soviet public relations campaign designed ostensibly to portray a new Soviet commitment to peace. Despite this "new look," Moscow is continuing its arms buildup and expanding its political and military influence wherever and whenever the opportunity presents itself. Consequently, the Soviet Union remains the major threat to the security of the United States, its allies, and its friends.¹

General John R. Galvin, the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe (SACEUR), has indicated the United States must deal with Soviet capabilities, not with the stated intentions of the Soviet Union. He said, "Every month ... the Soviets produce enough tanks to outfit an entire division ... Since General Secretary Gorbachev assumed power in March 1985, the Soviets have fielded more tanks and artillery pieces than currently exist in the combined armies of Britain, France, and West Germany."²

For the past seventy years of Communist Party rule, the Soviet Union has put military power ahead of political, economic, and social power to the extent that it has militarized the entire country. As Richard Pipes stated, "[The Communist regime's] outstanding characteristic is the militarization of politics, that is, the thorough reshaping of civic society on the model of a combat organization."³ This total orientation of the state toward military power has resulted in extreme deprivation in quality of life for the Soviet people. There can be little question that the sweeping changes Mikhail Gorbachev has proposed are meant to improve the conditions of the Soviet people. He has promised them and they now expect to see improvement. In addition, Mr. Gorbachev has recognized that to be a first class world power the Soviet Union has to be more than a strong military power and that the economy and industrial infrastructure must be totally revitalized.

In an article on trends in the use of national power, Michael Handel noted that the foreign affairs of major powers no longer take precedence over domestic affairs. He stated, "There is little sense in assigning priority to foreign affairs in the absence of a threat to the survival of the nation--if in the process the state destroys itself from within."⁴ The Soviet Union, in the pre-Gorbachev era, appeared to be doing just that with its total emphasis on military power. Handel's concept has not been lost on Mr. Gorbachev, for it appears Mr. Gorbachev has placed domestic affairs, with emphasis on strengthening his country's economic and technological base, as his country's number one priority--at least for the near term. However, Lt Gen Odom's statement, made in his paper on Soviet military

doctrine, is worth repeating: "The primacy of military forces in Soviet economic development should be kept clearly in mind as we observe Gorbachev's contemporary struggle for perestroika."⁵

Therefore, is perestroika solely an effort to restructure the Soviet economy and political system to improve the living standards of the Soviet people or is its main purpose to strengthen the industrial infrastructure and technological base to ensure future military superiority? It is far too early to answer this question. However, the West must never forget the Soviets are masters of deception. The West must guard against the real possibility that what it is observing in the Soviet Union today is a masterful deception at the strategic level. This deception could very well be so complex and with such a long-term objective that it could become virtually impossible for the West to sustain the vigilance and resolve it has exhibited in the past to counter the threat posed by Communism and its ideology of world domination. Subsequently in the year 2009, after 20 years of decreased defense spending resulting from a perceived lessening of the Soviet threat, the West could find itself suddenly threatened again by the Soviet Union, greatly strengthened by its 20 years of retrenchment under perestroika.

It is the purpose of this paper to present information which will show there may be another interpretation to what we read and hear almost every day in the various news media. Chapter II will provide an historical perspective and will address three areas: the implications of Marxist-Leninist doctrine, some remarkably similar periods in the Soviet Union's 70-year history, and the cyclical nature of the impact of technology on development of Soviet military thought.

Chapter III will present a look at how the nature of the Soviet threat is changing in Europe. Chapter IV will then provide some recommendations and conclusions.

It is my contention that Mr. Gorbachev must prove to the world through deeds that what he is saying is true. The world must not be lulled into a sense of complacency merely because a series of well thought-out speeches give the impression of a Soviet Union reoriented toward world peace. This paper will provide insights into past actions of the Soviet Union so that one can keep the proper perspective on its current actions. It is imperative that we do this, for it is too soon to believe this enigmatic country has truly changed and is no longer a threat to world peace.

ENDNOTES

1. Frank C. Carlucci, Report of the Secretary of Defense to the Congress on the Amended FY 1988/FY 1989 Biennial Budget, p. 23.
2. Christie Golden, "Count the Soviets' Arms, as well as their intentions," USA Today, Dec 6, 1988, p. 11A.
3. Richard Pipes, "Dealing with the Russians: The Wages of Forgetfulness," U.S.-Soviet Relations: The Next Phase, p. 279.
4. Michael I. Handel, "The Future of Dominant-Subordinate Systems," in Course 2: War, National Policy, and Strategy, Vol. 1, p. 40.
5. William E. Odom, "Soviet Military Doctrine," Foreign Affairs, Winter 1988/1989, p. 118.

THE SOVIET THREAT: IS IT REALLY DECLINING?

CHAPTER II

AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

By analyzing the implications of a few of the basic tenets of Marxist-Leninist doctrine, recurring themes in Soviet Union history, and the basis of development of Soviet military thought, one can gain important insights into what the world is observing in the Soviet Union today.

MARXIST-LENINIST DOCTRINE

There are certain immutable truths of Marxist-Leninist doctrine which underlie Soviet thinking. It is important to keep these "truths" in mind as one assesses what is transpiring in the Soviet Union, for it helps to focus on the true nature of the threat the Soviet Union poses to world peace. Even Secretary General Gorbachev cannot change these "truths" without going to the absolute foundations of the Communist system. In fact, he has no intention of changing them, for throughout his book, Perestroika, he reaffirms his faith in Marxist-Leninist thinking. Following are some excerpts of Mr. Gorbachev's statements concerning Lenin.

We have always learned, and continue to learn, from Lenin's creative approach to the theory and practice of socialist construction. We are using his scientific methods and mastering his art of analyzing concrete situations.

As perestroika continues, we again and again study Lenin's works, especially his last.

The classics of Marxism-Leninism left us with a definition of the essential characteristics of socialism. ...

This new stage confronts us with a need to sort out many theoretical issues and established ideas of socialism, relying on Lenin's heritage and methods. Such a review is all the more important since Lenin's ideas were not always adhered to in the years after his death.¹

He also includes a letter from an admirer who states, "We young people are to continue Lenin's cause, the great cause of the Soviet people."²

The US Army Intelligence Agency's 1987 assessment of what the West should expect from the Soviet Union stated:

The precepts and principles that were formulated by Lenin more than 60 years ago have been firmly institutionalized since the official formation of the state in 1922. The West should expect that all the actions taken by the current leadership will continue to follow this pattern. To expect something else would be wishful thinking and something that has no basis in the historical record.³

What are these precepts and principles? The key principle to keep in mind is Marx's concept of the dialectic, where there is a thesis and its antithesis. Through conflict, the differences are resolved resulting in a synthesis. In terms of today's realities, the two antagonists are capitalism/imperialism and socialism. This leads to the idea of the two camp world. These two camps are in basic conflict. The capitalist camp, led by the United States, is the mortal enemy of the socialist camp, led by the Soviet Union. Imperialism, as Lenin stated, is the epitome of capitalism.⁴ The two systems are incompatible and cannot exist together as the world moves irrevocably toward socialism.

The nature of this conflict, as defined by the Communists, has changed over time. Lenin espoused the concept of the inevitability of war--a war caused by the capitalists but from which the Soviet Union

would not run. Stalin wholeheartedly indorsed this philosophy and stated, "In order to eliminate the inevitability of wars imperialism must be destroyed."⁵ The inevitability of war concept was pushed aside during the Khrushchev era, for with the advent of nuclear weapons the inevitability of war implied the destruction of mankind. However, as we saw above, Mr. Gorbachev still firmly believes in Leninist doctrine. Mr. Gorbachev may subscribe to the fact that wars are no longer inevitable. However, he certainly still believes there will be some form of conflict between capitalist and socialist states, because conflict is what advances the dialectical march of history.

In Gorbachev's report to the 27th Communist Party Congress in February 1986 he stated, "The clash and the struggle between the opposite approaches to the long-term prospects for world development have become especially complex in nature."⁶ Therefore, if, in fact, the Communists still really do hold this Leninist belief that socialism and capitalism cannot escape conflict then it makes sense for them to make every attempt to rid the world of nuclear weapons. Certainly Mr. Gorbachev, in the name of peace, appears to be doing just that. I will return to this point in Chapter III.

It is also clear in Perestroika that Gorbachev still views the world in terms of a socialist and capitalist camp and that by means of perestroika he is firmly convinced socialism will win the conflict. For example, he states

There was an opinion, for instance, that we ought to give up planned economy and sanction unemployment. We cannot permit this, however, since we aim to strengthen socialism, not replace it with a different system. What is offered to us from the West, from a different economy, is unacceptable to us. We are sure that if we really put into effect the potential of socialism, if we adhere to its basic principles, if we take fully into

consideration human interests and use the benefits of a planned economy, socialism can achieve much more than capitalism.⁷

Soviet President Gorbachev is emphatic here that socialism is superior to capitalism. He states further,

The success of perestroika will help the developing countries find ways to achieve economic and social modernization without having to make concessions to neocolonialism or throwing themselves into the cauldron of capitalism.

The success of perestroika will be the final argument in the historical dispute as to which system is more consistent with the interests of the people. Rid of the features that appeared in extreme conditions, the image of the Soviet Union will gain a new attractiveness and will become the living embodiment of the advantages that are inherent in the socialist system. The ideals of socialism will gain fresh impetus.⁸ (underlining is mine)

This statement indicates, in Mr. Gorbachev's view, the conflict or 'historical dispute' between socialism and capitalism continues, and through perestroika the Soviet Union will be revitalized and again become a vibrant springboard for socialist revolution in developing countries. It is his hope that perestroika will restore the legitimacy of Marxism-Leninism as a model for the world to follow. Later in his book, Mr. Gorbachev discusses "the decisive role" socialism plays in the world and indicates that only when the "economic positions of socialism" are strong can it contain "imperial ambitions,"⁹ i.e., the ambitions of the imperialist United States. This again provides insight into the impetus for perestroika--that to successfully continue the struggle between socialism and capitalism the Soviet Union must strengthen its economy.

Therefore, when Mr. Gorbachev discusses world interdependence, he does so in light of Marxism-Leninism which states that the East and the West have a "contradictory, i.e., irreconcilably antagonistic relationship."¹⁰ He goes much further in private by stating "the West

is the enemy with whom the USSR is involved in a relentless struggle."¹¹ Thus, from the perspective of the dialectic, which is the only perspective from which Marxist-Leninists view the world, perestroika is not a peaceful, benign attempt to only restructure the Soviet Union for its people's benefit, but rather it is the next step in the relentless struggle between socialism and capitalism. Further, it is clear the Soviets believe the socialist revolution envisioned by Marx will eventually overcome capitalism in this struggle.¹²

As Marx and Engels stated in the Communist Manifesto, the conflict leading to the historical change or synthesis to socialism and then communism takes the form of a class struggle. This class struggle takes place between the owners (the bourgeoisie) and the workers (the proletariat) and results from the fact that there is inequitable distribution of wealth with the owners as the "haves" and the workers as the "have nots." The synthesis results in a system of common ownership of the production capability of a nation (communism) with equal distribution of property and wealth. In Marx's theory this struggle would occur in capitalistic societies, i.e., societies where production capabilities were already developed but still owned by private individuals. Marx felt this was a necessary precondition for the revolution to occur and succeed. Interestingly, the Soviet Union was a backward, agrarian society when the revolution occurred. This is an important point to keep in mind; for having observed its own difficulties over the past seventy years and the problems it has had exporting socialism to other backward, agrarian-based third world countries, the Soviet Union may well look to more industrialized countries in the future for exporting revolution.

Mr. Gorbachev also points out in his book, "Lenin never believed that the road to socialism would be straight. He knew how to change slogans when life required it. And he was never a slave to resolutions once they were adopted."¹³ In the context of these words, it is within the realm of possibility that perestroika and glasnost are merely a change in slogans with socialist victory still the ultimate goal on the twisting road to world communism.

From the time of Lenin, the Soviet Union has always seen as justified its involvement in the revolutions of other countries. As reported in Kommunist, "Where such [revolutionary] forces are engaged in a struggle, they have the right to depend on our solidarity and support."¹⁴ We must not forget the words of the former Soviet Minister of Defense, Dmitri Ustinov, at the time of the invasion of Afghanistan:

Loyal to its international duty, the Soviet Union has always rendered and continues to render fraternal aid to the peoples struggling for their independence and for their revolutionary gains... It is precisely with this noble mission that limited contingents of our armed forces were sent to the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan.¹⁵

There is nothing to indicate that this is no longer the predominant view in the Soviet Union. Mikhail Gorbachev stated in his report to the 27th CPSU Congress, "Social progress is expressed in the development of the international communist and working class movement and in the growth of the new massive democratic movement of our time..."¹⁶ Under this definition of "progress", Soviet actions and Soviet involvement in the Third World have continued. For example, the Soviet Union still maintains Cuba militarily and has provided over

\$200 million worth of military supplies to Nicaragua since the U.S. Congress cut off all military aid to the Contras in February 1988.¹⁷

The Soviets determine the relative strengths of the socialist and capitalist camps via an in-depth analysis of the military, economic, political, moral, psychological, and scientific elements of power.¹⁸ This assessment of the 'international correlation of forces' is the motivation for future Soviet actions. In the past, when the correlation of forces was going against the Soviets, they have fallen back to regroup, as we shall see in subsequent sections of this chapter. This concept plays an important part in the following words spoken by Lenin:

We have the great experience of the Revolution and from this experience we have learned that it is necessary to conduct a policy of merciless onslaught when the objective conditions permit it ... but we must resort to the tactic of temporizing, the slow gathering of forces, when the objective conditions make it impossible to issue appeals for a general merciless repulse.¹⁹

Perhaps these words still ring very true in the minds of the Soviet leaders today. Perhaps they need "peace" to slowly gather forces until such time as the "objective conditions" within the Soviet Union are again right for aggressive action. In the following section we will see that the Soviet Union has indeed already gone through several cycles of "peace" and then military buildup over the last 70 years. As we saw above, Gorbachev firmly believes in the teachings of Lenin and that his perestroika will greatly enhance socialism's conflict with capitalism. Therefore, until the West has some very definitive proof that these words of the Soviet Union's founding father have been disavowed by Soviet leaders, the West must remain ever vigilant as to the true intentions of Soviet actions.

A RECURRING THEME IN SOVIET INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

To put the nature of the current Soviet threat into further perspective, one must look at Soviet history. Gorbachev's force reductions, announced in December 1988, and the restructuring of the economy are really not new phenomena. The Soviet Union has found itself in this situation before. Perestroika may merely be a more dramatic example of a recurring process. Lest one forgets what happens after a period of relaxed tensions with the Soviet Union, one need only re-examine history.

Lenin's 'Peaceful Coexistence'

As the U.S.S.R. entered the 1920s, the country found itself in an absolutely horrible state with industrial production at a standstill, the transportation system in shambles, and terrible harvests in 1920 and 1921 leading to famine and the deaths of five million people.²⁰ The Bolsheviks had not realized their hopes for the spread of the Communist revolution throughout the world as their attempts to control Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Hungary, Germany, Austria, and Italy all failed. As a result, "the Bolsheviks decided to abandon aggressive militant communism and formally adopted 'co-existence' as the official conventional policy towards the rest of the world."²¹ Afraid the economic and military might of Europe would overcome the new Soviet government, Lenin began his policy of 'peaceful coexistence.' The Bolsheviks entered into many treaties and

trade agreements in the early 1920s in order to strengthen their own security and to revitalize their industrial base. Foreign loans were a big part of this revitalization plan. In 1922, the Allied Supreme Council invited the Soviet Union to a general European conference, during which the Soviet Union called for peace and total disarmament.²² In 1924, Lenin reduced his 5 million man troop strength by 562,000.²³

In 1989, as in the early 1920s, the Soviet economy is in crisis, if not total disarray.²⁴ In addition, the Soviet Union is aggressively pursuing loans, credits, and increased trade with the West as well as technology in order to revitalize their economy. As Soviet President Gorbachev announces force reductions and continues to call for nuclear disarmament in the name of world peace, one cannot help but notice the similarities between the late 1980s and the early 1920s. Further, one of the four basic premises under which the first Five Year Plan was established was the reduction in national defense expenditures in order to promote more rapid industrialization.²⁵ In January 1989, the Soviet Union announced it will reduce defense expenditures by 14.2 percent and military production by 19.5 percent.²⁶ And as Lenin did, Soviet President Gorbachev plans to reduce his 5.2 million man troop strength by 500,000.

A recent article summarized this historical perspective as follows:

Lenin's new concept, "peaceful coexistence," which was a policy of seeking a breathing period, ... included developing correct state-to-state relations with the West, raising the level of economic interaction in order to build a modern industrial base in the Soviet Union and relegating the international class struggle to the Third World. The first Five-Year Plan and the entire effort to accelerate industrialization had as its major

aim the creation of sufficient military potential for both the defense of the single socialist state and the eventual resumption of the struggle between socialism and capitalism on a global scale.²⁷

By the end of 1939, the Soviet Union had invaded Finland and in 1940 it occupied Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Bessarabia, and Northern Bukovina. These occupations added 102,588 square miles and almost 10 million people to Soviet-held territories.²⁸ Will historians in the 21st century be able to rewrite the above quotation by merely replacing the words, "Lenin's new concept, 'peaceful coexistence,'" with the words, "Gorbachev's new concept, 'perestroika and glasnost'?" This is the question Westerners must ask themselves.

Post-WW II

Again in the 1950s the Soviet Union decreased the size of its armed forces. After World War II the Soviet Union's economy suffered greatly and it was impossible to maintain a large army.²⁹ Along with this reduction came Khrushchev's emphasis on "peaceful coexistence" and "friendship," where he sought to relax tensions by maintaining acceptable international behavior in the eyes of the West. The underlying objective of this policy was to weaken anti-Soviet defensive alliances through treaties and agreements with such countries as Turkey, Austria, and Finland and participation in international conferences like the Geneva Summit meeting in 1955 to discuss disarmament.³⁰ However, the relaxation of tensions did not give the Soviets what they wanted and soon they turned to a policy of "increased vigilance" and "military preparedness."³¹ They put down revolts in Poland and Hungary³² and by the early sixties they were

openly defying the United Nations, actively interfering in underdeveloped countries in Southeast Asia, Latin America, and Africa, with a resultant deterioration of relations with the Western powers.³³ A prime example of this change from peaceful coexistence and friendship to open confrontation was the Cuban missile crisis of 1962.

Early 1970s

In the continuing oscillation of Moscow's relations with the Western world, another period of relaxed tensions occurred in the early 1970s with Brezhnev's detente. This was again driven by a need "to buy time in order to gain the initiative."³⁴ Interestingly, in 1979 Mr. Brezhnev announced with much publicity a "unilateral withdrawal of the 10,000 Russian Sixth Tanks Guards Division from its base in Wittenberg, East Germany."³⁵ However, the Soviet force strength actually doubled in the end, for the Sixth's equipment was disbursed along the front and its headquarters was moved to Poland where it was outfitted with new equipment.³⁶ And in spite of all the detente-based words and promises of force reductions, by the end of the 1970s the world saw the Soviet Union invade and occupy Afghanistan.

Thus, there is a continuing pattern of peaceful coexistence, friendship, and detente-like policies emanating from the Soviet Union to fit its requirement to relax tensions so that it can regain the initiative. These periods occur when the Soviet Union's analysis of the trends in the correlation of forces are going against the forces of socialism and the country needs time to take whatever action is

necessary to turn the situation around. Until proven otherwise, the West must view the current restructuring occurring within the Soviet Union as just another part of this cyclical behavior. Nothing should give the West more cause to pause and reflect on recent events than Lenin's words, "History suggests that peace is a breathing space for war."³⁷

THE BASIS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF SOVIET MILITARY THOUGHT

The above premise that the Soviet Union is merely in the midst of the peaceful section of another cycle is strengthened by an analysis of the trends in technology and their impact on Soviet military thought put forth by the US Army's publication, Soviet General Doctrine for War, Volume I, and by William E. Odom. Both contend there have been three cycles in Soviet history when technological advancements have caused the Soviet General Staff to redefine military thought.

The 1920s

The first instance occurred in the early 1920s, after World War I, when the importance of airpower, chemical weapons, and automotive power became apparent.³⁸ These new technologies required a re-examination of Soviet military thought in order to determine the course of future wars. In order to ensure weapon systems based on this new technology would be available, a reduction in military expenditures became necessary in the late 1920s and early 1930s (the time frame of the first Five Year Plan) to develop the needed

technology.³⁹ This was coincident with Stalin's peaceful coexistence policy which gave the Soviet Union the needed breathing space. As a sidelight, it is noteworthy that the Soviet doctrinal thought that evolved from this rethinking turned out to be far more accurate than similar efforts in Western countries, for the Soviets recognized the importance of joint operations early on while many in the West like Douhet came to base doctrine on the total dominance of airpower in war.⁴⁰

Post-WW II

The second cycle came after World War II. The Soviet Union again found itself without the technology needed to keep up with the West. This time the advances were in nuclear weapons, rocketry, and computers.⁴¹ The Soviets documented their analysis of the impact of these new technologies on future wars and the resulting doctrine in a book, Military Strategy, written by Marshal V.D. Sokolovskiy. Again, to ensure their capability to produce modern weapons, the Soviets reduced military expenditures in the late 1940s to develop these three technologies.⁴² They also reduced conventional forces in the 1960s in order to continue development of nuclear capabilities.⁴³

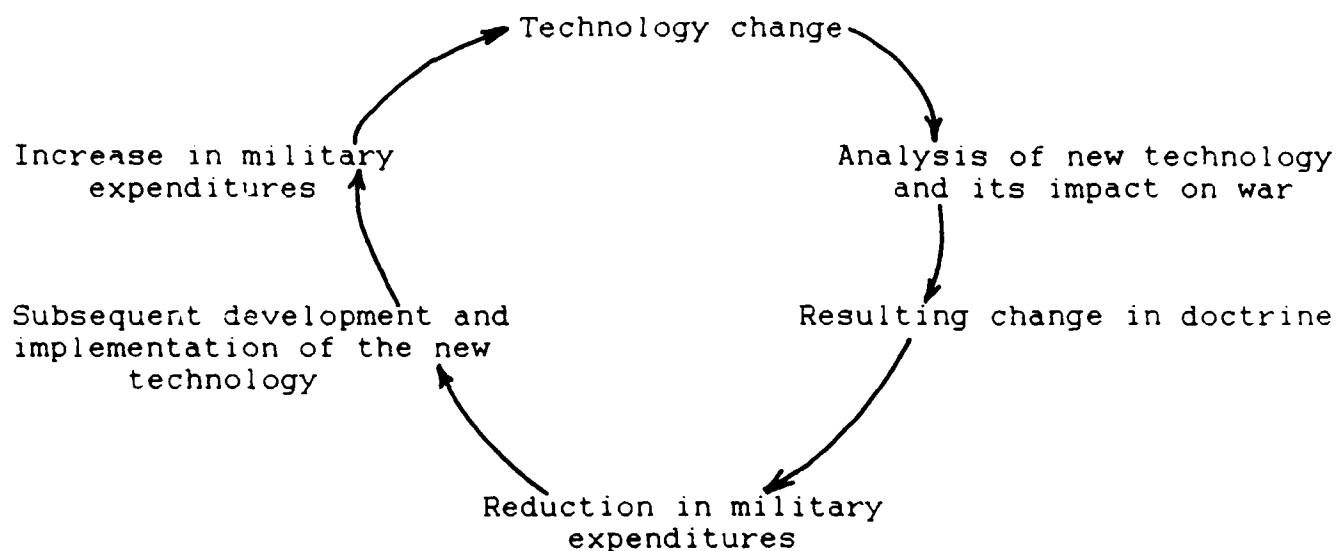
Late 1970s to Present

A third cycle began in the late 1970s. This time the emerging technologies included microcircuitry and semiconductors, laser technology, genetic engineering, and much more destructive non-nuclear weapons.⁴⁴ Once again the General Staff analyzed the impact of these

changes on the nature of war and developed a major change in military thought. However, the Soviet technological-industrial base cannot currently produce the weaponry to support the new doctrine that has emerged. In terms of the correlation of forces, the technological advantage enjoyed by the West is turning the tide against the Soviet Union. Gorbachev is all too keenly aware of this and now must find a way to strengthen his country's economy and industrial base before these new technologies can be developed and then implemented.

To do this he must again reduce military expenditures to shift resources from production to investment. We have already seen at least three examples of this. One is the INF treaty. Although there are other implications, one outcome of this treaty is a reduction in expenditures for nuclear weapons. The second example is Gorbachev's force reductions of men, tanks, artillery, and aircraft. The third example is the reduction by 14.2 percent and 19.5 percent in defense expenditures and military production, respectively, that Mr. Gorbachev announced in January 1989.⁴⁵ Such reductions in military expenditures are required in order to have the funds available to develop the new technologies needed for future military use. From the perspective of the dialectic, only after the Soviet Union has developed these recent technologies and implemented them in new weapon systems will the correlation of forces again be in favor of the socialist camp. Only then will it be possible to once more aggressively pursue the conflict between socialism and capitalism.

The cycle of doctrinal development discussed in this section can be viewed in the following figure.



While Mr. Gorbachev would like the world to view his defense expenditure reductions as large peace initiatives, it is important to put them in the historical perspective presented in this chapter. Since the Soviets have in the past used peace as "a breathing space for war" and since the Soviets have in the past reduced defense expenditures to advance their technological base only to later field more destructive weapons, it is too soon to believe Mr. Gorbachev's recent peace initiatives and reductions in defense expenditures are a major departure from past behavior.

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THE SOVIET THREAT: IS IT DECLINING?

CHAPTER III

NEW DIMENSIONS OF THE SOVIET THREAT IN EUROPE

As we have seen, there are certain basic principles of Marxist-Leninist thought which still hold true today as they did 70 years ago. In addition, the Soviet Union has gone through similar periods of economic chaos and military doctrinal change which have required reductions in military strength in order to bolster the economic and technological base.

The nature of the Soviet threat is changing. It is becoming much more subtle and no longer manifests itself in strong rhetoric and aggressive overtures toward the West. This presents a new challenge to Western leaders. They must learn to deal differently with the Soviet Union. In this chapter, I will examine several areas where I feel the United States and its European allies must remain alert as to the true intentions of the Soviet Union.

THE SOVIET ECONOMY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

In order to meet the new technological requirements of Soviet military doctrine discussed in the previous chapter, the USSR must improve its industrial base. As we will see, this is an immense undertaking and creates a new dimension to the current threat posed by the Soviet Union.

The Soviet economy and underlying industrial base are in shambles. The centralized economic system developed under Stalin has proven to be ineffective in producing a robust Soviet economy. Gorbachev acknowledges this clearly in his February 1986 report to the Communist Party Central Committee.¹ His emphasis is decentralization--putting greater control back with the people directly responsible for production. Gorbachev's glasnost has begun to reveal the true extent of the problems the Soviet economy faces. Previous Central Intelligence Agency estimates appear to have been overly optimistic.² The Soviet Union for the first time has admitted budget deficits and the existence of inflation in its economy. The Soviet economy could be "barely a third the size of [the United States] and would put Soviet per capita output at just over a quarter the American level," and yet up to one-quarter of the Soviet Gross National Product (GNP) is used on defense spending.³ This suggests an economy totally dedicated to military means at the expense of its people's welfare. As Professor C.N. Donnelly has stated, the Soviet Union does not 'have' a war machine; it 'is' a war machine with the entire society oriented toward defense.

In order to highlight the socio-economic problems facing the Soviet Union, some facts about this country and its economy are presented below.⁴

- a. The Soviet Union ranks 50th in the world in infant mortality.
- b. It ranks 32nd in the world for life expectancy.
- c. The Soviet Union spends between \$25 and \$105 per year per person on health care compared to about \$2,000 in the United States.

d. About half of the schools have no central heating, running water, or sewage system.

e. The Rector of Moscow State University recently stated science has essentially been neglected in the Soviet Union with little done to promote development of technology.

f. Soviet workers do not understand the concept of quality control. The limited number of consumer goods produced in the Soviet Union are notorious for their terrible quality. For example, exploding television sets account for 60 percent of all apartment fires in Moscow.

g. The industrial system is based on production quotas. This requires large surges to meet the targets with no attention paid to quality control.

h. Computer technology is severely limited and the country has no base from which to develop and quickly catch up to the West. Telephone circuits cannot transmit computer information.

In addition, the Soviet grain harvest of 195 million tons for 1988 was the worst since 1985 and fell 40 million tons short of the goal.⁵ This will hurt the Soviet economy further since the country now must import grain from the West using hard currency which Mr. Gorbachev sorely needs for rebuilding his country's industrial base.

Gorbachev has acknowledged the Soviet economy is far worse off than originally thought and has convinced his countrymen the only way out of this debacle is to restructure the party system and economy. This will be a long-term effort and one that will not likely be accomplished by the end of this century. During the pre-Gorbachev

years, the Soviet system developed extreme inflexibility, with strong centralization resulting in little initiative and each level of management looking to higher authority for direction. The inertia of this centrally managed economy will make it extremely difficult to decentralize as Mr. Gorbachev wants.

Considering the weakness of the Soviet economy, the restructuring that the Soviet Union is currently undergoing takes on a much more desperate character. Perestroika is a matter of survival. Without it the Soviet Union cannot hope to compete technologically with the West and fulfill the requirements of the new military doctrine. This situation presents a real challenge for the West to determine how to respond to the Soviet Union's requests for credits and technology. This is one of the new dimensions of the Soviet threat.

Clearly, Mr. Gorbachev's overtures of increased cooperation and peace are designed to enhance economic relations with the West in order to achieve the goals of restructuring the Soviet economy. The Soviet Union requires a major infusion of capital. Thus, under his policy of perestroika, Gorbachev is looking to the West for loans and credits. In October 1988, West Germany, Italy, Great Britain, and France began to help by providing credit lines of \$1.8 billion, \$775 million, \$1.8 billion, and \$2 billion, respectively.⁶ The Soviet Union also wants to increase trade with the West along with this increased economic aid. In June 1988, the Soviet Union's economic body, COMECON, established relations with the European Community. The Soviet Union is also interested in membership in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and is pursuing relations with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.⁷

Western economic aid and credits to the Soviet Union are a matter of critical importance in terms of analyzing the changing nature of the Soviet threat. Richard Pipes states that many groups in the West still believe the civilian and military components of the Soviet system are separate as they are in the West.⁸ The underlying assumption is that economic aid to the civilian sector has no influence on the military sector. However, nothing could be further from the truth. For example, since the 1920s the State Planning Commission has had representation from the General Staff.⁹ This military contingent has had a significant role in the decisions of this commission. Thus, all economic and technological assistance has a direct positive impact on military capabilities.¹⁰ In support of Pipe's view, a Soviet emigre economist has provided an even more alarming perspective on the West's relationship to the Soviet economy. He stated that

imports and loans from the West play a far more important role in the Soviet economy than most observers seemed to understand. The Soviet financial system permits Moscow to plug a huge hole in its budget through hard currency transactions--meaning, in effect, that trade with the West directly empowers the Soviet state.¹¹

Seeking economic credits and trade with the West, along with the reductions in military spending, combine to increase the capital the Soviet Union can expend on modernizing its industrial and technological base. As discussed in Chapter II, the military establishment has, in the past, accepted reductions in force in order to achieve a long-term improvement in military-technological capability. Having gone through a re-analysis of Soviet military doctrine in light of new and emerging technologies, along with a realization of the current inability of the Soviet economy to support

the requirements of that doctrine, the military has again come to accept the necessity of a cutback in military spending. The question is how long it will take to see a substantial change in the Soviet economy. Leonid Abalkin, a leading Soviet economist, indicated recently that latest projections put the year 1995 as the earliest the Soviet people will see their lives better off than before.¹² It could very well be longer than that--perhaps into the 21st century. Thus, the military must be willing to accept a smaller force structure today so it can have the latest in destructive weapons 15 to 20 years from now. Therefore, a force reduction like the one Mr. Gorbachev announced in December should be no surprise in light of the pressing need to find capital to develop and field new technologies.

Considering the length of time this restructuring process will take, the Soviet Union's peaceful overtures toward the West could very well continue for many years to come. Herein lies the real challenge to the West. As we will see in the next section, the will of the Western population to support defense spending is eroding with the perception of a lessening threat. If the West succumbs to twenty years of neglect in military preparedness, there could be disastrous results when the Soviet military emerges from this period of perestroika much stronger and more technologically advanced. Since it is still too soon to correctly assess Mr. Gorbachev's true intentions, the United States and its European allies must carefully analyze the ramifications of all economic aid and trade provided to the Soviet Union.

THREATS TO NATO STABILITY

The Soviet Union has long had the strategic goal of destabilizing the NATO alliance. Lenin taught the Soviets to critically analyze enemy alliances and wherever they found a weakness to exploit it.¹³ In addition, Lenin indicated that in the interest of expediency the Soviet Union should form alliances even with the capitalists as it did during World War II. Therefore, until proven otherwise, the NATO Alliance should continue to assume that the Soviet Union wants to see its demise and that any alliance, economic or otherwise, proposed by the Soviets is merely part of a self-serving long-range strategic plan. What basis does the West have to assume otherwise?

This section will explore four areas where current Soviet actions threaten the stability of NATO: the will of the people to support defense, attempts to separate the United States from Western Europe, denuclearization of Europe, and the proposed unilateral Soviet force reductions.

The Will of the People to Support Defense

The Vietnam War provided the United States a tremendously important lesson on how important the will of the people is to the success of this country's defense posture. Michael Handel wrote that "the key to victory is not on the battle field but in the enemy's capital. ... that the best way to achieve [the enemy's] goals is by an appeal to American public opinion."¹⁴ These lessons have not been

lost on Mikhail Gorbachev. His amazing pronouncements, along with perestroika and glasnost, are seriously and quickly eroding the will of the people of the United States and the will of the people of Western Europe to maintain a strong defense against the Soviet Union. The public seems to view perestroika and glasnost not only as a significant break from the past but also as a sign the Soviets no longer have any strategic designs for the rest of the world. It is far too early to assess whether Gorbachev's statements are truly based in fact or are part of a tremendously complex and long-range strategic deception. Therefore, it is far too early to let down our guard and to begin cutting defense expenditures to fund other areas.

The Soviet threat takes on a new, subtle, and therefore very dangerous form in the context of national will. Mikhail Gorbachev is a cunning master of playing to the world's desire for a lessening of tension and desire for peace. One can only gasp in amazement at statements like he made at the United Nations in December 1988 when he stated that military force no longer "can or must be an instrument of foreign policy."¹⁵ Statements like these along with newspaper headlines like, "Thatcher Says Cold War Has Come to an End: Premier Calls for Support of Gorbachev,"¹⁶ lead the average citizen in the West to believe the Soviet threat is truly going away. While the British Prime Minister is still very much aware of the threat the Soviet Union poses, the news media captured her statement concerning the end of the Cold War, made it into a headline, and further supported Gorbachev's goal of lessening the threat in the eyes of the Western public.

The unilateral force reductions announced by Gorbachev in his UN speech attack Western public support for continued high levels of defense spending. Even if those reductions are made, the Warsaw Pact will still have a two-to-one advantage in tanks, armored personnel and artillery pieces. Nevertheless, Mr. Gorbachev has achieved the desired result of a perception of a reduced threat. This announcement along with other events like the signing of the INF Treaty, continue to increase this perception.

A large majority of West Germans no longer perceive Moscow as a threat, according to recent polls.¹⁷ The NATO alliance has already begun to see the results of this perception, with increasing West German criticism levelled at Army training in their country. This criticism may soon result in a decrease of NATO training activities with a resultant decrease in military readiness.¹⁸ The very strength of our defense in NATO is based on the fact our units are extremely well trained. Brent Scowcroft, President Bush's national security advisor recently stated, "I also think [Gorbachev is] interested in making trouble within the western alliance and I think he believes the best way to do it is a peace offensive, rather than to bluster the way some of his predecessors have."¹⁹

Maybe the threat is less than it once was, but, again, it is far too early to tell. The danger here is that once the people of a country no longer perceive a threat, they will no longer have the will to support the military force that exists to deter that threat. Couple this with the budget problems within the United States, requiring a cutback of real growth in defense spending, and one can

see the potential impact of the subtle, changing nature of the threat posed by the Soviet Union.

"Europe is Our Common Home"

In the fall of 1988, four West European leaders from West Germany, Austria, Italy, and France visited the Soviet Union.²⁰ Mr. Gorbachev was fairly successful in portraying the Soviet Union as a good neighbor that need not be feared. This is all part of Mr. Gorbachev's skillful plan to identify the Soviet Union with Europe in the hearts and minds of the Europeans. The added benefit to Mr. Gorbachev is that such meetings help to drive a wedge between the European NATO countries and the United States.

One section in Mr. Gorbachev's book Perestroika is entitled "Europe is our Common Home." He states, "Russia's trade, cultural and political links with other European nations and states have deep roots in history. We are Europeans."²¹ Stressing the positive impact Russians have had on European history, Mr. Gorbachev wants West Europe to view the Soviet Union as part of Europe. The implication is that while the Soviet Union is European, the United States is not. He directly challenges the NATO alliance when he writes, "The concept of a 'common European home' suggests above all a degree of integrity, even if its states belong to different social systems and opposing military-political alliances. It combines necessity with opportunity."²² Like the old adage "blood runs thicker than water", Mr. Gorbachev's statements seem to be saying, "being European runs thicker than the NATO Alliance."

He writes derogatorily about the United States' relationship with Europe.

Sometimes ... one has the impression that the independent policies of West European nations have been abducted, that they are being carried off across the ocean; that national interests are farmed out under the pretext of protecting security. A serious threat is hovering over European culture too. The threat emanates from an onslaught of "mass culture" from across the Atlantic.²³

He also writes,

It is regrettable that the governments of the NATO countries, including those who in words dissociate themselves from the dangerous extremes of American policy, eventually yield to pressure thereby assuming responsibility for the escalation in the arms race and in international tension.²⁴

These kinds of statements are a common theme with Mr. Gorbachev. For example, in his report to the 27th CPSU Congress, he derided the United States when talking about "the three main centres of present-day imperialism--the United States, Western Europe, and Japan ..."²⁵ He stated,

But how are the three centres of modern-day imperialism to share one roof if the Americans themselves, manipulating the dollar and the interest rate, are not loath to fatten their economy at the expense of Western Europe and Japan? [Coordinated positions are] more often than not the effect of American pressure or outright dictation, and work in the interests and aims above all of the United States. ... For the first time, governments of some West European countries ... and the public at large have begun to openly discuss whether present U.S. policy coincides with Western Europe's notions about its own security and whether the United States is going too far in its claim to leadership. ... Washington should not expect unquestioning obedience to U.S. dictations on the part of its allies and competitors, and especially so to the detriment of their own interests."²⁶

All of the above statements seem to make full use of Lenin's teaching to exploit the smallest cracks in the enemy's alliances, and I am sure these themes come up when Mr. Gorbachev speaks to visiting European leaders.

Surely Mr. Gorbachev looks on with great delight as the 12 nations of the European Community move toward the removal of all trade barriers by 1992. With a combined \$250 billion economy, Europe's economic muscle will increase dramatically,²⁷ making Europe less dependent on the United States.

Since the late 1940s the Soviet Union has had the strategic objective of removing the United States from Europe. Through rhetoric that plays on West European emotions, Mr. Gorbachev attempts to divide the United States and its NATO allies. To guard against these subtle attempts all NATO countries must recognize that their own perspectives of the world and specifically of the Soviet Union may, in fact, differ from their other allies but that only through their unity of purpose can NATO serve as an effective deterrent to the possibility of future Soviet aggression.

Denuclearization of Europe

The Soviet threat has taken on an entirely new dimension with the very definitive statements made by Mikhail Gorbachev on nuclear weapons. In both his statements to the 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) Central Committee and in his book Perestroika, Mikhail Gorbachev has clearly stated his desire to see nuclear weapons eliminated.²⁸ He has also denounced nuclear deterrence stating that the mere existence of nuclear weapons presents a risk of war.²⁹ As we shall see, not only does the removal of nuclear weapons strengthen the correlation of forces in the Soviet Union's favor, but it also makes a naive world view it as the peace

maker and the U.S., with its continued reliance on nuclear deterrence and resulting need for nuclear weapons, as the aggressor.

The Soviets regard the West's overriding strength to be the NATO alliance. The primary thrust of this alliance is its strategy of flexible response, which includes a direct link to the strategic nuclear arsenal of the United States. The nuclear umbrella provided by the United States to Western Europe is feared greatly by the Soviets as the one aspect of Western military power that could easily inflict great damage on their homeland. If the Soviets could remove nuclear forces from the correlation of forces equation, they would certainly gain an advantage considering their superiority in conventional forces. In addition, they would have more capital to spend on stimulating their economy.

Wettig provides further insight into the Soviet desire to rid the world of nuclear weapons when he states Lenin's belief and subsequent Soviet following of that belief that someday war might present the possibility of annihilation of mankind.³⁰ Certainly nuclear weapons could bring this prophecy to fruition. Since the Soviets hold the unshakable belief that the struggle between socialism and capitalism will continue (until socialism wins), as long as use of nuclear weapons is a possibility, this struggle runs the risk of unleashing them. Therefore, not until nuclear weapons are totally eliminated can the Soviet Union again use their conventional forces as an effective instrument of political and military power.

Why, after so many years of negotiations on the INF Treaty, did the Soviets finally agree to the original "going in" position of the United States? The answer might be that they finally saw this treaty

as providing the first real opportunity to reduce NATO's reliance on the United States and its nuclear strength. If Moscow succeeds in removing nuclear weapons from consideration, the Soviet Union could become much more willing to risk war in Europe, since the threat of a nuclear strike on its homeland would no longer be possible. It could then take the stance of intimidating Western Europe into accepting their positions. In addition, since Pershing missiles and ground-launched cruise missiles could hit their homeland, the Soviets viewed them as strategic. Therefore, their response to an attack by these weapons would have been to hit a U.S. target. Removal of these weapons takes a link out of the flexible response chain, reducing the U.S. nuclear presence in Europe and European dependence on the U.S.

How can Gorbachev achieve this goal of denuclearization? By lessening the perception of the Soviet threat in the West, the political will of the American and West European people to support a strong defense is weakened. By continuing to issue statements that point up the irrationality of maintaining nuclear weapons, that describe nuclear deterrence as a flawed concept, and that indicate world peace is a real possibility with the elimination of nuclear weapons, Gorbachev can gradually mold world opinion to look on those who would persist in keeping these weapons of massive destruction as the true aggressors. This is an example of how the Soviet Union could very well be working to advance the correlation of forces by using Richard Pipes' concept of "peace as a form of warfare."³¹ Eventually world opinion and U.S. public opinion could bring about total nuclear arms reductions. Elimination of nuclear weapons and the threat of nuclear war is certainly a very worthwhile goal. However, as long as

the Soviet Union has such superiority in conventional forces, it is not possible to really believe the Soviet threat is dissolving.

One other point to keep in mind is that even though the Soviets no longer talk about the feasibility of winning a nuclear war, they still have a large commitment to not only deploying nuclear weapons like the road mobile SS-25 ICBM and the rail-based SS-24 ICBM,³² but also to ensuring their own survivability in a nuclear war through hardened command, control, and communications facilities and large-scale spending on civil defense.³³ Again, Soviet rhetoric must be considered just that until it is backed up by corresponding action.

Reduction in Soviet forces

Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev announced on 7 December 1988 that the Soviet Union would reduce Soviet troop strength by 500,000 men and reduce equipment by 10,000 tanks, 8,500 artillery pieces, and 800 combat aircraft, including removal of 50,000 troops and 5,000 tanks from Eastern Europe.³⁴

While Mr. Gorbachev would like the world to view this unilateral cut in Soviet forces as another grand overture toward world peace, the West must carefully analyze what it really means. First, what troops and equipment will the Soviets actually reduce? One view is that the Soviet Union would have had to cut troop strength anyway because it already is experiencing an annual half million shortfall in its conscription system.³⁵ Another view is that they can merely take 500,000 men out of the military system and put them into the civilian work force but still keep them working on military projects.³⁶ As far as the elimination of 10,000 tanks goes, the Soviet Union has close to

20,000 tanks built during the 1950s. By eliminating these antiquated tanks, the Soviets could actually improve their combat capabilities since they could reduce their need for old spare parts and reduce the training requirements for maintaining many different types of tanks.³⁷ Soviets are indicating the tanks they will destroy are, in fact, the newest T-72s and T-80s. However, even if this is true, the Soviets make tanks at the rate of about 5,000 per year. Therefore, a 10,000 tank reduction over two years would not result in a reduction in tank capability but merely no growth. This is hardly a large peace overture.

Second, since this is a unilateral reduction and not part of an agreement, there will be no verification by the West; and since "keeping track of manpower is perhaps the most difficult verification problem in all of arms control,"³⁸ the West will have difficulty determining if, how, and where the troop cuts are taken.

Third, even after these reductions, the Soviets will still have a two-to-one advantage over NATO in troops, tanks, artillery, and combat aircraft.³⁹

Fourth, if, in fact, Mr. Gorbachev is looking for ways to destabilize the NATO alliance, he has found success with this announcement in two ways. First, he built on the growing perception among the average Western citizen that the Soviet threat is diminishing and that peace could very well be at hand. This public perception relates directly with their willingness to support defense spending. Second, prior to Gorbachev's U.N. speech, the West German government had indicated its willingness to support Great Britain and the United States in its pursuit of modernizing NATO's tactical

nuclear weapons with the follow-on to Lance program. However, after the speech NATO foreign ministers began to question the need for the follow-on to Lance program and to wonder how they would ever be able to convince their countrymen of that need.⁴⁰ Such political dilemmas are becoming increasingly common for NATO as Mr. Gorbachev continues to present such imaginative and ingenious proposals.

Fifth, Soviet troop withdrawals from Eastern Europe will bring increasing calls for similar reductions of U.S. troops in Western Europe. Such a reduction has a far greater impact on NATO's war readiness than a similar reduction in Soviet forces, for the Soviet lines of communication to Eastern Europe are internal while those of the United States to Western Europe are over air and sea lanes. In addition, considering today's economic climate which is requiring reduced defense spending, any U.S. troop strength removed from Europe would result in reduced force structure, making it even more difficult to mobilize for war.

Thus, this force reduction makes the Soviet Union a winner in several ways. It helps to destabilize NATO; it gets rid of the lower end of the force structure; it saves money for the Soviet economy; and it still allows the Soviet Union to maintain the offensive advantage. In addition, Mr. Gorbachev comes away looking like a peace maker.

As already discussed, these cuts in troop strength and equipment are minimal and may, in fact, increase overall Soviet capability. In addition, the political impact of these announced cuts has been tremendous. Again, Mr. Gorbachev has shown he can expertly control the agenda of East-West relations, for again he has gone on the peace

offensive in the eyes of the world with Western leaders befuddled as to how to respond.

ONE POSSIBLE OUTCOME

In the section above, entitled 'Europe is Our Common Home,' the words used by Mr. Gorbachev to describe the United States as a menace to the well-being of Europe do not sound like the words of a man content with the United States' presence in Europe. As noted in that section, the Soviet Union has had the goal of removing the United States from Europe since 1949. The other recent Soviet actions discussed above could all be interpreted as actions intended to reduce United States' influence on Europe with the eventual long-term goal of removing United States troops from European soil. The INF treaty is already reducing the United States nuclear presence in Europe. Gorbachev's announced unilateral reduction of Soviet troops, the Soviet Union's withdrawal from Afghanistan, and the INF treaty all give the impression of a strong peace-making role on the part of the Soviet Union. This in turn reduces the resolve of NATO countries to maintain a strong United States presence in Europe to defend against the supposedly diminished, or even non-existent, threat.

If the United States presence in Europe were reduced or totally removed, the Soviet Union would be able to exert much greater indirect control over Western Europe. As General Galvin, SACEUR, stated,

My principle concern is that Soviet numerical superiority in the conventional field will lead the Kremlin to be more aggressive in its relations with the West and more willing to take risks. And should the military balance erode further--and the trends have not been heartening--NATO's members might become susceptible to coercion or intimidation. If this were to happen, Moscow would

be able to circumscribe the freedoms Western Europe has spent centuries developing and preserving.⁴¹

The possible Soviet coercion and intimidation of Western Europe addressed above would result in the indirect control Handel discusses.⁴² The Soviet Union has direct control over the Warsaw Pact countries. As such, the Soviet Union also has a responsibility to support the Warsaw Pact countries when the need arises or else it faces the serious political consequences associated with the failure of the Polish economy, for example. On the other hand, indirect control of Western Europe would result in the benefits associated with closer economic ties but no responsibility to bail out a Western European economy if it needed help.

A Soviet umbrella over Western Europe would dramatically change the balance of power in the world or the Soviet concept of correlation of forces. According to the McKinder thesis, the country that controls the Eurasian land mass controls the world. With the United States military presence removed from Europe, the Soviet Union would then be in an excellent position to indirectly control West European actions. Not only might West Europeans succumb to the intimidation of the militarily strong Soviet Union, but they already have a natural proclivity to want to maintain a closer relationship to the Soviet Union than most Americans might desire to believe. As Bialer stated,

Western European attitudes toward the Soviet Union are in many respects at odds with those of the United States. The European tradition of realpolitik, so different from the American preoccupation with moral issues, as well as Europe's close proximity to the Soviet Union and exposure to the brunt of Soviet military power, produces in Western Europe a less belligerent, less moralistic and, indeed, a more accommodating attitude.⁴³

It is conceivable that if the American presence in Western Europe were significantly reduced, we would see West European governments move

much more emphatically toward accommodating the Soviet Union. Bialer goes on to state, "the American and West European, particularly West German, policies within the alliance have become more independent than ever."⁴⁴

This situation is certainly one that Mr. Gorbachev can capitalize on in his attempts to reduce United States influence in Europe. With a reduced United States presence in Europe and with greatly increased economic ties between Europe and the Soviet Union, the Soviet Union would be in a much better position to use indirect control to gain West European acceptance of its policies.

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THE SOVIET THREAT: IS IT DECLINING?

CHAPTER IV

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The Soviet Union is still the primary threat to the United States' national security interests. Until Soviet President and General Secretary Gorbachev's stated intentions are backed up by corresponding actions, the West must continue to be both vigilant and diligent in providing the defense posture necessary to deter war. In addition, we must actively pursue new initiatives to respond to the changing order we are observing in the Soviet Union. This chapter will present some recommendations and conclusions related to the changing nature of the Soviet threat.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Before the Bush administration has any kind of summit meeting with the Soviet Union, it is advisable that it first have direct and intense discussions with the NATO allies in order to reevaluate and develop a new, common strategy for dealing with the Soviet Union. This action must play a major part in the administration's development of the United States' national security strategy. Only through this common strategy can the Western countries present a united front to the changing nature of Soviet foreign and domestic policy. As we have

seen, Mr. Gorbachev makes a sweeping proposal, e.g., his unilateral force reduction, and NATO is left wondering how to respond.

In addition, it is extremely important for the bond between the United States and Western Europe to remain strong. Deterrence is based on the Soviet Union's perception of NATO's resolve to commit conventional and nuclear forces when required. The health of the NATO alliance can be greatly enhanced if the U.S. continues to consult its allies on these important foreign policy matters and does not make them feel like we are developing a Soviet policy without their input. This will also establish the right environment within the alliance to hopefully ensure our European allies do not unilaterally negotiate with Moscow without consulting the United States. NATO must guard against the implications of each country pursuing an independent policy with the Soviet Union and remember that Lenin encouraged alliances, even with capitalists, in the name of expediency. The Soviet Union is eager to make agreements with individual countries, for it knows such actions would help to fractionalize the NATO alliance.

There are several areas which must be specifically addressed as the NATO alliance reevaluates its common approach to the Soviet Union.

a. As discussed in Chapter III, Western countries have been providing financial credits to the Soviet Union. With the view that hard currency transactions provide tremendous relief to the strained Soviet budget, the West must carefully analyze the impact of these actions and not provide such assistance without some political gain. The same is true for grain sales to the Soviet Union. This is the Kissinger concept of "linkage." As Michael S. Brown stated, in order

for an economic strategy to be successful it must be integrated with the political, military and psychological elements of power.¹ William Odom emphasizes this concept when he states the political-military component of East-West relations must become linked with the economic component or the West will deny itself a large security advantage.² The Soviet Union's current retrenchment has been mainly driven by the deteriorating state of its economy and its inability to field new technologies. Therefore, the common strategy, developed by the U.S. and its NATO allies, must address how the tremendous economic power they wield can best be used to attain NATO's strategic objectives.

b. Mr. Gorbachev has been on the peace offensive with his talk of nuclear arms control and unilateral force reductions. He has left the West on the defensive trying to figure out how to respond. The West must regain the initiative by developing a strategy that will not only further our objectives but will also ensure the world understands we, too, have peace as a goal. Bold initiatives are required.

2. The United States and its NATO allies must not make any offer for a reciprocal unilateral reduction in force. First, as discussed in Chapter III, Mr. Gorbachev's reductions do not really lessen the Soviet Union's capability to wage war and may, in fact, enhance it. On the other hand, a U.S. force reduction would certainly lessen NATO's ability to counter a Soviet offensive, especially considering the time it would take to redeploy troops to Europe. Second, the NATO alliance would probably never recover from the impact such a reduction would have on Europeans. The perception would be that the only reason the Americans were leaving was because the threat truly had diminished to the point the current troop strength no longer had to be

maintained. The European countries' national will, which is already being tested, would no longer support the expenditures necessary for an adequate military defense. Third, even if Mr. Gorbachev's intentions are as he would have us believe, to reduce our force structure at this point in time would be totally premature considering the opposition he must overcome within his own country. His "staying power" may not be sufficient to overcome this opposition at which point the West would be faced with the possibility of a return to an outwardly aggressive Soviet Union. Thus, any troop reductions must be tied to bilateral arms reductions.

3. The Bush Administration, along with our NATO allies, would be advised to mount a massive public education program to maintain the public's resolve to support a strong defense posture. The thrust of this effort must be to ensure the public understands the nature of the Soviet threat. Lessons from history, like the ones presented in this paper, must be brought to the public's attention. At the same time such an education program could clearly identify, for both the public's and the Soviet Union's benefit, what evidence the West requires in order to truly believe Mr. Gorbachev's stated intentions. There is great risk in this endeavor, since any attempt to espouse the point of view there is still a Soviet threat, in the face of Mr. Gorbachev's seemingly peaceful stance, could very easily make the United States look like the aggressor. Nevertheless, it is far too soon to make an accurate assessment that the Soviet Union has thrown its old doctrine of world domination aside. Therefore, if we do not maintain the U.S. and European national will to support a strong defense, the West may not be able to recover if its force structure is

reduced while the Soviet Union maintains its historical objective of world domination.

4. NATO military readiness must be maintained. There must not be any diminution of NATO's program to modernize its remaining nuclear force- and its conventional forces. Negotiations with the Soviet Union can only come from a position of strength. Readiness also requires training. The current trend to reduce training in NATO must be reversed to ensure our troops are ready if the need arises.

CONCLUSIONS

Never before has there been such an opportunity for a dramatic improvement in the international environment. The United States must take advantage of this opportunity while at the same time maintain its military strength in the eventuality overt Soviet aggression resumes.

The real challenge for all Western countries is to determine what to believe from all the amazing pronouncements emanating from the Soviet Union. If perestroika and glasnost exist only to benefit the Soviet people and are not part of a sophisticated Soviet deception, then the United States' policies for the last 40 years have been a success. If this is the case, the West has a lot of "new thinking" of its own to do, for this would be a major turning point in world history. On the other hand, if Mr. Gorbachev is, in fact, pulling off the best disinformation campaign in recent history, the West also has a lot of "new thinking" to do, for Mr. Gorbachev's new approach toward international relations requires not only a well thought-out response

from the West but also an entirely revamped strategy in order to regain the initiative.

If Mr. Gorbachev has truly given up the idea of a world dominated by Communism, the threat still exists from within the Soviet Union that the true ideologues will regain the initiative and resume control, possibly throwing the world back into the darkest days of the Cold War. If he has not given up this idea, then the threat remains but in a more subtle and altered form. In either case the Soviet Union still poses a grave threat to the national security interests of the United States.

The only thing that is for sure at this time is that the level of uncertainty is extremely high. It is far too early to believe Mr. Gorbachev's intentions are as he would have us believe until some very positive actions result. Therefore, the West must not let down its guard. What a challenge this presents when every outward indication to the world at large is that the Soviet Union is truly on the road to peace. However, as Richard Pipes has indicated, the Soviets are masters at using peace as a form of warfare.

Unless the Soviet economy is improved, the Soviet Union runs the very real risk of becoming a second-rate world power, falling far behind the United States both economically and technologically. The revised Soviet military doctrine requires the latest advances in technology. Without a strong economy and a modernized technological base, the Soviet Union cannot hope to compete with the West--economically or militarily. Therefore, the Soviet Union desperately needs a period of relaxed tensions in order to retrench. It is Mr. Gorbachev's plan that perestroika will provide the systemic strength

which will once again make the Soviet Union the model for all countries to follow. This retrenchment could take 10 to 20 years or more. However, once accomplished, the Soviet Union will emerge strengthened and very possibly ready to resume the inevitable struggle which it believes will lead to a world dominated by Communism.

My concern and the conclusion I draw from the material presented in this paper is that Mr. Gorbachev's actions are driven solely by the desperate state of the Soviet Union's economy and its inability to effectively implement the next advancement in military technology. In addition, the evidence indicates the Soviets have not changed their long-held strategy to reduce and eventually eliminate the United States' presence in Europe. With this accomplished, the 'historical dispute' between capitalism and socialism on the European continent can begin again in earnest. Therefore, my current assessment based on history, the impact of technology on the development of Soviet military thought, and Soviet intentions toward Western Europe and NATO is that the Soviet threat has not lessened but has merely taken on a more subtle form. As a result, Western nations must continue to approach the Soviet Union from a position of military strength.

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