

Reinterpreting the End of the Cold War

Issues, interpretations, periodizations

**Edited by
Silvio Pons
and
Federico Romero**



FRANK CASS
LONDON • NEW YORK

**Also available as a printed book
see title verso for ISBN details**

Reinterpreting the end of the Cold War

The history of the Cold War is being re-written according to the newly available sources. But first and foremost, it needs to be re-conceptualized and framed within the broader historical context that transformed the Cold War from the 1960s onwards, altered the very dynamics of bipolarism, and eventually brought it to its end. The long duration and the unexpectedly peaceful ending of the Cold War call for new viewpoints that transcend the established paradigms about its inception. Historians ought to address all those transformations in the international economy, in the networks of interdependence linking together new areas – especially in Asia – and in the ensuing cultural images that gradually narrowed the relevance of bipolarism. Thus the habitual diplomatic and security themes must be enjoined with economic, ideological, technological and cultural ones.

Here a distinguished group of international history specialists discuss the complex relationship between Cold War dynamics, the globalizing of capitalism, and the demise of Soviet Communism. Their controversial and conflicting views, as well as their multidisciplinary approaches, highlight the various factors that constituted (and did not constitute) the Cold War. Thus they help to redefine the concept itself, to map its values and limitations, and to propel historical debate onto new grounds.

Silvio Pons is Professor of East European History at Rome University ‘Tor Vergata’ (Rome II) and the Director of the Gramsci Foundation, Rome. He is the author of *Stalin and the Inevitable War 1936–1941* (London, Frank Cass, 2002) and has edited the Italian edition of Georgi Dimitrov’s *Diary* (Torino, Einaudi, 2002). He is currently working on Eurocommunism and détente.

Federico Romero is Professor of United States History at the University of Florence. He has published extensively on US–European relations in the twentieth century and he is preparing a general history of the Cold War.

Cass Series: Cold War history

Series editors: Odd Arne Westad and Michael Cox

In the new history of the Cold War that has been forming since 1989, many of the established truths about the international conflict that shaped the latter half of the twentieth century have come up for revision. The present series is an attempt to make available interpretations and materials that will help further the development of this new history, and it will concentrate in particular on publishing expositions of key historical issues and critical surveys of newly available sources.

1 Reviewing the Cold War

Approaches, interpretations, and theory

Edited by Odd Arne Westad

2 Rethinking Theory and History in the Cold War

Richard Saull

3 British and American Anticommunism before the Cold War

Edited by Marrku Ruotsila

4 Europe, Cold War and Co-existence, 1953–1965

Edited by Wilfred Loth

5 The Last Decade of the Cold War

From conflict escalation to conflict transformation

Edited by Olav Njølstad

6 Reinterpreting the End of the Cold War

Issues, interpretations, periodizations

Edited by Silvio Pons and Federico Romero

7 Across the Blocs

Cold War cultural and social history

Edited by Rana Mitter and Patrick Major

Reinterpreting the End of the Cold War

Issues, interpretations, periodizations

**Edited by
Silvio Pons
and
Federico Romero**



FRANK CASS
LONDON • NEW YORK

First published 2005

by Frank Cass

2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon,
Oxon OX14 4RN

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada

by Routledge

270 Madison Ave, New York, NY 10016

This edition published in the Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2004.

Frank Cass is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group

© 2005 Silvio Pons and Federico Romero

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilized in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

The publisher makes no representation, express or implied, with regard to the accuracy of the information contained in this book and cannot accept any legal responsibility or liability for any errors or omissions that may be made.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

A catalog record for this book has been requested

ISBN 0-203-00609-7 Master e-book ISBN

ISBN 0-714-65600-3 (hbk)

ISBN 0-714-68492-9 (pbk)

Contents

Notes on contributors

vii

Introduction

1

SILVIO PONS AND FEDERICO ROMERO

PART I

Long duration, globalization and the changing frame of the Cold War

11

1 The Cold War as an era of imperial rivalry

13

CHARLES S. MAIER

2 Power, politics, and the long duration of the Cold War

21

MARK KRAMER

3 *On recule pour mieux sauter*, or ‘What needs to be done’ (to understand the 1970s)

39

LEOPOLDO NUTI

4 The Cold War considered as a US project

52

ANDERS STEPHANSON

5 Beginnings of the end: how the Cold War crumbled

68

ODD ARNE WESTAD

6 Karol Wojtyła and the end of the Cold War

82

AGOSTINO GIOVAGNOLI

PART II

**The end of the Cold War and the downfall of
Soviet communism 91**

**7 Economic information in the life and death of the
Soviet command system 93**

MARK HARRISON

**8 Ideas and the end of the Cold War: rethinking
intellectual and political change 116**

ROBERT ENGLISH

**9 Unwrapping an enigma: Soviet elites, Gorbachev and
the end of the Cold War 137**

VLADISLAV M. ZUBOK

10 1989: history *is* rewritten 165

JONATHAN HASLAM

11 Gorbachev and the demise of east European communism 179

MARK KRAMER

12 The end of Soviet communism: a review 201

FRANCESCO BENVENUTI AND SILVIO PONS

Index 229

Notes on contributors

Francesco Benvenuti is Professor of History at the University of Bologna – Ravenna Branch. A specialist in Russian and Soviet history, he is the author of a *History of Contemporary Russia, 1853–1996* (Laterza, 1999; in Italian).

Robert English is Associate Professor of International Relations at the University of Southern California. He is the author of *Russia and the Idea of the West: Gorbachev, Intellectuals, and the End of the Cold War* (Columbia, 2000).

Agostino Giovagnoli is Professor of History at the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan. He is a specialist on Catholic political culture in the twentieth century. In his latest book *Storia e globalizzazione* (Rome, 2003) he discusses the historians' approaches to globalization.

Mark Harrison is Professor of Economics at the University of Warwick. He is currently working on the political economy of the Soviet defence industry. He has written a number of books and articles on Soviet and international economic history including *The Soviet Defence Industry Complex from Stalin to Khrushchev* (Macmillan, 2000).

Jonathan Haslam is Professor of the History of International Relations at Cambridge University. His most recent books are *The Vices of Integrity: E. H. Carr, 1892–1982* (Verso, 1999) and *No Virtue Like Necessity: Realist Thought in International Relations Since Machiavelli* (Yale, 2002). He is writing a history of the Cold War.

Mark Kramer is Director of the Harvard Cold War Studies Project at Harvard University and a senior fellow of Harvard's Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies. His latest book, *The Collapse of the Soviet Union*, is due out from MIT Press in 2005.

Charles S. Maier is Leverett Saltonstall Professor of History at Harvard University, where he teaches contemporary European and International History. His last book was *Dissolution: The Crisis of Communism and the End of East Germany*. He is currently writing an inquiry about the nature of American hegemony in comparative historical perspective: *Among Empires: American Ascendancy and its Predecessors*, scheduled for publication in 2005.

Leopoldo Nuti is Professor of International History at the School of Political Science, University of Roma Tre. His latest book was *Gli Stati Uniti e l'apertura a sinistra* (Roma: Laterza, 1999). He is currently completing a book on the history of nuclear weapons in Italy.

Silvio Pons is Professor of East European History at Rome University 'Tor Vergata' (Rome II) and the Director of the Gramsci Foundation, Rome. He is the author of *Stalin and the Inevitable War 1936–1941* (London, Frank Cass, 2002) and has edited the Italian edition of Georgi Dimitrov's *Diary* (Torino, Einaudi, 2002). He is currently working on Eurocommunism and détente.

Federico Romero is Professor of United States History at the University of Florence. He has published extensively on US–European relations in the twentieth century and he is preparing a general history of the Cold War.

Anders Stephanson teaches US history at Columbia University and is also James P. Shenton Associate Professor of the Columbia Core. He is at work on an episodic book on the conceptual history of US foreign relations as well as more conventional one on the historiography of the field of diplomatic history.

Odd Arne Westad is head of the Department of International History at the London School of Economics and director of the new LSE Cold War Studies Centre. He has written or edited ten books on contemporary international history, the most recent of which are *Decisive Encounters: The Chinese Civil War, 1946–1950* (Stanford University Press, 2003) and, with Jussi Hanhimäki, *The Cold War: A History in Documents and Eyewitness Accounts* (Oxford University Press, 2003).

Vladislav M. Zubok is Associate Professor at the Department of History, Temple University. He has just finished a forthcoming book *The Enemy That Went Home: Explaining Soviet Behavior in the Cold War*, and he is currently working on the connections between de-Stalinization and the end of the Cold War.

Introduction

Silvio Pons and Federico Romero

In June 2000 the Fondazione Istituto Gramsci convened an international conference in Rome on the nature, duration and interpretation of the Cold War entitled 'Forty Years of Cold War? Issues, Interpretations, Periodizations'. A small but dynamic group of international history specialists who attended the conference focused their discussions on the complex relationship between the dynamics of the Cold War and the globalizing nature of capitalism, primarily during the 1970s and 1980s.

Historical scholarship has devoted considerable effort and resources to the investigation of the origins and the architecture of the Cold War system. Nevertheless, there was (and remains) an extensive *terra incognita* within the field: the broader historical context in which the Cold War was transformed from the 1960s onwards, in which the very dynamics of bipolarism were altered, and in which the confrontation ultimately came to its end. Our workshop labored under the assumption that transformations in the international economy, networks of interdependence that link new areas of the world (especially in Asia) together, and ensuing cultural images that gradually limited the relevance of bipolarism would be the most useful starting points for broadening the context for interpreting the Cold War.

As uneven as any such enterprise is bound to be, the workshop was most useful in highlighting two broad themes. First, although bipolarism is easily identified as an overarching 'system' that lasted from 1947 to 1989, the Cold War underwent substantial transformations during the course of this same chronology. We asked several of the workshop participants to address the question of whether or not the very concept of a Cold War was still relevant after the 1960s. The debate that ensued helped everyone to more precisely define their terms, but it also made clear that disagreements over this issue derive from a deeper conceptual cleavage over what factors actually constituted (or did not constitute) the Cold War, consequently even raising questions over the usability of the concept itself.

Secondly, the debate in Rome emphasized the complex multiplicity of factors that contributed to bringing about the end of the Cold War. Although we were not successful in expanding our interdisciplinary dialogue as broadly as we had wished (to include, in particular, historians of technology, political economy and international trade), discussion addressed a range of issues that needed to be weighed, assessed and compared. Ideology and technical change, geopolitics and

2 Introduction

international economics, domestic politics and cultural transformations – all were factors that interacted in the international history of the 1970s and 1980s in a variety of mutually defining matrices that remain to be explored.

Some issues concerning the first theme of periodization and definition raised above could already be hammered out with coherence and clarity, and so we asked several participants to turn their contributions into full-fledged essays. We felt, however, that the second theme of the conference, that concerning the end of the Cold War, had been sketched out in only the broadest strokes. While several papers presented lucid and consistent arguments, much more had to be taken into consideration. More specialized research on the history of Soviet communism needed to be integrated in this work if we want to unravel the multiple economic and cultural trends that shaped the perceptions of the Cold War antagonisms. We consequently decided to organize a second workshop, with a new mix of participants, which would focus on the long-term trends that had first brought the USSR to attempt a reformist tack, and which eventually led to the country's demise.

We convened this second conference in June 2002, once again in Rome, and called it 'The End of Soviet Communism: Toward a Historical Approach'. The second conference was designed to focus on the collapse of the Soviet Union and its empire in historical perspective, by comparing and discussing the principal interpretative approaches that had been developed over the course of the decade following those events. Such various approaches had often been studied in isolation, as being distinct in nature from each other. What's more, scholarship has not generally engaged the subject of the Soviet Union's demise in any long-term perspective. Interpretations that rest on the immediate-term internal developments that occurred within the Soviet Union and eastern and central Europe during the 1980s largely failed to analyze the interrelationship between Cold War dynamics, globalizing capitalism, political and economic structures, socio-cultural and ethno-cultural processes, and the events of 1989–91. Extensive research and writing on the subject of *perestroika* and the revolutions that took place in eastern and central Europe has provided us with significant knowledge of circumstances, protagonists and political actions. However, much remains underdetermined as far as historical concepts and long-term insight are concerned. Consequently, the conference identified its main aims to be the following: (1) to assess the principal paradigms and interpretations concerning the end of Soviet communism and the Soviet Union; (2) to consider the interaction between the domestic context and international policy; and (3) to integrate varying views in order to overcome mono-causal explanations and introduce a broader historical perspective to the research agenda. Speakers were expected to emphasize those elements of recent debates or of their own research that might contribute to advancing these three goals.

Taken together, the two conferences generated a good number of stimulating scholarly presentations and exchanges on large questions, those that might orient future research on the Cold War and its protagonists. Rather than collating the uneven, disjointed (and perhaps tedious) proceedings of each conference, we have decided to select the most innovative, relevant and complete of the two workshops'

papers and bring them together in a book that is not meant to impose any overarching interpretation of the subject but, rather, to bring forward a diverse set of conceptual approaches. We wish to thank all those participants who engaged the authors at the two workshops: Archie Brown, Ennio Di Nolfo, Marcello Flores, Vladimir Kozlov, Melvyn P. Leffler, Alan S. Milward, Christian Ostermann, Leonardo Paggi, Piotr Pykel and Arfon Rees. Their contributions to the general discussion were substantial and their suggestions helped each author to refine his own arguments.

In Part I of this volume, the contributors address basic questions of definition and, therefore, of periodization. Charles S. Maier frames the Cold War within the long-term succession of modern empire formations. Consequently, he perceives a 40-year-long era of ‘stable antagonism’ and ‘controlled conflictuality’ that was accompanied by some localized warfare on peripheral frontiers. However, the divergent nature of the two empires that faced each other from 1949 to 1989, and, in particular, the different character and pace of the changes each of them promoted or suffered, lead Maier to emphasize a crucial transformation that marked the second half of the Cold War era (and, we might add, goes a long way toward explaining its conclusion). From World War II to the late 1960s, as Maier argues, the Soviet Union and the United States based their power and the viability of the international coalitions they defined as their empires on the economic prowess of their Fordist mass-production systems. Although radically distinct in ideology, in political economy and in their coalition-building practices, the two empires shared a common grammar of industrial growth. The Cold War was, as such, a contest of ‘rival Fordisms’.

From the early 1970s this commonality began to give way to a growing divergence. As the West moved rapidly, albeit shakily, toward the post-industrial and post-territorial economy we now label as globalization, the United States experienced a ‘second wind’ of economic ascendancy in the 1980s. The Soviet empire, on the other hand, proved unable to pursue such a transition for economic as well as ideological reasons.¹ Post-Fordist growth and post-territorial forms of control were most difficult, and perhaps even impossible, for a system ‘wedded to the fusion of heavy industrial prowess and hierarchic control of space’. Increasingly outmoded more than out-competed, the Soviet empire stagnated, failed and eventually collapsed.

Mark Kramer argues that the essence of the Cold War was a bipolar power structure cum irreconcilable ideological rivalry. The intensity of this conflictual relationship might have varied – and did, in fact, experience various ups and down that he briefly chronicles – but the basic conditions for bipolar antagonism remained essentially unchanged, resulting in a Cold War that coincided with the long period of bipolarism that stretched from the end of World War II to the collapse of the Soviet empire in Europe. Kramer’s Cold War is fundamentally defined by Soviet power, and its intensity seemed to escalate when that power was ascendant or more directly brought to bear on the geopolitical scene: from its Stalinist apotheosis around 1950 – when Soviet domination of eastern Europe and Soviet military hegemony over the continent was coupled with the Sino-Soviet

alliance – to the 1970s thrust into the Third World, when the Kremlin felt that the ‘correlation of forces’ was turning to its advantage. This quintessentially zero-sum game could occasionally grow milder but could not actually be ended as long as Soviet power remained in place. In Kramer’s view, neither Marc Trachtenberg’s ‘settlement’ of the German (European) question in the early 1960s,² nor the recognition of the ‘other’ that Anders Stephanson identifies in the same period,³ signaled an end to the Cold War. These and other major changes (the Sino-Soviet split to begin with, then *détente*, Eurocommunism and other factors that diminished Soviet influence outside its empire, or made it more brittle inside) complicated the game but did not alter its basic rules. Bipolar antagonism remained the key definer of international relations.

Leopoldo Nuti largely shares this definition of the Cold War and devotes most of his chapter to an exploration of the possibilities for a history of how Europe – and, in particular, western Europe – acted within this framework over the extended period of bipolar antagonism, especially in the 1960s and 1970s. Power rivalry mixed with ideological irreconcilability remain the key defining factors for Nuti, though he is less peremptory on the objective reality of these factors. Indeed, he also emphasizes the important role played by the perceptions of the protagonists: the Cold War was a zero-sum game because each side saw it as such. *Détente*, in his view, is less interesting for its partial success than for its failure, signaling as it did the protagonists’ inability, or perhaps the very impossibility, of disassembling the structure of ideological antagonism even while organizing a degree of diplomatic accommodation. Hence, the higher relevance of Raymond Aron’s notion of an ‘international civil war’ as a proper definition of the Cold War.⁴

Anders Stephanson offers a view of the Cold War that is incommensurably distant from those presented by Maier, Kramer and Nuti. He looks at the Cold War as ‘a genuine concept’ rather than a metaphor, and he discerns in it a United States project that he calls ‘diplomatic rejectionism’: ‘a war that was cold but essentially and maximalistically also about the political liquidation of the other side’. It is a concept that has its roots in Franklin D. Roosevelt’s ‘maximalistic notion of security as freedom’ on a global scale, born out of the ‘global civil war to the death’ with fascism. But it also expresses deeper themes of US history and culture, particularly the struggle to death between slavery and liberty as conceptualized by Abraham Lincoln. Thus, Stephanson’s Cold War ends after 1963, as he has argued in previous works,⁵ when the United States government moved away from its original project (a projection of US power designed not only to balance Soviet military and diplomatic might, but to fully negate the other’s legitimacy) and toward some sort of grumbling accommodation with the USSR, designed to both guarantee coexistence and still contain Soviet international power.

Odd Arne Westad takes issue with all those views that see the end of the Cold War as a mono-dimensional event. He argues that the Cold War had ‘not one but many endings’, spread out along the decade prior to 1989, which should lead us to consider more carefully both the global and the local (peripheral) historical

dynamics that influenced its outcome. Westad focuses on five different ‘endings’: Willy Brandt’s *Ostpolitik*, Enrico Berlinguer’s Eurocommunism, Ayatollah Khomeini’s revolution in Iran, the Soviet ‘non-invasion’ of Poland after the rise of Solidarity, and Ronald Reagan’s reversal – in the mid-1980s – of his previous confrontational attitude towards the Soviet Union. Westad maintains that ‘the re-establishment of German foreign policy, the transformation of west European communism, the emergence of political Islam, the decline in the Soviet will to intervene, and the domestic political successes of the United States’ neo-conservative movement all had a determining influence on how and when the Cold War ended’. In other words, there were several factors (even if we leave aside the impact of the economic and financial transformations of the international system from the early 1970s onwards) that in many ways affected the Cold War’s relevance to the political and social realities of various parts of the world. A multi-dimensional approach to the end of the Cold War is indispensable and it is likely to nourish a more complex retrospective view of the Cold War itself.⁶

Agostino Giovagnoli examines an actor – the Vatican – that does not usually figure in Cold War historiography. The actual role of such a radically different type of agent in a superpower contest is not easy to assess with any precision and could probably be discounted in any summary treatment. But as we focus on the broader historical processes that brought the Cold War to its end, the influence of the Polish pope and of the Catholic Church in societies that were looking for alternatives to communism becomes increasingly relevant. Giovagnoli rejects the broadly held view of the Vatican as one more unspecified player in the West’s ideological struggle against the Soviets, with Pope John Paul II somehow paralleling Ronald Reagan as an ideological warrior of a ‘second Cold War’. Instead, he stresses the continuity and specificity – at least from the 1960s onward – of the Vatican’s own *Ostpolitik*. It was aimed at not only facilitating the life of the Catholic churches in eastern Europe and promoting a climate of *détente*, but at strengthening a Church capable of being the ‘soul’ of those nations, a potential alternative to communism within an ecumenical view of a reunited European society. In this respect, Pope John Paul II represents less of a break with previous Church approaches than a strengthening and deepening of the same, a dynamic rooted in his own experience as a Catholic leader in a communist country. The Vatican’s own Cold War with Soviet communism was over, Giovagnoli argues, by the early 1960s, replaced by a more subtle, cautious and yet ambitious attempt to promote change in eastern Europe that would not be based on sudden, violent events. Karol Wojtyła brought this strategy to a new plateau and was surely a player – in Poland if nowhere else – in the peaceful demise of communism.

Part II of the volume explores the connections between the end of the Cold War and the process of decline, reform and breakdown within the Soviet Union. For obvious reasons, all the chapters focus on the 1980s and offer an interpretation of Gorbachev’s *perestroika*. But they all also present an explicit or implicit reference to long-term structural, intellectual and political processes, thus offering a number of associations with the chapters appearing in Part I.

The opening contribution by Mark Harrison, devoted to the significance of information in the life and death of the Soviet command economy, can be read in relationship to a crucial argument advanced by Charles S. Maier in his chapter from Part I: the irreparable lag suffered by the Soviet Union in adapting its economy to post-industrial systems and culture. Harrison underlines how 'the Soviet command system forced economic growth on the basis of a relatively low-value information stock' and shows what the implications were for the collapse of the Soviet Union. In the 1970s, the hierarchical principles that had constituted the long-standing framework for industrial organization world-wide – principles that had been at the very core of the Soviet model of rapid industrialization – began their decline. In Western economies those hierarchical principles were replaced by horizontally organized networks increasingly based on the value of information. In the Soviet Union this did not happen. Its economy (and society) consequently experienced a decisive impasse. This was the beginning of the end for the Soviet economic system, although, it should be noted, this event was hardly determined in any direct fashion by the Cold War.

Any revision and backdating of the end of the Cold War, as Westad stresses in Part I, should not necessarily be seen as an attempt to underestimate the role played by Mikhail Gorbachev. The other chapters appearing in Part II deepen and clarify the historiographical discussion over the controversial personality of the last General Secretary of the CPSU and the motivations for and the effects of his political actions. Acute differences come to the fore on this issue.⁷

Robert English acknowledges Gorbachev's decisive contribution by focusing on the role of ideas in the last decades of the Cold War and stressing the long-term change that occurred in this period. Gorbachev's 'new thinking' was not born in the mid-1980s. It was the result of gradual intellectual transformations that emerged generally in the post-Stalin era in opposition to the dominant 'old thinking' that reflected a 'hostile-isolationist' world view. The new thinking developed mainly, although not exclusively, in the field of international relations (being significantly inspired by the Prague Spring, despite the repression of Czech reform) and in the ranks of the so-called '*shestidesyatniki*', the generation of the 1960s. English presents Gorbachev's rise to power as the ascendant transition of 'new thinking' from the intellectual to the political sphere. Seen in this light, Gorbachev's contribution to the end of the Cold War can hardly be described as a sudden turn, although that was the way it appeared to Western politicians and observers. As such, English's contribution undermines the more simplistic views of abrupt Soviet change and points the way to a more complex paradigm of the Cold War's end.

Vladislav Zubok likewise adopts a long-term perspective in his discussion of the attitudes of the Soviet elites. Nevertheless, he is much more skeptical about the consistency of the Soviet reformers' views during *perestroika*. Zubok examines the evolution of key elite groups (party and state managers, 'power ministers' and the intelligentsia, with particular reference to the *shestidesyatniki*) in order to highlight the decline of the Soviet ruling classes. By the 1980s, only the pro-Western intelligentsia seemed to offer a way out from the frustration generated by

comparisons with the social and economic achievements of the West and the gradual loss of 'imperial will'. However, once Gorbachev came to power his implementation of Western-oriented policies turned out to be an incongruous response to Soviet decline. After a phase of realism in domestic and foreign policy in 1987–88 – which conformed to the expectations of the key elites – Gorbachev shifted towards an ideological approach and 'became imbued with a messianic spirit'. He not only rejected the class-based communist *Weltanschauung*, but the 'post-Stalin imperialist *realpolitik*' as well. In so doing, he essentially eliminated any possible legitimacy for the system, beginning with the Cold War consensus. His policy became extemporaneous, providing fewer and fewer tools to deal with the crisis of the Soviet Union. In fact, it accelerated that crisis, alienated key sectors of the elites and contributed to the Soviet collapse. Zubok maintains that the General Secretary played a primary role.⁸ But his assessment of that role, and of Gorbachev himself, is a very severe one. At the same time, he tells us that Gorbachev's place can only be explained by taking account of long-term processes that his peculiar personality then influenced.

In his detailed analysis of the events of 1989, Jonathan Haslam suggests a view that diverges from those of English and Zubok. The insights he provides bring to the fore Gorbachev's adaptation to the foreign policy factors at work. According to Haslam, Gorbachev's attitude towards eastern Europe and Germany had hardly cohered on the eve of 1989: he lacked any clear blueprint, let alone any new liberal guidelines. The only consistent aspect of his thinking was the rejection of any use of force. Some of his advisers, such as Shakhnazarov, warned him as early as fall 1988 that a dreadful crisis was developing in eastern Europe and that 'radical reform' was inevitable, both in domestic policies and in intra-bloc relations. During the crucial year that followed, Gorbachev's reaction to the compelling demands posed by such a scenario was ambiguous. He apparently opted for non-intervention and hoped for a process of gradual, peaceful change. As for the German question, he overstated the West's willingness (and capacity) to control events and apparently counted on the United States to restrain West Germany's reunification ambitions. In other words, Gorbachev's management of a historical crisis that concerned – and eventually changed – the very shape of post-war Europe is revealing of a leader who did not anticipate the impetuous pace that events would take. Thus, what once looked like Moscow's 1989 'recasting' of history seems, rather, to have been more like the haphazard consequence of improvisation and adaptation than the outcome of a political grand design.

Mark Kramer's second contribution to this volume draws our attention to a crucial yet scarcely analyzed subject: the impact of eastern Europe's revolutions of 1989 on the Soviet Union. In Kramer's view, Gorbachev's role in 1989 was not entirely passive. He allowed and even encouraged rapid change in eastern Europe because he understood that the definitive end of the Cold War configuration would help the cause of reform within the Soviet Union. Although this assumption was correct in principle, a number of factors affected subsequent events in the opposite way. Kramer points to a double chain. On the one hand, the downfall of communist regimes in eastern Europe indirectly compromised the Soviet

Union's legitimacy, more than Gorbachev may have foreseen. Soviet influence and military presence in the area vanished in an astonishingly short time, nullifying the very notion of a 'socialist commonwealth'. Meanwhile, the election of non-communist governments in eastern Europe provided a model for change that was politically oriented against any 'socialist' perspective, including that of *perestroika*. On the other hand, a new space opened up for national movements inside the Soviet Union (in the Baltic republics and the Ukraine) which would follow the pattern of Solidarity and even establish direct links with the new Polish leaders. The disintegration of the Warsaw Pact, the reunification of Germany and its integration into NATO, the rise of movements seeking independence inside the Union – all these were factors that openly generated conflicts within and between the Soviet elites, particularly in the sphere of civil-military relations. Consequently, the events of 1989 should be viewed as belonging to the same line of development as the *coup d'état* and the dismantling of the Soviet Union in 1991.⁹

In the volume's final chapter, Benvenuti and Pons provide a comprehensive review of the existing literature concerning the end of Soviet communism, including studies devoted to domestic issues as well as international policy. The authors maintain that the prevailing 'standard account' of *perestroika* runs the risk of determinism by emphasizing the inevitability of disintegration as a result of Gorbachev's contradictory efforts at reforming the Soviet Union. The general assumption that inspires and shapes these standard accounts posits an insurmountable divide between totalitarianism and democracy, as well as between a command economy and a market system, thus making *perestroika* nothing less than a historical paradox, doomed to failure and destined to catalyze systemic collapse. Benvenuti and Pons argue that such an assumption ignores a crucial aspect of historical perspective: the 'Soviet compound' (an incisive term coined by Robert Service) may well have been unreformable, but that still does not explain the peaceful downfall of Soviet communism. Any assessment that sees Gorbachev as the *a priori* unsuccessful savior of Soviet communism must underestimate his standing as a statesman and his thinking as a political leader. Benvenuti and Pons suggest that the true significance of Gorbachev's role was manifest in his rejection of the so-called 'Chinese variant' – the option for a market-oriented nationalist authoritarianism that many have indicated was the only feasible way to change the Soviet Union. Gorbachev did not pursue that path because he aspired to face the real magnitude of the Soviet Union's crisis of legitimacy. In fact, the nexus between being a Great Power with global ambitions *and* the leader of the communist world had defined the identity of the Soviet Union, particularly after World War II. The decline of Soviet power over the last quarter of the twentieth century was clearly associated with the decreasing relevance of Soviet communism to world civilization. In the mind of Soviet reformers, putting an end to the Cold War became the main avenue for creating a new basis of legitimacy and a deep change, both in the Soviet system and in communism. Gorbachev's political evolution in his last years of power, though quite impressive, was not enough to meet such a challenge. Furthermore, Gorbachev may have overlooked the immediate risks in undertaking radical reforms within the

interdependent Soviet system. But his 'new thinking' was not simply the vain rhetoric of failure: it was the blueprint for a peaceful outcome of Soviet communism. It was a manifesto for a post-communist order and a political testament that should be taken seriously by historians.

As even these brief summaries show, the essays in this volume provide ample food for thought. We did not get answers to all the questions that prompted us to convene the two workshops. No one ever does. But we generated many thoughtful responses, a variety of unexpected suggestions and several interesting new problems. With their composite and often contrasting views, these essays make it clear that Cold War history needs to become, and can become, something very different from what it used to be. This change is not just a matter of new empirical sources or the passage of time, as important as these factors doubtlessly are. We need to frame the Cold War and its protagonists, great and small, within the longer, broader run of twentieth-century history, and beyond. And we need to reconnect the diplomatic and security themes to the economic, ideological, technological and cultural ones.

This is not just a matter of scholarly theories and methodologies. The themes and issues elucidated above were all intertwined in the societies that waged or suffered the Cold War; they were variously present in the minds of the statesmen who conceptualized and managed the Cold War; it was their very multiplicity that made the Cold War the global, complex conflict that it was, as well as a specific but not isolated period of modern history. That issues of security and diplomacy were at the core of bipolar rivalry is self-evident. That those issues were often (though not always) resolved, transformed or bypassed by cultural or economic change is becoming apparent.

It is quite possible, and indeed likely, that our own Italian perspective informed the questions we formulated in the two workshops. Italy is a country, after all, where the Cold War was often directly engaged, and decided, on issues of income distribution, technological change and mass culture; where most communists assumed that they could wed revolution to democracy; and where containment had a religious and political meaning more than a military one. Above all, Italy is a country – though certainly not the only one – where the long-term global transformations that so radically altered its society, culture and economy made the Cold War look increasingly obsolete and irrelevant – at times even almost surreal – from the late 1960s onwards. Obviously, we do not propose that this be the single perspective by which to understand the Cold War and the end of communism. Others are just as pertinent, and often much more so. We are convinced, however, that these essays prove the case for, and contribute to, a global, multi-dimensional history of a conflict that dominated the second half of the twentieth century.

The pervasiveness of the Cold War has often been used as an argument for studying it on its own terms: the bipolar system and its dynamics dominated all the nooks and crannies of the societies involved. But its very pervasiveness means that it was also porous, permeable and subject to myriad influences and transformative trends. The essays presented below show that much can be gauged, and gained, by assuming the existence of such complexity. By acknowledging a larger, more diffuse Cold War, we can hope to understand its inner workings.

Notes

- 1 At the first conference, Alan S. Milward contributed to this broad argument and further substantiated it in a paper that could not, unfortunately, be developed into an essay for this book. He demonstrated that in the 1970s and 1980s the Soviet empire's economies grew increasingly dissimilar – and, therefore, peculiarly insular – in one of the key parameters that define the post-industrial and post-territorial transformations of Western economies and world markets: the magnitude and velocity of cross-border capital flows.
- 2 Marc Trachtenberg, *A Constructed Peace: The Making of the European Settlement, 1945–1963* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999).
- 3 Anders Stephanson, 'Fourteen Notes on the Very Concept of the Cold War', in Gearóid Ó Tuathail and Simon Dalby (eds), *Rethinking Geopolitics* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), pp. 62–85.
- 4 Raymond Aron, *Gli ultimi anni del secolo* (Milano: Mondadori, 1984), p. 201.
- 5 See Stephanson, 'Fourteen Notes on the Very Concept of the Cold War'.
- 6 Odd Arne Westad has meanwhile proceeded in this direction by editing a volume of essays that review and discuss theoretical and historical approaches to the Cold War. See Odd Arne Westad (ed.), *Reviewing the Cold War: Approaches, Interpretations, Theory* (London: Frank Cass, 2000).
- 7 The role of Gorbachev's personality has been stressed by Archie Brown at the second conference, in a paper focusing on the domestic context of *perestroika* which was not included in this collection. See also his *The Gorbachev Factor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996). Brown's main points are discussed by Benvenuti and Pons in Chapter 12.
- 8 For documentation on Gorbachev's international role in 1989 presented by the same author, see Vladislav M. Zubok, 'New Evidence on the End of the Cold War', *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, 12–13, Fall/Winter 2001.
- 9 On the collapse of the Soviet Union, see the three special issues edited by Mark Kramer of the *Journal of Cold War Studies*, vol. 5, nn. 1 (Winter 2003), and 4 (Fall 2003), vol. 6, n. 4 (Fall 2004).

Part I

Long duration, globalization and the changing frame of the Cold War

1 The Cold War as an era of imperial rivalry

Charles S. Maier

The collapse of the Soviet system, both in eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union itself, was an unprecedented event. No grand imperial construction has ever dissolved so quickly without experiencing defeat in a great war. How and why did such a rapid disintegration take place? This chapter presents a general perspective on this question rather than a narrative examination. It suggests that historians should reconceive of the Soviet–US antagonism that lasted from the late 1940s until the end of the 1980s as a type of imperial rivalry and should then ask why one form of empire prevailed over the other. In fact, the international history of the twentieth century can be summarized as a ‘transit of empire’: from the ascendancy of Britain (and, to a lesser degree, France) as colonial powers at the turn of the century, to the unsuccessful challenges by Germany and Japan that were intended to establish European and Asian hegemony (1914–45), to the dual domination of the United States and the Soviet Union after 1945, and the survival of the United States as ‘the only remaining superpower’ after 1989. This is a most general perspective of events. What historical insights can it actually offer?

The ‘Soviet Empire’ is a familiar concept. Although the term was often used as a political slogan, it was not without a basis in reality. Soviet military strength helped to bolster a supranational domination of other nations from 1945 to 1948. Force was mobilized in 1953, 1956 and 1968 to maintain Soviet domination in eastern Europe. Analysts suggested in the early 1990s that the end of the communist system amounted, in effect, to the final wave of decolonization. But that analogy is misleading. Decolonization meant the recovery of independence by overseas territories. Such a divestiture sometimes involved a regime change in the metropole, such as happened with the collapse of the Fourth French Republic in 1958 or the Portuguese Revolution of the Carnations in 1974. In any event, however, the home territories never disintegrated during decolonization; they remained functioning states. In contrast, what happened at the end of the 1980s and early 1990s was a fragmentation of Soviet and Communist Party political space at home as well as in the ‘near abroad’, a dissolution born of entirely different reasons than those that provoked the earlier waves of overseas decolonization.

Similarly, the anti-Soviet coalition led by the United States has been conceived of as a sort of US empire, although one organized on distinct principles, what Geir Lundestad has famously described as an ‘empire by invitation’. In earlier

essays I, too, sought to put forward a historical perspective through which to understand the type of imperial construction coordinated by the United States.¹ In this chapter I wish to return to the idea of empire, but with the added advantage of two further decades of hindsight. Whether because of the reunification of Germany and post-communist politics in eastern Europe, or the episodes of endemic violence in the Balkans, central Asia and Africa, or the preoccupation with political Islam, or even the dramatic events of 11 September, enough post-Cold War history has now taken place to provide us with a better sense of perspective when examining the earlier era of stable antagonism.

In fact, I am less interested in the Cold War as a unique confrontation than I am in the Cold War as a chapter in the establishment of 'order' in world politics. I would not go so far as John Gaddis and describe it as a 'long peace',² for in too many instances it verged on disastrous world conflict – over Berlin in 1948, over Korea during the winter of 1950–51 and over Cuba in 1962. If the Cold War brought peace, it was peace by the skin of our teeth. Nonetheless, the era of the Cold War did produce a type of world order. The idea of 'order' implies a sort of equilibrium in international politics. This does not eliminate international armed violence but keeps its scope below what organized war between the Great Powers would have entailed. The Cold War was, thus, while not an era of peace, at least one of controlled conflictuality. The underlying hypothesis is that, in recent historical times, this kind of world order has been associated with various sorts of imperial organization of the world, or of a significant part of it. And empires, significantly, tend to localize warfare at their frontiers while they keep the peace within.

Empire does not necessarily mean a multi-ethnic unit forged by conquest. It could also signify a leading power's coordination of diverse national elites who are willing to limit their own people's assertion of political independence in return for security or prestige. In a successful empire, these local elites remain oriented toward a hegemonic metropole whose leadership they accept and with whom they cooperate in constructing an accompanying system of economic and cultural exchange. If the term 'empire' is too harsh, perhaps 'imperial system' is a bit easier to live with. An empire can be an extensive unit created by conquest or it can be, in effect, a coalition of allied states that defer to a *primus inter pares* and who share international ambitions. Those ambitions can be ostensibly defensive; nonetheless, they must be multi-dimensional, that is, they must be designed to achieve economic as well as political goals.

The imperial agenda, it should be emphasized, does not require mass adhesion. True, widespread discontent can undermine an empire, but the so-called masses are not really instrumental in initiating an empire, even if the Soviet system continually used the concept of the masses to legitimize its own creation of so-called popular democracies. Indeed, empires tend to widen the gap within their domestic political communities between what might be termed a senatorial elite (whether determined by wealth, education, prominence in the media and professions, or party affiliation) and a more passive citizenry that enters the public domain largely as spectators. Political participation is reduced to plebiscitory

consultations: public opinion is massaged and measured or given an expressive outlet – the poll and the ‘talk show’. Short of mass defection in the streets, an active, formative role on policy on the part of the general public is difficult to sustain. Imperial politics tends to minimize the ‘voice’ option in Hirschman’s famous typology of Exit, Voice and Loyalty. The result is a polarization between exit and loyalty.

Imperial systems are rarely static. They usually exist in a state of territorial flux and institutional tension. Empires are intrinsically hierarchical; they recruit compliant local elites as public servants. And they are not, despite the terminology adopted in ancient Rome or the contemporary United States, actually republican in the classic sense, although their local politics are often formally democratic. They can allow expressions of opinion and the ratification of decisions by majorities. Empires are also necessarily preoccupied by frontiers: there is often disorder on the frontier, both inside and outside, that must be suppressed. More precisely, ‘disorder’ and ‘chaos’ are the terms that the imperial elites employ to categorize the endemic violence that the border helps create. The enemies of empire consider the same phenomena to be resistance.

Empires thus claim to practice formal equality while they remain stratified constructions, both as international institutions and as socio-political systems at home, although successful empires always know how to co-opt outsiders. Internationally, they have a center and a periphery. Investment capital flows from the imperial concentration of inequality at its center; surplus labor, usually unskilled, flows from the periphery (whether the periphery inside Europe or outside Europe) towards the center. By the end of the nineteenth century and the emergence of general male suffrage at the center of Western imperial systems, this differential distribution of wealth and capital faced a legitimation problem resulting from the subsequent inequality. Marxian and neo-Marxian critics, above all, criticized empires for their prolongation of inequality, for the exploitation they supposedly facilitated, and for their potential for conflict and war. On the other hand, by the end of World War II, when the Soviet Union and the major liberal capitalist power joined forces to defeat the Axis, apologists for imperial systems found persuasive counter-arguments that justified imperial inequality. When the United States emerged as supreme, these inequalities were referred to as ‘development’ or ‘productivity’. But empires also manifest hierarchies within the metropole as well. They elevate certain elements by according power, status and wealth. They also accommodate the aspirations of diverse groups to achieve a livelihood, a family, or just make a go of it in a complex society. Diversity is a saving grace. The imperial metropolis was polyglot and composed of the races to be ruled – represented in a token if not a real way. It was characterized by a special sort of group tolerance, as Michael Walzer makes clear in his recent lectures on toleration: ‘Imperial autonomy...tolerates groups and their authority structures and customary practices, not (except in a few cosmopolitan centers and capital cities) free-floating men and women.’³

Before World War I there were two sorts of empires. The first were land-based states that had expanded over the course of centuries: Russia, Austria-Hungary,

the Ottoman domain and China. Despite the era's industrial development these empires remained significantly agrarian and semi-authoritarian. The second group of empires included maritime, overseas empires: British, Dutch, French, the remnants of the Spanish and Portuguese realms, and the new Japanese, German, Italian and United States acquisitions. The land-based empires were in crisis – witness the Russian revolution of 1905, the Chinese revolution of 1911 and the Austro-Hungarian ethnic contentions – in part because of national and ethnic aspirations among their populations, in part because of their laggardness in modernizing their armed forces and, most clearly in Europe, because of the profound changes that had transformed the European countryside and agrarian relations over the course of the previous century. The landed empires were based on patrimonial landed relations. These were undermined by land and labor markets that had intruded into the countryside.

The crises that overcame the old empires were also connected with the rivalries among the outer ring of new overseas empires, for the world's alliance system interlocked newer overseas empires with at least one traditional land-based empire that was experiencing internal tensions. It was the interaction between, on the one hand, the decomposition of the landed empires and, on the other hand, the rivalries between overseas empires that led to World War I. The result was the discredit and the ultimate collapse of the old empires, even as the war allowed the Allies to aggrandize their new overseas empires. The war increased the popularity of anti-imperial notions of national self-determination that were based on the ideas of 1789 and the rhetoric of Woodrow Wilson. In Wilson's view, world stability would be reconstructed on the basis of national self-determination and collective action to keep the peace. But for all the praise, autonomous nation-states could not turn the League of Nations into a well-functioning institution, and international settlements were repeatedly violated by force in the 1930s. And so, nation-states failed to function as guarantors of international order precisely in that period when they were assigned that role, that is, between the two world wars. It also became clear that the overseas imperial powers were going to be challenged, in part by the ideologies they championed at home, in part by the conflicts among the peoples they sought to rule. Independence movements and colonial labor movements were not yet strong enough to prevail, but after 1919 they emerged as a permanent challenge to imperial rule.

No stable imperial structure re-emerged until the US quasi-empire of the post-World War II era. The German and Japanese challenges were sufficient to help bring an end to the British and French empires, but not strong enough to maintain themselves against the rising Soviet and US empires. Between 1948 and 1989 two major imperial systems coexisted – the Soviet and the US – achieving and imposing international stability in part as a function of their very rivalry. However, they worked on very different constituent principles.

During the first half of this four-decade period, the US empire functioned by paying for a combination of political and economic regulatory principles and by policing the frontiers with its military. Washington supported political pluralism among its alliance partners, although it tolerated authoritarian regimes as expedients if they

were friendly. Through the Marshall Plan and other aid programs, it sought to encourage open economies that allowed private investment and entrepreneurship. It sought to convince both its domestic labor unions and those among its aid recipients abroad that wage increases must be limited by the growth of productivity, and it made yearly increments in economic output (growth) the major criterion for judging economic policy success.⁴ But the United States also had to revert to the traditional military buttresses of empire. It organized a major alliance system and kept troops on the German frontier to confront the rival empire (a rivalry that also helped sustain ideological discipline). It kept troops (and still keeps them) on the major military frontier in Asia, the 38th parallel. And from time to time, and with less success, it intervened in the so-called Third World, which was also the periphery (Vietnam, Cuba and Latin America) of imperial control.

The US empire was a continuation and, in fact, an enhancement of the older British imperial principles of economic ascendancy. Economic prowess provided the material public good that made US preponderance seem beneficial to its clients and allies. In effect, the United States established an empire of Fordist production from 1941 to 1973, beginning with the industrial supplies sent by the United States to Russia and Britain during the war, and continuing with aid for post-war reconstruction (that excluded the Soviet Union after 1947).⁵ The United States excelled in systems of mass production of (mechanized) agriculture, heavy and basic industrial goods (steel and steel products), and consumer goods. The damage that the continental European economies had sustained in the war made the United States' relative lead in these spheres all the more preponderant. These resources, however, had lost their earlier efficacy by the end of the 1960s. The consensual rules of neo-Keynesianism at home, the US unwillingness to sustain discipline in its balance on current accounts, the end of cheap energy prices after the oil crisis of early 1974, and Europe's own success in catching up to US production techniques – all meant that Washington's resources became less of a guarantee of ascendancy. And yet, the United States enjoyed a renewed economic ascendancy in the 1980s. The unexpected success of pre-Keynesian monetarism, the United States' mastery of a new post-industrial technology – computers and media – and the importance of 'cultural' exports (whether jeans, rock and roll, Coca-Cola or MTV) and the growth of English as a world language revived a flagging vital principle.

At the same time, the principles upon which the Soviet empire was built became increasingly obsolescent. One can analyze this obsolescence on several levels. On one hand, the Soviets' relative backwardness was a failure of economic growth. Although the Soviets remained roughly equivalent in terms of the large-scale or mass-produced physical output characteristic of the industrial age through the 1950s – whether measured by subways, large aircraft or rockets – they lagged in the computer technology and its applications in the post-Fordist decades. Moreover, they had to claim a share of national income far larger than the West's approximately 5 per cent in order to sustain a rough military parity. More generally, the Soviets fell behind in the panoply of consumer goods that the East Germans called 'the thousand little things', and they had to make do with

a satisfaction of housing needs far below the level of the West. But there were more general problems as well. The complexity of what we might call post-industrial aspirations seemed to outrun the supply of goods that might satisfy them, whether we are referring to the apparel of late capitalism, travel or the proliferation of rock music and the boutique-mode of delivering it (walkmans, videos, etc.). The supply of these goods was examined with intense scrutiny in eastern Europe and, no matter how communism as a system might try to emulate the dynamism of post-industrial consumer culture, they were always behind.

The failure was partially economic, stemming from the lack of Western currencies, the budgetary claims of the military, and the failure to have modernized and so reduce dependency on a high percentage of workers in agriculture. But it was also the product of an ideological system that had defined for decades its population as workers, peasants or intellectuals, that is, as large class categories that hardly allowed for the claims of intensely individualist or post-industrial notions of identity. Late adolescence, after all, with its sumptuary demands, its enthusiasms for jeans or rock, was hardly a factor that Marxism had identified as a concern for central planners.⁶ But there is another way of explaining the inadequacy of late communist performance: Moscow had wagered heavily on drawing upon the geopolitical resources of the territory it controlled. Territorial control – the monopoly of power within the geographic borders of the communist bloc – remained crucial to its own measure of success. This situation was not foreordained by Marxist ideology, which looked to winning the hearts and minds of the proletariat everywhere. But it did issue from the experience of World War II and from Stalinist aspirations more generally. Despite the universal claims of communist ideology, what counted for the Soviets, from Stalin and Molotov through Brezhnev, was control of non-Russian space. Moscow aspired towards control of a territorial empire, an ambition it realized at the end of the Second World War. This entailed, in turn, a preoccupation with frontier regions and military superiority. But for reasons I have sought to explain elsewhere, control of territory and space was becoming less and less relevant to political domination.⁷ As the renewed ascendancy of the United States in the 1980s and 1990s demonstrated, a version of imperial predominance could be built upon non-territorial elements, on precisely the global appeals of consumerism and consumer culture, on the growth of services in the economy, on the technology of the computer and the software of the internet – all of which Moscow only sought to develop belatedly. The communist states were clearly second rate in satisfying consumer desires and cultural aspirations – including those of popular and youth culture – and in establishing mastery of computer technology in an era when both were becoming crucial resources for international hegemony.

The failure of the Soviet empire can thus be described as a failure to adapt to the new post-territorial principles of control. Wedded to the fusion of heavy industrial prowess and hierarchic control of space, the Soviet Union lagged in developing the new means of post-territorial competition for influence, those which the Western powers (and Japan) quickly adapted to. This lag had ramifications for the Soviet inability to adjust to the new cultural and personal expectations that accompanied

such a profound transformation. The Soviet Union might have been only a decade or two behind the West in developing a post-industrial culture and economy, but a decade's lag was crucial given the subjective compression of time that also characterized the era of media exposure.

The success of the US imperial system lay in the fact that it rested as much on economic prowess as on decisive military superiority. That economic superiority developed in two phases: the surge of Fordist production techniques from about 1911 through the late 1960s, and the 'second wind' of post-industrial economic achievement that took off from about 1980. A decade of faltering marked by stagflation and emerging Western discontent – a generalized crisis of Western capitalism during the 1970s – separated these two phases.⁸ Providing for mass consumption, albeit of different goods, was a common element of success in both stages. The first stage was distinguished by the United States' recovery from the great depression of the 1930s and its industrial mobilization during World War II, together with the provision of subsidies and a successful economic model for other European societies in the era of the Marshall Plan and post-war reconstruction. Integrated steel production, the disciplining and incorporation of mass labor movements, the provision of housing, vacations and the family automobile, television as a common cultural good, basic welfare, expanded access to post-secondary education – all marked the success of this model until it encountered difficulties in the late 1960s, as expressed in labor disaffection, student ideological activism and the United States' own contradictory pursuit of victory in a distant military war on the periphery, together with economic seigneurage in Europe. What was remarkable was the recovery of United States energies and coherence by the end of the 1970s, in part as a result of domestic electoral reorientations around old-style market ideologies and the continued failure of the communists to offer an attractive alternative. The United States mastered *two* cycles of economic transformation: it led in the Fordist era of mass production and it surged ahead again in the post-Fordist era from the 1980s on, a period in which consumer roles have replaced producer consciousness, the imagery of the network has displaced that of hierarchical coordination, and the role of the television media has become ever more significant to political outcomes.

Since 9/11 (to choose a symbolic but important date, equivalent to that of Sarajevo in 1914) we have entered a new confrontation that dominates world politics. The control of political outcomes by means of territorial resources has become increasingly difficult or irrelevant. This is the process that we call globalization. In so far as a notion of empire characterizes US ascendancy, the resources of this US empire are post-territorial. The most severe challenges to the United States' post-territorial ascendancy likewise emerge from non-territorially based claims to loyalty and power, namely, pre-territorial transnational values of religion and faith. (Paradoxically, when those representing such values achieve political power, they effectively seek to recapitulate and achieve for their own adherents the traditional goals of controlling territory and enforcing bordered sovereignty over space. So-called fundamentalists aspire to a control of territorial states, threatened by globalization and all the aspirations of secular consumer

capitalism, by means of enforced values that derive from an epoch prior to the age of industrialized nation-states.) It is always difficult to achieve an adequate historical perspective on transformations currently in progress. Nonetheless, current developments at least suggest the meaning of epochs that have come to a close. In this light, might we propose that the Cold War represented, in effect, the highest stage of Fordism, or rival Fordisms: a conflict in which economics and politics were clearly still linked to concepts of controlling coherent territories. Rival ideologies and rival economic systems (though based on comparable Fordist technologies) had the mission of protecting territorial space: 'Western', or 'Atlantic', or 'free world', versus communist. The Berlin Wall was a symbol of that territorial conflict, but it came down over 12 years ago. What has succeeded it is only slowly becoming discernible. In Rome, the *arcana imperii* were kept secret. In the contemporary world they surround us, diffuse and difficult to penetrate. But we can at least begin to discern their outlines.

Notes

- 1 Geir Lundestad, 'Empire by Invitation? The United States and Western Europe, 1945–1952', *Journal of Peace Research*, XXIII (1986): pp. 236–77. Charles S. Maier, 'Voi Europei': Concetti internazionali e Ruoli nazionali nel quadro del Piano Marshall', in Elena Aga Rossi (ed.), *Il Piano Marshall e l'Europa* (Rome: Trecani, 1983), pp. 39–58; also 'Imperi o nazioni? 1918, 1945, 1989 ...', *Il Mulino*, XIV, 361 (Sept.–Oct. 1995), pp. 761–82. Rather than recapitulate detailed bibliographical references here, I have cited several of my works in which the reader will find extensive citations.
- 2 John Gaddis, *The Long Peace: Inquiries into the History of the Cold War* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), esp. pp. 215–47.
- 3 Michael Walzer, *On Toleration* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), pp. 14–19, quote p. 16.
- 4 Charles S. Maier, 'The Politics of Productivity: Foundations of American International Economic Policy after World War II', originally in *International Organization*, 31, 4 (Autumn 1977), pp. 607–33, and in Peter Katzenstein (ed.), *Between Power and Plenty* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978). Federico Romero, *The United States and the European Trade Union Movement, 1944–1951*, trans. Harvey Fergusson II (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1992).
- 5 For discussions of 'Fordism' – the organization of economies characterized by the important role of mass production in heavy industry, standardized large-batch output, a unionized work force working in large-scale units and bargaining collectively – see, among a large literature, such works as Michel Aglietta, *A Theory of Capitalist Regulation: The U.S. Experience* (London: New Left Books, 1979); Robert Boyer, *The Regulation School: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990); David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), pp. 121–88.
- 6 See my discussion and sources in Charles S. Maier, *Dissolution: The Crisis of Communism and the End of East Germany* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977), chap. 2; Italian translation: *Il Crollo: La crisi del comunismo e la fine della Germania Est* (Bologna: Mulino, 1999), pp. 109–82.
- 7 'Consigning the Twentieth Century to History', *American Historical Review*, 105, 3 (June 2000), pp. 807–31.
- 8 See Charles S. Maier, 'Due grandi crisi del xx secolo. Alcuni cenni su anni Trenta e Settanta', in Luca Baldissarra (ed.), *Le radici della crisi: L'Italia Tra gli anni Sessanta e Settanta* (Roma: Carocci, 2001), pp. 37–55.

2 Power, politics, and the long duration of the Cold War

Mark Kramer

Most of the chapters in this volume examine the late stages and the end of the Cold War. But before considering when and how the Cold War ended, we need to think about when and why it began. We also need to ask why it lasted as long as it did. That is the purpose of this brief chapter.

Two features of the Cold War distinguish it from other periods in modern history. First, it stemmed from a fundamental clash of political ideologies (Marxism-Leninism versus liberal democracy). Second, it entailed a highly stratified global power structure in which the United States and the Soviet Union were seen to be a pre-eminent and, in fact, separate class of countries known as ‘super-powers,’ a status that far exceeded the earlier conception of ‘great powers.’ Both of these features were prerequisites for the Cold War. Neither one in itself would have been sufficient to bring about the fierce, all-encompassing struggle that persisted for nearly 45 years and affected all parts of the globe.

The notion that both power and ideology were intrinsic features of the Cold War helps us to understand when the Cold War began. Some scholars have sought to date its beginnings back to 1917, when the Bolsheviks seized power in Russia. The radical challenge posed by Soviet communism, the argument goes, caused Western countries to be obsessed with undermining the new Soviet state.¹ This argument is unconvincing because it overlooks the element of power. As long as the Soviet Union was a relatively weak country, which it certainly was until well into the 1930s, international politics did not revolve around a confrontation between the USSR and the West. On the contrary, the world system was clearly multipolar during the two decades preceding World War II, and extensive cooperation took place between ‘bourgeois’ Germany and the communist Soviet Union, including cooperation in military affairs. Not until the Soviet Union emerged from World War II as the dominant military power in Europe – and the United States emerged as the most powerful country in the world, rivaled only by the USSR in the military sphere – did the Cold War truly begin.

The Stalin era

During the first eight years following World War II, the Cold War was identified on the Soviet side with the personality of Joseph Stalin. John Gaddis, among

others, has singled out Stalin as the individual most responsible for the onset of the Cold War.² There is considerable merit in this view. Stalin's antagonistic conception of East–West relations was already evident in the 1930s when he launched a massive program of espionage in the West, seeking to plant spies and sympathizers in the upper levels of Western governments. Newly declassified materials underscore how successful this program was.³ In the United States alone, more than 350 individuals were actively cooperating with Soviet intelligence agencies in the 1930s and early 1940s.

In the closing months of World War II, as the Soviet Union repulsed and defeated Nazi Germany, Stalin was able to resort to a more overt technique of spreading Soviet influence: by relying on Soviet troops to occupy vast swathes of territory in east-central Europe. The establishment of Soviet military hegemony in the eastern half of Europe and the sweeping political changes that followed under Soviet occupation were perhaps the single most important precipitant of the Cold War. So long as Soviet military control over east-central Europe continued, it is doubtful that any lasting reconciliation between the USSR and the West was feasible.

The extreme repression practiced by Stalin at home carried over into his policy *vis-à-vis* the West. Although it would be foolish to suggest that a leader's domestic conduct is necessarily a reliable indicator of his approach to foreign policy, there is little doubt that Stalin's unchallenged dictatorial authority within the Soviet Union gave him enormous freedom to formulate Soviet foreign policy as he saw fit. The pervasive suspicion and intolerance that characterized his domestic behavior were replicated in his approach to foreign affairs. The huge losses inflicted by Germany on the Soviet Union after Adolf Hitler abandoned the Nazi–Soviet pact and launched Operation Barbarossa in June 1941 – a pact that Stalin had upheld even in the wake of numerous warnings from well-placed intelligence sources concerning an imminent German attack on the USSR – made the Soviet leader all the more unwilling to trust or seek a genuine compromise with his Western counterparts after the end of the war. Having been humiliated once, he was determined not to let down his guard again.

Stalin's supremely mistrustful outlook was evident not only in his relations with Western leaders, but also in his dealings with fellow communists. During the civil war in China following World War II, Stalin kept his distance from the Chinese communist leader, Mao Zedong. Although the Soviet Union provided crucial support for the Chinese communists during the climactic phase of the civil war, Stalin and Mao never managed to develop a close personal relationship.⁴ Mao himself, upon traveling to Moscow in December 1949, remained in awe of Stalin, but his sentiments were not reciprocated. During the two months Mao spent in the Soviet Union, from mid-December 1949 to mid-February 1950, Stalin agreed to meet privately with him only twice, leaving him with little to do the rest of the time. This high-handed treatment was typical of the relationship that Stalin maintained with Mao. In the events preceding the Korean conflict in June 1950, Stalin did his best to outflank Mao, giving the Chinese leader little choice but to acquiesce in the decision to start the war.⁵

Stalin took a similar approach in his relations with the east-central European leaders. Recent archival evidence confirms that Stalin exercised remarkably tight control over the political situation in east-central Europe, allowing only the most tenuous leeway to indigenous officials.⁶ At Stalin's behest, the communist parties gradually solidified their hold through the determined use of what the Hungarian Communist Party leader Mátyás Rákosi called 'salami tactics'. Moscow's supervision over the communization of the region was further strengthened in September 1947 by establishment of the Cominform, a body responsible for binding together the European communist parties (including the French and Italian Communist Parties) under the leadership of the Soviet Communist Party.⁷ By the spring of 1948, 'People's Democracies' were in place all over east-central Europe, ready to embark on Stalinist policies of social transformation.

Stalin's unwillingness to tolerate dissent was especially clear in his policy toward Yugoslavia, which had been one of the staunchest post-war allies of the Soviet Union. In June 1948, Yugoslavia was expelled from the Cominform and publicly denounced. The Soviet-Yugoslav rift, which had been developing for several months behind the scenes and finally reached its breaking point in March 1948, appears to have stemmed from both substantive disagreements and political maneuvering.⁸ Documents released since 1990 indicate that the level of animosity between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia by mid-1948 was even greater than Western analysts had thought. The chief problem was caused by Stalin's refusal to allow the Yugoslav leader, Josip Broz Tito, any chance of diverging from the Soviet policy agenda in the Balkans or *vis-à-vis* the West. When Tito demurred, Stalin sought to effect an abject capitulation by Yugoslavia that would serve as an example to the other east European countries of the unwavering obedience expected from them.⁹

In the end, however, Stalin's approach was highly counterproductive. Neither economic pressure nor military threats succeeded in compelling Tito to back down, and efforts to provoke a high-level coup against Tito failed when the Yugoslav leader liquidated his pro-Soviet rivals within the Yugoslav Communist Party. If Yugoslavia had not been located on the periphery of east-central Europe with no borders adjacent to those of the Soviet Union, it is certainly possible that Stalin would have undertaken a military operation to bring Yugoslavia to heel. Although any such military operation would have been logistically difficult (traversing mountains with an army that was already overstretched in Europe), one of Stalin's top aides, Nikita Khrushchev, later said he was 'absolutely sure that if the Soviet Union had had a common border with Yugoslavia, Stalin would have intervened militarily'.¹⁰ Plans for a full-scale military operation were indeed prepared, but the vigorous US military response to North Korea's incursion into South Korea in June 1950 helped dispel any lingering notions Stalin may have had of sending troops into Yugoslavia.¹¹

The Soviet Union thus was forced to accept a breach in its east European sphere, as well as the strategic loss of Yugoslavia in relation to the Balkans and the Adriatic Sea. Most importantly of all, the split with Yugoslavia provoked concern about the effects elsewhere in the region if 'Titoism' were allowed to spread.

To preclude further challenges to Soviet control, Stalin instructed the east European states to carry out new purges and show trials – which, in fact, were already under way in most countries – in order to remove any officials who might have hoped for greater independence.¹² Although the process took a particularly violent form in Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Hungary, the anti-Titoist campaign exacted a heavy toll throughout the Soviet bloc.

Despite the loss of Yugoslavia, Soviet influence in east-central Europe came under no further threat during Stalin's lifetime. From 1947 through the early 1950s, the east-central European states embarked on crash industrialization and collectivization programs. The results were vast social upheaval but also rapid short-term economic growth. Stalin was able to rely on the presence of Soviet troops, a tightly woven network of security forces, the wholesale penetration of the east European governments and armies by Soviet agents, the use of mass purges and political terror, and the unifying threat of renewed German militarism to ensure that regimes loyal to Moscow remained in power. By the early 1950s, Stalin had established a degree of control over east-central Europe to which his successors could only aspire.

The Soviet leader had thus achieved two remarkable feats in the first several years after World War II: he had consolidated a communist bloc in Europe and had established an unusually close Sino-Soviet alliance, which proved crucial during the Korean War. These twin accomplishments marked the high point of the Cold War for the Soviet Union.

Changes after Stalin

Stalinism in its purest form was so closely identified with Stalin himself that it did not long survive him. Soon after Stalin's death in March 1953, his successors began moving away from and discarding some of the cardinal precepts of Stalin's domestic and external policies.¹³ Already in the spring of 1953, Soviet foreign policy underwent a number of significant changes that could have led to a far-reaching abatement of the Cold War, including a settlement in Germany. No such settlement proved feasible, for reasons I have explained elsewhere.¹⁴ Although the two sides finally agreed on a ceasefire in Korea in July 1953, the prospects for radical change in Europe were never realized. In the late spring and early summer of 1953, a combination of developments in east-central Europe (most significantly the uprisings in East Germany in June, which were quelled by the Soviet Army) and the latest twists in the post-Stalin succession struggle in Moscow (notably the arrest and denunciation of the former secret police chief, Lavrentii Beria) induced Soviet leaders to slow down the pace of change both at home and abroad.

Thus, despite a significant moderation of Soviet domestic policies after Stalin's death, the communist system in the Soviet Union was preserved and the fundamental ideological conflict that underlay the Cold War persisted, albeit at a reduced level. Although the extreme Stalinist conception of world politics no longer prevailed, evidence from the former East-bloc archives (as well as material long available from open sources) confirms that Soviet and US leaders continued

to embrace irreconcilable notions of how the world should be configured. These clashing visions, combined with the immense military strength of the United States and the Soviet Union, ensured that the Cold War would continue. Not until one side or the other would be willing to make drastic changes in its ideological orientation was there a real possibility of ending the Cold War.

This is not to say, however, that the Cold War had to continue at the same level of intensity. The period from mid-1953 through the fall of 1956 was a time of great fluidity in international politics. The United States and the Soviet Union achieved a settlement on Indochina at the Geneva Conference in July 1954 and signed the Austrian State Treaty in May 1955, bringing the decade-long military occupation of Austria to an end. The Soviet Union also mended its relationship with Yugoslavia, an effort that culminated in Khrushchev's visit to Yugoslavia in May 1955. US–Soviet relations improved considerably during this period, symbolized by a meeting in Geneva between Khrushchev and President Dwight Eisenhower in July 1955, an event that prompted officials on both sides to seek to build on the 'spirit of Geneva'.

Within the Soviet Union as well, considerable latitude for reform emerged, offering hope that Soviet ideology might evolve in a more benign direction. At the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party in February 1956, Khrushchev launched a 'de-Stalinization' campaign by delivering a 'secret speech' in which he not only denounced many of the crimes and excesses committed by Stalin, but also promised to adopt policies that would move away from Stalinism both at home and abroad. Although the text of the speech was not officially published in the Soviet Union until 1989, the gist of it became known almost immediately to large segments of the Soviet public as well as to the outside world. The condemnation of Stalin stirred a good deal of social ferment and political dissent in the Soviet Union and east-central Europe. The Soviet authorities tried to reassert firm control by issuing directives on censorship and political activity, but these measures were only partly successful within the Soviet Union and were of little effect in east-central Europe.

Throughout the Soviet bloc, and particularly in Poland and Hungary, social and political unrest escalated rapidly in the summer of 1956. By the early fall, the Soviet Union was confronted by serious political crises in both Warsaw and Budapest. Although the Soviet–Polish crisis was resolved peacefully (though just barely), Soviet troops intervened *en masse* in Hungary in order to overthrow the revolutionary government of Imre Nagy and to crush all popular resistance.¹⁵ The fighting in Hungary was bloody, resulting in the deaths of some 2,502 Hungarians and 720 Soviet troops as well as serious injuries to 19,226 Hungarians and 1,540 Soviet soldiers.¹⁶ Within days, however, the Soviet forces had crushed the last pockets of resistance and had installed a pro-Soviet government under János Kádár to set about 'normalizing' the country.

By re-establishing military control over Hungary and by exposing – more dramatically than the suppression of the East German uprising in June 1953 had – the emptiness of the 'roll-back' and 'liberation' rhetoric of the West, the Soviet invasion in November 1956 stemmed any further loss of Soviet power in east-central

Europe. Shortly after the invasion, Khrushchev acknowledged that US–Soviet relations were likely to deteriorate for a considerable time, but he said he was more than ready to accept this tradeoff in order to ‘prove to the West that [the Soviet Union is] strong and resolute’ while ‘the West is weak and divided’.¹⁷ US officials, for their part, were even more aware than they had been during the East German uprising of the constraints they faced in eastern Europe. Senior members of the Eisenhower administration conceded that the most they could do in the future was ‘to encourage peaceful evolutionary changes’ in the region, and they warned that the United States must avoid conveying any impression ‘either directly or by implication... that American military help will be forthcoming’ to anti-communist forces.¹⁸ Any lingering US hopes of directly challenging Moscow’s sphere of influence in east-central Europe thus effectively ended.

The Khrushchev interlude: East–West crises and the Sino-Soviet rift

The clampdown in Hungary restored order to the Soviet bloc and kept the de-Stalinization process within acceptable bounds. The Soviet invasion coincided with another East–West crisis – the Suez crisis – which began in July 1956 when President Gamel Abdel Nasser of Egypt nationalized the Suez Canal Company. The French, British and US governments tried to persuade (and compel) Nasser to reverse his decision, but their efforts proved of no avail. In late October 1956, Israeli forces moved into Suez in an operation that was broadly coordinated with Britain and France. The following day, French and British forces joined the Israeli incursions. Soviet leaders mistakenly assumed that the United States would support its British and French allies. The Soviet decision to intervene in Hungary was based in part on this erroneous assumption, and was also facilitated by the perception that a military crackdown would incur less international criticism if it took place while much of the world’s attention was distracted by events in the Middle East.

As it turned out, the Eisenhower administration sided against the British and French and helped compel the foreign troops to pull out of Egypt. The US and Soviet governments experienced considerable friction during the crisis (especially when Soviet Prime Minister Nikolai Bulganin made veiled nuclear threats against the French and British), but their stances were largely compatible. The US decision to oppose the French and British proved to be a turning point for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the alliance formed in 1949 to help cement ties between western Europe and the United States against the common Soviet threat. Although NATO continued to be a robust military-political organization throughout the Cold War, the French and British governments knew after the Suez crisis that they could not automatically count on US support during crises even when the Soviet Union was directly involved.

In these ways, the events of October–November 1956 reinforced Cold War alignments on the Soviet side (by halting any further loss of Soviet control in east-central Europe) but loosened them somewhat on the Western side, as fissures within NATO gradually emerged. The Warsaw Pact – the Soviet-led alliance with

the east European countries that was established in mid-1955 – was still largely a paper organization (and remained so until the early 1960s), but the invasion of Hungary kept the alliance intact. In the West, by contrast, relations within NATO were more strained than before. Although some differences within the alliance had already surfaced in the early 1950s during debate on proposals to establish a European Defense Community (proposals that never materialized), the Suez crisis had a much more jarring effect.

A number of other East–West crises erupted in the late 1950s, notably the Quemoy-Matsu offshore islands dispute between Communist China and the United States in 1958 and the periodic Berlin crises from 1958 through 1962. Serious though these events were, they were soon overshadowed by a schism within the communist world. The Soviet Union and China, which had been staunch allies during the Stalin era, came into bitter conflict less than a decade after Stalin's death. The split between the two communist powers, stemming in part from genuine policy and ideological differences and in part from a personal clash between Khrushchev and Mao Zedong, developed out of the public eye in the late 1950s.¹⁹ The dispute intensified in June 1959 when the Soviet Union abruptly terminated its secret nuclear weapons cooperation agreement with China (though this action was not taken in time to prevent the Chinese from building their own nuclear weapons just five years later). Khrushchev's highly publicized visit to the United States in September 1959 further antagonized the Chinese, and a last-ditch meeting between Khrushchev and Mao in Beijing right after Khrushchev's tour of the United States failed to resolve any of the issues dividing the two sides.²⁰ From then on, Sino-Soviet relations steadily deteriorated. As news of the conflict spread throughout the world, Khrushchev and Mao made a few additional attempts to reconcile their differences, but the split, if anything, grew even wider. Hopes of restoring a semblance of unity in the international communist movement quickly faded as the Soviet Union and China vied with one another for the backing of foreign communist parties, including those long affiliated with Moscow.

The spill-over from the Sino-Soviet conflict into east-central Europe was evident almost immediately. In late 1960 and early 1961 the Albanian leader, Enver Hoxha, sparked a crisis with the Soviet Union by openly aligning his country with China, a precedent that caused alarm in Moscow.²¹ The Soviet Union imposed strict economic sanctions against Albania, withdrew all Soviet technicians and military advisers from the country, took back eight of the twelve submarines it had given the Albanians, dismantled Soviet naval facilities at the Albanian port of Vlora, and engaged in bitter polemical exchanges with the Albanian leadership. Khrushchev also ordered Soviet warships to conduct maneuvers along the Albanian coast, and he secretly encouraged pro-Moscow rivals of Hoxha to carry out a coup.²² The coup attempt was rebuffed, and the other means of coercion proved insufficient to get rid of Hoxha or to bring about a change of policy. The 'loss' of Albania, though trivial compared to the earlier split with Yugoslavia and the deepening rift with China, marked the second time since 1945 that the Soviet sphere of influence in east-central Europe had been breached.

An even worse development from Moscow's perspective was the discovery that China was secretly attempting to induce other east-central European countries to follow Albania's lead. At a closed plenum of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party in December 1963, the top Soviet official responsible for intra-bloc relations, Yuri Andropov, noted that the Chinese had been focusing their efforts on Poland, Hungary and East Germany:

The Chinese leaders are carrying out a policy of crude sabotage in relation to Poland, Hungary and the GDR. Characteristic of this is the fact that in September of this year, during conversations with a Hungarian official in China, Politburo member Chu De declared that China would welcome it if the Hungarian comrades diverged from the CPSU's line. But, Chu De threatened, if you remain on the side of the revisionists, we will have to take a stance against you.²³

China's efforts bore little fruit in the end, but Soviet leaders at the time could not be sure of what would ultimately happen. The very fact that China was seeking to foment discord within the Soviet bloc was enough to provoke consternation in Moscow.

The emergence of the Sino-Soviet split, the attempts by China to lure away one or more of the east-central European countries, the competition between Moscow and Beijing for influence among non-ruling communist parties, and the assistance given by China to the communist governments in North Vietnam and North Korea complicated the bipolar nature of the Cold War but did not fundamentally change it. International politics continued to revolve mainly around an intense conflict between two broad groups: (1) the Soviet Union and other communist countries, and (2) the United States and its NATO and east Asian allies. The fissures within these two camps, salient as they may have been, did not eliminate or even diminish the confrontation between the communist East and the democratic West. Individual countries within each bloc acquired greater leverage and room for maneuver, but the US-Soviet divide was still the primary basis of world politics.

The early 1960s: a tacit settlement?

The intensity of the Cold War escalated in the early 1960s with the accession of a new US administration headed by John F. Kennedy. The Kennedy administration was determined to resolve two volatile issues in East-West relations: the status of Cuba, which had aligned itself with the Soviet Union after communist insurgents led by Fidel Castro seized power in 1959; and the status of Berlin. These issues gave rise to a succession of crises in the early 1960s, beginning with the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in April 1961 and continuing through the Cuban missile crisis in October 1962. At the Bay of Pigs, a US-sponsored force of Cuban exiles was quickly rounded up and Castro remained in power. But the Kennedy administration continued to pursue a number of top-secret programs to destabilize the Castro government and get rid of the Cuban leader.²⁴ Khrushchev, for his

part, sought to force matters on Berlin. The showdown that ensued in the late summer and fall of 1961 nearly brought US and Soviet military forces into direct conflict. In late October 1961, Soviet leaders mistakenly assumed that US tanks deployed at Checkpoint Charlie (the main border crossing point along the Berlin divide) were preparing to move into East Berlin, and they sent ten Soviet tanks to counter the incursion. Although Khrushchev and Kennedy managed to defuse the crisis by privately agreeing that the Soviet forces would be withdrawn first, the status of Berlin remained a point of contention.

These tensions provided the backdrop for the Cuban missile crisis.²⁵ In the late spring of 1962 Soviet leaders approved plans for the secret deployment of medium-range nuclear missiles in Cuba. In the summer and early fall of 1962 the Soviet General Staff oversaw a massive operation (codenamed 'Anadyr') to install dozens of missiles and support equipment in Cuba, to deploy some 42,000 Soviet combat forces to the island to protect the missiles, and to send nuclear warheads to Cuba for storage and possible deployment – all under conditions of extraordinary secrecy. The idea was to present the United States with a *fait accompli*.

Operation Anadyr proceeded smoothly until mid-October 1962, just a few weeks before the medium-range missiles were due to become operational. On 15 October, US intelligence analysts reported to Kennedy that an American U-2 reconnaissance flight had detected Soviet missile sites under construction on Cuba. Based on this disclosure, Kennedy made a dramatic speech on 22 October revealing the presence of the missiles and demanding that they be removed. There were many things that the Kennedy administration did not know at the time – that tens of thousands of Soviet combat troops had been surreptitiously deployed in Cuba, that nuclear warheads had already arrived in port and could have been placed on missiles, and that the commander of Soviet forces on the island, General Issa Pliev, had requested authority to install nuclear warheads on tactical missiles and use them, if necessary, against a US invading force (a request that was denied by Khrushchev) – but the administration's discovery of the presence of the medium-range missiles was itself sufficient grounds for the most intense crisis of the Cold War.

In the standoff that developed over the next several days, officials on both sides feared that war would ensue, possibly leading to a devastating nuclear exchange. This fear, as much as anything else, spurred both Kennedy and Khrushchev to do their utmost to find a peaceful way out. At the height of the crisis, Castro sent a secret cable to Khrushchev urging him to launch a nuclear strike against the United States if US troops invaded Cuba, but Khrushchev rebuked the Cuban leader and intensified his efforts to forge a compromise through secret back-channel negotiations.²⁶ As the crisis neared its breaking point, the two sides arrived at a settlement that provided for the withdrawal of all Soviet medium-range missiles from Cuba and a pledge by the United States that it would not invade Cuba. In addition, Kennedy secretly promised that US Jupiter missiles based in Turkey would be removed within 'four to five months'. This secret offer, presented by the President's brother and closest aide, Robert Kennedy, was not publicly disclosed until many years later, but the agreement that was made public in late October 1962 sparked enormous relief around the world.

The intensity of the Cuban missile crisis prompted efforts by both sides to ensure that future crises would not come as close to a nuclear war. Communications between Kennedy and Khrushchev during the crisis had been extremely difficult at times and had posed the risk of misunderstandings that might have proven fatal. To help alleviate this problem, the two countries sought to establish a secure communications link that would enable the top leaders to transmit messages instantly to one another. This proposal inspired the signing of the Hot Line Agreement in June 1963, an agreement that rested on proposals already floated by both sides in the 1950s and early 1960s.²⁷ The agreement, which provided for a special teletype connection between Washington and Moscow, was a milestone in US–Soviet relations, marking the first successful attempt by the two countries to achieve a bilateral document that would reduce the danger of an unintended nuclear war. The Hot Line was upgraded and modernized in three phases in the 1970s and 1980s.

The joint memorandum establishing the Hot Line was symbolic of a more general improvement in US–Soviet relations that began soon after the Cuban missile crisis was resolved. Having been chastened by the events of October 1962, Kennedy and Khrushchev each began to consider ways of settling matters that until recently had seemed intractable. This new spirit was reflected in a much-heralded speech by Kennedy at American University in June 1963. Although neither side intended to make any radical changes in its policies, both leaders looked for areas of agreement that might be feasibly addressed in the near term. One consequence of this new flexibility was the signing of the Limited Test Ban Treaty (LTBT) in August 1963, an agreement that Kennedy had strongly promoted in his June 1963 speech.²⁸ Negotiations on the test ban had dragged on since the 1950s, with remarkably little to show for them. But in the new climate of 1963 a number of stumbling blocks were resolved, and each side made a few key concessions. The resulting agreement permitted the two countries to continue testing nuclear weapons underground, but it prohibited explosions in the atmosphere, underwater and in outer space. The agreement encountered some resistance in the US Congress, but the United States ultimately ratified it, allowing the treaty to take effect in October 1963.

Some scholars have argued that this burst of activity in the wake of the Cuban missile crisis was tantamount to the end of the Cold War. (The chapter below by Anders Stephanson is a case in point.) In a sustained study along these lines, Marc Trachtenberg has recently contended that the German question – which he sees as the defining element of the Cold War – was essentially resolved by the steps undertaken in 1961–63 to cope with the Berlin crisis, the Cuban missile crisis and their aftermath.²⁹ The building of the Berlin Wall in August 1961, according to Trachtenberg, effectively resolved the status of Berlin, and the LTBT, in his view, amounted to a *de facto* peace treaty in so far as West Germany's signature on it (after considerable hesitation by Chancellor Konrad Adenauer) provided Moscow with a guarantee that the West Germans would not acquire their own nuclear weapons. Although it took another five years before the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) was signed and nearly a decade before a formal

Quadripartite Agreement was concluded on the status of Berlin and a series of bilateral peace treaties were signed between West Germany and its east European neighbors, Trachtenberg believes that these matters had been fundamentally settled by late 1963.

This argument is unconvincing. The notion that the German question was resolved through the building of the Berlin Wall and the signing of the LTBT is problematic. It is true that the exodus of East Berliners to West Berlin was choked off, but the status of the city was left ambiguous for another decade. Moreover, the absence of formal peace treaties until the early 1970s created the potential for another crisis. Trachtenberg's claim that the question of Germany's nuclear status was settled in 1963 is equally dubious. The initiative to form a Multilateral Force (MLF) among the European NATO members, a proposal that Soviet leaders claimed would facilitate West Germany's acquisition of nuclear weapons (directly or indirectly), reached its zenith in 1964.³⁰ Not until late 1965 was the MLF idea finally defunct. The main reason that Soviet leaders were so anxious to move ahead with the NPT and to ensure that West Germany would be a party to it is that the nuclear weapons status of Germany had *not* yet been resolved, despite the demise of the MLF.

Indeed, it was precisely because ambiguity continued to characterize the German question that some West German politicians initially believed that *Ostpolitik* (an effort initiated by the West German government in the mid- to late 1960s to seek a *rapprochement* between East and West Germany) could be pursued largely on West Germany's terms, without going through Moscow. The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 disabused them of this notion, and from then on *Ostpolitik* was reoriented to accommodate Soviet concerns. The early years of *Ostpolitik* and the ensuing frictions with Moscow underscored the importance of dispelling any further ambiguity about the German question.

The continuation of the Cold War

Even if the German question had been more conclusively resolved by 1963, the notion that the Cold War was over by that point, as Stephanson and others argue, is untenable. The two core features of the Cold War – the fundamental ideological conflict between liberal democracy and Marxism-Leninism, and the military pre-eminence of the two superpowers – remained intact throughout the 1960s, 1970s and early to mid-1980s. As long as the conditions underlying the Cold War were in place, the Cold War itself was bound to continue both in Europe and elsewhere. This was symbolized by the hundreds of thousands of heavily armed NATO and Warsaw Pact troops who confronted one another along the East German–West German border until 1989.

To say that the Cold War continued after 1963 is not, however, to say that all of its aspects remained unchanged. On the contrary, although the bipolar structure of international politics persisted, a number of important developments complicated the picture. The sharp deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations in the 1960s, culminating in border clashes in 1969, intensified the earlier disarray within the communist world and paved the way for a momentous *rapprochement* between

the United States and China in the 1970s. The realignment of China away from the Soviet Union and towards the United States obviously provided a major fillip to the West. The situation within the communist world was also complicated by the rise of what became known as 'Eurocommunism' in the 1970s. In several West European countries, notably Italy, France, Spain and Portugal, communist parties either had long been or were becoming politically influential. In the aftermath of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, several of these parties (the French party was a notable exception) sought to distance themselves from Moscow. This latest fissure within the world communist movement eroded Soviet influence in western Europe and significantly altered the complexion of west European politics. In east-central Europe, too, the rise of Eurocommunism tended to weaken Soviet influence by creating an alluring alternative to the Soviet model of communism.

The Cold War was also affected, albeit not drastically, by the rise of East–West *détente*. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, relations between the United States and the Soviet Union significantly improved, leading to the conclusion of strategic arms-control accords and bilateral trade agreements. This US–Soviet *détente* was accompanied by a related but separate Soviet–west European *détente*, spurred on by the *Ostpolitik* of West Germany. The initial version of *Ostpolitik* had been viewed with suspicion in Moscow, but the recasting of the policy after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia was far more in line with Moscow's preferences. A series of multilateral and bilateral agreements regarding Berlin and Germany in the early 1970s and the signing of the Helsinki accords in 1975 symbolized the spirit of the new European *détente*. Even after the US–Soviet *détente* began to fray in the mid- to late 1970s, the Soviet–west European *rapprochement* stayed largely on track. Although the west European countries continued to be firmly allied with the United States within the NATO framework, the west Europeans also took on a mediation role in several US–Soviet disputes.

The growing fissures within the Eastern bloc and the rise of East–West *détente* introduced important new elements to the global scene, but did not fundamentally change the nature of the Cold War or the structure of the international system. Looking back now, from the perspective of what happened in 1989–91, we might be tempted to conclude that by the 1970s (or even by the early 1960s, as Stephanson would have it) the end of the Cold War had become inevitable. But this would be the post hoc fallacy of attributing inevitability to events that, at the time they were occurring, were far more uncertain, tentative and contingent. Many events seem inevitable in retrospect, but the reality is almost invariably more complex.

Even when *détente* was at its height, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Cold War politics intruded into far-flung regions of the globe. A number of crucial events at the time proved how entrenched the Cold War still was. The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968, which brought an end to the 'Prague Spring', demonstrated the limits of what could be changed in east-central Europe. Soviet leaders were not about to tolerate a major disruption of the Warsaw Pact or to accept far-reaching political changes that would undercut the stability of the communist bloc.³¹ Similarly, the Vietnam War, which embroiled hundreds of

thousands of US troops from 1965 through 1975, is incomprehensible except in a Cold War context. Stephanson's notion that the Cold War had ended by 1963 seems particularly odd in light of the pending escalation in Vietnam.

In the 1970s as well, many events would have defied logic had they not occurred in the context of the Cold War. US–Soviet wrangling in the Middle East in October 1973 and, even more so, the confrontations over Angola in 1975–76 and Ethiopia in 1977–78 would have been pointless were it not for the perception in both Moscow and Washington that the two superpowers were locked in a zero-sum competition for influence around the globe. Soviet gains in the Third World in the 1970s, coming on the heels of the US defeat in Vietnam, were depicted by Soviet leaders as a 'shift in the correlation of forces' that would increasingly favor Moscow. Many US officials and commentators voiced pessimism about the erosion of US influence and the declining capacity of the United States to contain Soviet power. From today's perspective, it is easy to forget how bleak the US–Soviet relationship often seemed in the mid- to late 1970s.

Anyone in the 1970s who thought that the Cold War was over was due for a rude awakening in late 1979, when US–Soviet relations took a sharp turn for the worse. This trend was the product of a number of events, including human rights violations in the Soviet Union, domestic political maneuvering in the United States, tensions over Soviet gains in the Horn of Africa, NATO's decision in December 1979 to station new nuclear missiles in western Europe to offset the Soviet Union's recent deployments of SS-20 missiles and, above all, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan on Christmas Day 1979. By this point, the more relaxed atmosphere of the early 1970s was a distant memory, and acrimonious exchanges between the two sides intensified.

The endgame

The collapse of the US–Soviet *détente* in the late 1970s left no doubt about the staying power of the Cold War. One of the reasons that Ronald Reagan won the US presidency in 1980 is that voters perceived him as a stronger leader for a period of heightened US–Soviet antagonism. Although the renewed tensions of the early 1980s did not spark a crisis of the same intensity as those that erupted in the early 1950s and early 1960s, the hostility between the two sides was acute, and the rhetoric became inflammatory enough to spark a brief war scare in 1983.

Even before Reagan was elected, the outbreak of a political and economic crisis in Poland in the summer of 1980, giving rise to the independent trade union known as 'Solidarity', created a potential flashpoint in US–Soviet relations. The relentless pressure that Soviet leaders exerted on the Polish authorities over the next year and a half, demanding that they crush Solidarity and all other 'anti-socialist' elements, demonstrated once again the limits of what could be changed in east-central Europe.³² Unlike in Czechoslovakia in 1968, when the Soviet Politburo wanted to get rid of the reform-minded officials who launched the Prague Spring, the leaders of the Polish Communist party remained loyal to Moscow. Instead, the problem in Poland was a rebellion 'from below'. Soviet

leaders were willing to send tank and motorized infantry divisions to Poland to assist with the implementation of martial law, but the Polish authorities repeatedly warned that the entry of Soviet troops into Poland would provoke a 'catastrophe'. Under continued pressure, the Polish leader, General Wojciech Jaruzelski, successfully imposed martial law (*stan wojenny*) in Poland in December 1981, arresting thousands of Solidarity activists and banning the organization. Jaruzelski's 'internal solution' precluded any test of Moscow's restraint and restored conformity to the Soviet bloc at relatively low cost. The surprisingly smooth crack-down in Poland also helped prevent any further disruption in Soviet-east European relations over the next several years.

Even if the Polish crisis had never arisen, East-West tensions over numerous other matters would have increased sharply in the early 1980s. Recriminations over the deployment of intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) in Europe, and the rise of anti-nuclear movements in western Europe and the United States, dominated East-West relations in the early 1980s. To thwart NATO's plans, the Soviet Union made a vigorous effort to exploit and manipulate the Western anti-INF movements.³³ The deployment of NATO's missiles on schedule in late 1983 and 1984 helped defuse popular opposition to the INF but the acrimony left by the dispute highlighted the growing role of public opinion and mass movements in Cold War politics.

Much the same was true about the effect of anti-nuclear sentiment on the Reagan administration's programs to modernize US strategic nuclear forces and its subsequent plans, announced with great fanfare in March 1983, to pursue the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). These efforts and the rhetoric accompanying them sparked dismay not only among Western anti-nuclear activists but in Moscow as well. Soviet leaders even worried that the Reagan administration might be considering a surprise nuclear strike, and they ordered Soviet intelligence agencies to look for preparations of such an attack.³⁴ The level of apprehension in Moscow reached its peak in the fall of 1983. In the United States, however, public pressure and the rise of a 'nuclear freeze' movement induced the Reagan administration to reconsider its earlier aversion to nuclear arms control. Although political uncertainty in Moscow in the first half of the 1980s made it difficult to resume arms-control talks or to reduce bilateral tensions, there was no question by the mid-1980s that the Reagan administration was far more intent on pursuing arms control than it had been earlier.

This change of heart in Washington, while important, was almost inconsequential compared to the extraordinary developments in Moscow in the latter half of the 1980s. The rise to power of Mikhail Gorbachev in March 1985 was soon followed by broad political reforms and a gradual reassessment of the basic premises of Soviet foreign policy. Over time, the 'new thinking' in Soviet foreign policy became more radical. Soviet officials made clear that fundamental tenets of Marxism-Leninism might be due for revision. The test of Gorbachev's new approach came in 1989, when peaceful transformations in Poland and Hungary brought non-communist rulers to power. Gorbachev not only tolerated but actively encouraged this development. The orthodox communist regimes in East Germany, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and Romania did their best to stave off the

tide of reform, but the momentum created by Gorbachev's reforms and by the emergence of a Solidarity-led government in Poland in September 1989 proved irresistible. A series of upheavals in October–December 1989 brought about the downfall of the four orthodox regimes. In these cases, too, Gorbachev promoted radical changes and the transition to non-communist governments.

The remarkable series of events following Gorbachev's ascendance, culminating in the largely peaceful revolutions of 1989, marked the true end of the Cold War. Soviet military power was still enormous in 1989, and in that sense the Soviet Union was still a superpower alongside the United States. But Gorbachev and his aides did away with the other condition necessary to sustain the Cold War: the ideological divide. By reassessing, recasting and ultimately abandoning the core precepts of Marxism-Leninism, Gorbachev and his supporters enabled changes to occur in Europe that eviscerated the Cold War structure.

The end of the Cold War, even after Gorbachev's rise, was by no means preordained. Any number of events, such as a violent uprising in east-central Europe in 1987 or 1988, which would have created strong pressure for Gorbachev to intervene with military force, might have derailed the whole reform process in the Soviet Union. The deleterious effects of the East German uprising in 1953 and the Hungarian revolution in 1956 are instructive in this regard. But, as luck would have it, no exogenous events of sufficient magnitude emerged to interrupt the reformist trends in the late 1980s. Radical changes in Soviet foreign policy, which were well under way by late 1988, were taken to their logical end in the fall of 1989. Gorbachev's decision to accept and even facilitate the peaceful transformation of east-central Europe undid Stalin's pernicious legacy.

Notes

- 1 See, for example, Lloyd C. Gardner, *Imperial America: American Foreign Policy since 1898* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976); Lloyd C. Gardner, *Wilson and Revolutions, 1913–1921* (Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott, 1976); William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, 2nd rev. and enl. edn (New York: Dell, 1972); William Appleman Williams, *American–Russian Relations, 1781–1947* (New York: Octagon Books, 1971); and Gabriel Kolko, *The Roots of American Foreign Policy: An Analysis of Power and Purpose* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1969).
- 2 John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 292–4.
- 3 See, for example, John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr, *Venona: Decoding Soviet Espionage in America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999); Robert Louis Benson and Michael Warner (eds), *Venona: Soviet Espionage and the American Response, 1939–1957* (Washington, DC: US National Security Agency and US Central Intelligence Agency, 1996); and Desmond Ball and David Horner, *Breaking the Codes: Australia's KGB Spy Network, 1944–1950* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1998).
- 4 For an excellent analysis of the Stalin–Mao relationship based on newly declassified documents and memoirs from Russia and China, see Dieter Heinzig, *Die Sowjetunion und das kommunistische China 1945–1950: Der beschwerliche Weg zum Bündnis* (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 1998).
- 5 I have presented evidence for this in my 'Ideology and the Cold War', *Review of International Studies*, 25, 4 (October 1999), pp. 539–77. See also Shen Zhihua's excellent

- article, 'Sino-Soviet Relations and the Origins of the Korean War: Stalin's Strategic Goals in the Far East', *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 2, 2 (Spring 2000), pp. 44–68.
- 6 See, for example, the essays in Norman Naimark and Leonid Gibianskii (eds), *The Establishment of Communist Regimes in Eastern Europe* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997).
 - 7 For a meticulously documented analysis of the origins of the Cominform, see L. Ya. Gibianskii, 'Kak vznik Kominform: Po novym arkhivnym materialam', *Novaya i noveishaya istoriya* (Moscow), 4 (July–Aug. 1993), pp. 131–52. See also G. M. Adibekov, *Kominform i poslevoennaya Evropa, 1947–1956 gg.* (Moscow: Rossiya molodaya, 1994). The voluminous files of the Cominform, from 1947 to 1956, have been available for research since early 1994 in Fond 575 at the former Central Party Archive (now known as Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Sotsial'no-Politicheskoi Istorii, or RGASPI).
 - 8 The origins of the Soviet–Yugoslav split are much better understood now, thanks to newly declassified archival materials collected by Leonid Gibianskii in Moscow, Belgrade and other east European capitals. See his chapter, 'The Origins of the Soviet–Yugoslav Split', in Naimark and Gibianskii (eds), *Establishment of Communist Regimes in Eastern Europe*, pp. 291–312. For a good sample of the newly available documentation, see 'Sekretnaya sovetско-yugoslavskaya perepiska 1948 goda', *Voprosy istorii* (Moscow), 4–5, 6–7 and 10–11 (1992), pp. 119–36, 158–72 and 154–69 respectively. Among recent studies drawing on these and other materials are I. Bukharkin, 'Konflikt, kotorogo ne dolzhno bylo byt' (iz istorii sovetско-yugoslavskikh otnochenii)', *Vestnik Ministerstva inostrannykh del SSSR* (Moscow), 6 (31 March 1990), pp. 53–7; L. Ya. Gibianskii, 'U nachala konflikta: Balkanskii uzel', *Rabochii klass i sovremennyi mir* (Moscow), 2 (Mar.–Apr. 1990), pp. 171–85; I. V. Bukharkin and L. Ya. Gibianskii, 'Pervye shagi konflikta', *Rabochii klass i sovremennyi mir* (Moscow), 5 (Sept.–Oct. 1990), pp. 152–63; L. Ya. Gibianskii, 'Vyzov v Moskvu', *Politicheskie issledovaniya* (Moscow), 1 (Jan.–Feb. 1991), pp. 195–207; and the related series of articles by L. Ya. Gibianskii, 'K istorii sovetско-yugoslavskogo konflikta 1948–1953 gg.', in *Sovetskoe slavyanovedenie* (Moscow), 3 (May–June 1991), pp. 32–47, and 4 (July–Aug. 1991), pp. 12–24; and *Slavyanovedenie* (Moscow), 1 (Jan.–Feb. 1992), pp. 68–82, and 3 (May–June 1992), pp. 35–51.
 - 9 This point is well illustrated by the documents contained in 'Stranitsy istorii: Konflikt, kotorogo ne dolzhno bylo byt', pp. 57–63. See also 'Krupnoe porazhenie Stalina – Sovetsko-yugoslavskii konflikt 1948–1953 godov: prichiny, posledstviya, uroki', *Moskovskie novosti* (Moscow), 27 (2 July 1989), pp. 8–9.
 - 10 N. S. Khrushchev, 'Vospominaniya' (typescript, Moscow, 1965–69), vol. IV ('Vzaimootnosheniya s sotsialisticheskimi stranami'), p. 20e.
 - 11 On the military plans, see Bela Kiraly, 'The Aborted Soviet Military Plans against Tito's Yugoslavia', in Wayne S. Vucinich (ed.), *At the Brink of War and Peace: The Tito–Stalin Split in a Historical Perspective* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), pp. 273–88. Kiraly was the commander of Hungarian ground forces until late 1956. I have not yet found documents in Moscow that lay out the plans in detail, though they undoubtedly exist in the Central Archive of the Ministry of Defense (Tsentral'nyi Arkhiv Ministerstva Oborony). For now, unfortunately, that archive is largely closed for research on post-1945 topics.
 - 12 Adam B. Ulam, *Titoism and the Cominform* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1952), pp. 145–202. See also Vladimir Zelenin, 'Sovetsko-yugoslavskii konflikt 1948-ogo goda i Repressii v Vostochnoi Evrope', *Novoe vremya* (Moscow), 31 (July 1989), pp. 34–5.
 - 13 I have discussed these changes in my three-part article, 'The Early Post-Stalin Succession Struggle and Instability in East-Central Europe: Internal–External Linkages in Soviet Policy-Making', *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 1, Nos 1, 2 and 3 (Winter, Spring and Fall 1999), pp. 3–55, 3–39 and 3–66 respectively.

- 14 See *ibid.*, especially Part 3.
- 15 For an extended discussion of the crisis and the Soviet response, see Mark Kramer, 'The Soviet Union and the 1956 Crises in Hungary and Poland: Reassessments and New Findings', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 33, 2 (Apr. 1998), pp. 163–215.
- 16 See *ibid.*, p. 210 on total casualties.
- 17 Veljko Mićunović, *Moskovske godine, 1956–1958* (Zagreb: Liber, 1977), p. 156. Mićunović was the Yugoslav ambassador in the Soviet Union during the 1956 crises.
- 18 'Memorandum from the Director of Central Intelligence to the President', 20 November 1956 (Secret), in US Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955–1957*, vol. XXV (Eastern Europe), pp. 473, 475.
- 19 On the sources of the Beijing–Moscow dispute, see Mark Kramer, 'Sino-Soviet Relations on the Eve of the Split', *Cold War International History Bulletin*, 6–7 (Winter 1995–96), pp. 170–85.
- 20 For a transcript of these talks, see 'Zapis' besedy tovarishcha Khrushcheva N. S. s Predsedatelem TsK KPK Mao Tsze-Dunom, zamestitelyami Predsedatelya TsK KPS Lyu Shao-tsi, Chzhou En'-Laem, Czhu De, Lin' Byao, chlenami Politbyuro TsK KPK Pyn Czhenem, Chen' I i chlenom Sekretariata Van Tszya-syanom 2 oktyabrya 1959 goda'. Osobaya papka (Strictly Secret), 2 October 1959, in Arkhiv Prezidenta Rossiiskoi Federatsii (APRF), Moscow, Fond (F.) 45, Opis' (Op.) 1, Delo (D.) 331, Listy (Ll.) 1–33. Equally valuable is the detailed trip report by an influential Soviet Politburo member, Mikhail Suslov, shortly after he and the other members of the delegation returned to Moscow: 'O poezdke Sovetskoi partiino-pravitel'stvennoi delegatsii v Kitaiskuyu Narodnuyu Respubliku', Osobaya papka (Eyes Only), 18 December 1959, in Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Noveishei Istarii (RGANI), F. 2, Op. 1, D. 415, Ll. 56–91.
- 21 Valuable documentation on the Soviet–Albanian rift is available in *Albania Challenges Khrushchev Revisionism* (New York: Gamma Publishing, 1976), a compilation put out by the Albanian government which includes full transcripts of meetings between senior Soviet and Albanian officials in 1960 as well as cables and other messages between Hoxha and the Albanian participants in the meetings. The documents have been determined to be authentic and unaltered. A somewhat expanded edition of the collection is available in French: *La grande divergence 1960* (Paris: Nouveau Bureau d'Édition, 1976). Key insights also can be gained by reading the surprisingly compatible accounts in Hoxha's and Khrushchev's memoirs: N. S. Khrushchev, 'Vospominaniya N. S. Khrushcheva', 5 vols (typescript, 1966–70), vol. IV: 'Vzaimootnosheniya s sotsialisticheskimi stranami', 'Abaniya', pp. 1109–31; and Enver Hoxha, *The Artful Albanian: The Memoirs of Enver Hoxha*, ed. Jon Holliday (London: Chatto & Windus, 1986), pp. 141–247, esp. 224–47. For an early but still useful overview of the crisis, along with a handy collection of public statements and press articles, see William E. Griffith, *Albania and the Sino-Soviet Rift* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1963).
- 22 Khrushchev, 'Vzaimootnosheniya s sotsialisticheskimi stranami', p. 1117.
- 23 'Materialy k protokolu No. 6 zasedaniya Plenuma TsK KPSS: O deyatel'nosti Prezidiuma TsK KPSS po ukrepleniyu edinstva kommunisticheskogo dvizheniya, postanovlenie Sekretariata TsK KPSS ob izdanii tekstov vystuplenii na Plenum TsK Ponomareva B. N., Andprova Yu. V., i Il'icheva L. F., rechi sekretarei TsK KPSS Ponomareva, Andropova, Il'icheva, i Khrushcheva N.S.', 9–13 December 1963 (Top Secret), in RGANI, F. 2, Op. 1, D. 665, L. 30.
- 24 See James G. Hershberg, 'Before "The Missiles of October": Did Kennedy Plan a Military Strike against Cuba?', *Diplomatic History*, 14, 2 (Spring 1990), pp. 163–98.
- 25 Many reassessments, based on newly declassified archival materials from both East and West, have appeared over the past decade. See, for example, Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *'One Hell of a Gamble': Khrushchev, Castro, and Kennedy, 1958–1964* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997), which provides a fascinating account of the origins of the crisis, the showdown itself and the aftermath. Unfortunately, though,

most of the materials that Fursenko saw in the Russian archives (based on his connections and payments made to the archive) have not been made available to other scholars.

- 26 'Obmen poslaniyami mezhdru N. S. Khrushchevym i F. Kastro v dni Karibskogo krizisa 1962 goda', *Vestnik Ministerstva Inostrannykh Del SSSR* (Moscow), 24 (31 December 1990), pp. 67–80, esp. 71–3.
- 27 'Memorandum of Understanding between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics Regarding the Establishment of a Direct Communications Link', signed at Geneva, 23 June 1963. The Hot Line was used during the Arab–Israeli wars in June 1967 and October 1973.
- 28 'Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapons Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space, and Under Water', signed in Moscow, 5 August 1963.
- 29 Marc Trachtenberg, *A Constructed Peace: The Making of the European Settlement, 1945–1963* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), pp. 379–402.
- 30 See, for example, Andrew J. Priest, 'The Failure of Alliance Politics: The United States, Europe, and the NATO Multilateral Force', *49th Parallel: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Inter-American Studies*, 1 (Winter 1999), pp. 71–85.
- 31 See Mark Kramer, 'The Czechoslovak Crisis and the Brezhnev Doctrine', in Carole Fink, Philipp Gassert and Detlef Junker (eds), *1968: The World Transformed* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 110–74.
- 32 See my analyses of this crisis in *Soviet Deliberations during the Polish Crisis of 1980–1981*, Special Working Paper (Washington, DC: Cold War International History Project, May 1999); 'Jaruzelski, the Soviet Union, and the Polish Crisis: New Light on the Mystery of December 1981', 'Colonel Kuklinski and the Polish Crisis, 1980–81', and '"In Case Military Assistance is Provided to Poland": Soviet Preparations for Military Contingencies, August 1980', all in *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, 11 (Winter 1999), pp. 5–31, 47–60 and 86–94 respectively; and 'Poland, 1980–81: Soviet Policy during the Polish Crisis', *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, 5 (Spring 1995), pp. 1, 116–28.
- 33 See, for example, 'Postanovlenie Sekretariata TsK Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soyuza: O dopolnitel'nykh meropriyatiyakh po aktivizatsii vystuplenii obshchestvennosti protiv resheniya NATO o proizvodstve i razmeshchenii novykh amerikanskikh raket v Zapadnoi Evrope', ST-206/15s (Top Secret), 15 April 1980, in RGANI, F. 89, Op. 39, D. 1, Ll. 1–4; and 'Vypiska iz protokola No. 245 zasedaniya Sekretariata TsK KPSS: Ob utverzhdenii 'V osnovnom plana svyazei sovetskikh obshchestvennykh organizatsii s obshchestvennymi organizatsiyami kapitalisticheskikh i osvobodivshikhsya stran na 1981 g.', No. 120/6s (Top Secret), 13 January 1981, in RGANI, F. 89, Op. 43, D. 46, Ll. 1–4.
- 34 Extensive KGB documentation on this topic is presented in Christopher Andrew and Oleg Gordievsky (eds), *Comrade Kryuchkov's Instructions: Top Secret Files on KGB Foreign Operations, 1975–1985* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993). See also Ben B. Fischer, *A Cold War Conundrum: The 1983 Soviet War Scare* (Washington, DC: Center for the Study of Intelligence, September 1997).

3 *On recule pour mieux sauter,* or ‘What needs to be done’ (to understand the 1970s)

Leopoldo Nuti

Research on the 1970s and the 1980s: a cautionary note

The temptation to write about the momentous events of the late 1970s and the 1980s is hard to resist, as they completely reshaped the international system that was created in the aftermath of the Second World War. The sheer magnitude of the facts that led to the revamping of the Cold War and then to the Soviet collapse is such that historians are bound to be obviously mesmerised by the possibility of studying them.

Besides, not only do historians have the usual abundance (or one should perhaps say ‘redundancy’?) of memoirs by US policymakers,¹ but they can also rely on a large mass of primary sources obtained by a number of international research projects which have been very actively promoting the dissemination of records related to this period: the Cold War International History Project, the Carter-Brezhnev project, the National Security Archive, and the Parallel History Project on NATO and the Warsaw Pact, all combine the opening of US documentation with the flow of primary sources which, more or less steadily, keep coming from the eastern European – and more haltingly and unpredictably from the Russian federation’s – archives. The availability of the papers of François Mitterrand, as well as the memoirs of some of his former collaborators, also offer an extremely important contribution to our understanding of the 1980s and the end of the Cold War.² Other memoirs of crucial statesmen of the period – Hans-Dietrich Genscher’s and Margaret Thatcher’s are a particular case in point – all contribute to equip researchers with more sophisticated tools than those usually available to historians working on the recent past.³

The problem with studying the late 1970s and the 1980s, therefore, is certainly not the customary scarcity of documentation that contemporary historians have to face when writing about recent or sensitive issues, but it rather seems to lie in the temptation to jump at the conclusion of the Cold War just because it looks so interesting, neglecting all the twists and turns that led to it and regarding them as irrelevant when faced with the crucial events of 1989–1991. In particular, as historical research moves into the study of the late 1970s and the following decade, we should be aware that we still miss the ‘critical mass’ of historical studies on the mid and late 1960s that is available, for instance, for the previous two decades of the Cold War. The second half of the 1960s, in particular, is still largely ignored,

and, as I will argue in the rest of this paper, there are no detailed studies on a number of crucial problems of these years – ranging from the West European views of *détente* and the Vietnam war to a political analysis of the Non-Proliferation Treaty to the evolution of NATO's approach to *détente*, not to mention what happened in the other bloc.

Yet another risk which, as a European historian, I am particularly aware of, is the different timing of the availability of archival sources. Even if the PRO and the *Bundesarchiv* are firmly set on following a 30 years rule, the flexibility of the American archival system makes it likely that we will have a heavy imbalance of American, *vis-à-vis* western European, documents for quite some time. In turn, this may lead historians to assign to the US an even larger role in the international history of this period than their paramount position already requires. After all, it took the release of the British documents and the subsequent studies on British foreign policy written in the early 1980s to redress the image of the beginning of the Cold War as a purely bilateral issue and to illuminate the role of Great Britain in soliciting a US involvement in European affairs⁴ – as well as, more in general, to open up the whole debate on the 'Empire by invitation/who pulled whom', which restored the early phase of the Cold War to its place in international history.⁵ If research on this period does not proceed in parallel on the two sides of the Atlantic, therefore, there is a serious risk of producing a large number of books that may age prematurely.

Coherently with this introduction, the rest of this essay tries to sketch out a tentative agenda for researching the years of early *détente*: the first part focuses on some issues of the period between the late 1960s and the early 1970s that have been overlooked by current historical research, while the second one discusses the relevance of the Cold War paradigm to understand the evolution of the international system during those years.

From the 1960s to the 1970s: suggestions for a (western European?) historical research agenda

The passage from the origins of the Cold War to its stabilisation in the 1950s has been discussed and scrutinised by a sizeable amount of studies, and the same begins to be true also for the period of the late 1950s and early 1960s, probably due to the fascination of many historians for the charismatic figures and dramatic crises of the period. As one moves on into the mid and late 1960s, however, the perspective becomes much more uncertain: while the figures of Johnson, Nixon and Kissinger and the policies of their administrations have been the object of much research,⁶ we are still far from having at our disposal a broad historical database shedding light on some of the crucial international problems of these years. In this part of the essay, therefore, I shall try and highlight some issues that I think need to be further clarified in the next future.

The scramble for détente

That the move towards the improvement of relations with the Soviet Union was implemented as a disorderly competition between the US and its Western allies is

rather well known.⁷ What is missing is a detailed, documented reconstruction of the mistrust, fear and uncertainty that the whole process engineered in the relationship between the US and its European partners.⁸ *Détente* seems to have often been perceived in western Europe as a purely bilateral affair managed by the two superpowers over the heads – and sometimes at the expenses of – the Western European allies. Some of them vacillated between trying to restore the old Transatlantic bonds under a new heading, or building up western Europe as an alternative source of strength: under the new leadership of Georges Pompidou, for instance, France explored the possibility of re-establishing a working relationship with Washington within a bilateral, rather than a multilateral, framework – only to find out that Nixon and Kissinger were bound to pursue a more unilateral course than it had been imagined, and that cultivating the US option turned out to be more difficult than expected.⁹ This left the western Europeans with the unpleasant feeling that they had to choose between reaching their own agreements with Moscow and/or strengthening their own co-operation in the EEC, but above all left them with a strong suspicion towards their American ally. Roberto Ducci, Secretary General of the Italian Ministry of Foreign affairs and one of the most perceptive Italian diplomats of the post-war period, bluntly stated that the choice for the Europeans seemed to be between European unity and a *détente* that would quickly turn into an appeasement of the Soviet Union's hegemonic interests.¹⁰

Another dimension that is often neglected is an analysis of the wide gap between the contrasting interpretations of *détente*. There can be little doubt that for Nixon and Kissinger on one side and Brezhnev on the other *détente* was perceived as a rather Metternichian attempt to bring about a relaxation of tensions by a very clear-cut demarcation of their countries' spheres of influence, as well as by the implicit corollary that nothing should be changed or altered in the domestic status quo of the states belonging to each bloc. The Brezhnev doctrine and the 1973 rightwing coup in Chile both seem to confirm this interpretation. As Joan Hoff-Wilson put it, one of the goals of *détente* was to modify Soviet behaviour 'by gaining its de facto acceptance of international cooperation and competition [...] in order to preserve international stability by according the Soviet Union a greater stake in the status quo'.¹¹

This conservative view (*détente* was clearly 'a reactionary diplomacy', wrote an Italian diplomatic historian at the time)¹² stands in sharp, clear contrast with the interpretations of all those political forces who expected *détente* to pave the way for the gradual dissolution and melting away of the blocs, and that believed that in such a climate they would enjoy a much greater freedom of manoeuvre than in the past. The Italian Communist Party would learn at its own expenses in the mid-1970s how its attempts to work out some sort of a third way in between the blocs would be opposed by *both* the Soviets – who regarded it as a dangerous precedent for the eastern European partners – and the Ford and Carter administrations – who regarded it as a new Soviet attempt to infiltrate its Trojan horse within the walls of the Western citadel.¹³ As an unknown Pole ironically resumed it to Raymond Aron, the logic of *détente* was to 'support the Communists where they have made themselves despicable, and fight them where they enjoy some popularity'.¹⁴

The impact of Vietnam

This is another large missing piece of the puzzle. While the abundance of studies on all sorts of aspects of the American war in Vietnam is truly frightening (as a quick glance at the famous web bibliography of Edwin Moise can confirm),¹⁵ there are very few studies that try to analyse the war in its international context. A quick count shows R. B. Smith's *An International History of the Vietnam War*, Gardner and Gittinger's *International Perspectives on Vietnam*, Judith Klinghoffer's interesting investigation of the connection between the war in Vietnam and the 6-days war in the Middle East, Ilya Gajduk's book on the Soviet attitude, some new books and interesting articles showing a much greater Chinese involvement than was ever suspected, and the proceedings of the conference held at the German Historical Institute in Washington in December 1998.¹⁶ In particular, there is very little on how the Western Europeans' interpretation of the war changed (or did not change) their perception of the United States; we know of their separate attempts to help finding a negotiated solution to the conflict,¹⁷ of the American pressure to obtain more straightforward declarations of support and of Johnson's scathing comments about the loyalty of the allies, but what about the overall impact of the war on the Atlantic alliance, on the trust that each European partner had placed on the United States for its own security, or what about the dramatic change in the image of the US among the western Europeans as a result of the increasing identification of the US as the aggressor in the public opinion of western Europe?¹⁸

There is also very little on the international dimension of the story – how many books on Vietnam try to relate the escalation to the general situation in South East Asia, to the *konfrontasj* between Sukarno's Indonesia and the Malayan Federation or to the failed, bloody Indonesian coup of 1965, which is probably remembered only for the wonderful movie by Peter Weir?¹⁹

The treaty of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons

This particular issue could perhaps be subsumed under the previous heading of *détente* if it were not for the fact that it is perhaps the single most underrated topic of the whole period.²⁰ In the last part of his book *A Constructed Peace*, Marc Trachtenberg basically concludes that the 1963 Test Ban Treaty was the equivalent of a peace treaty ratifying the division of Germany, since it marked the beginning of a US approach that would deny West Germany a future nuclear development and hence the chance of building up a situation of strength from which Bonn could negotiate the reunification of the country. Thus the PTBT was tantamount to a recognition of the partition of Germany: not a recognition *de jure*, which would have caused a political storm in West Germany and in NATO, but to all intents and purposes a recognition *de facto*, with which the Soviets were willing to go along. If that interpretation is true (and Adenauer's harsh criticism of the treaty, as well as the warm interest displayed by the Soviets, seem to confirm it), the 1963 PTBT marks the real 'beginning of the end' of the long, protracted

struggle for the control of Germany that started in 1945, and the beginning of a new era in which the US and the Soviet Union started a difficult, halting, dialogue in the field of arms control to define the rules of a possible bipolar condominium – in other words, the process of *détente*.²¹

The NPT of 1968, therefore, must be seen as the cornerstone of the whole process, since it made clear what the 1963 PTBT only hinted at, namely that there would not be a nuclear West Germany contesting the partition of the country. It is astonishing how this *political* significance of the treaty was quickly forgotten and how well, on the contrary, it was impressed in the minds of the diplomats of the time: Roberto Ducci, once again, remarked only a couple of months after the signature of the treaty that the thought 'that the US have given Germany's skin to the USSR for free' made him sigh.²² The fact that the whole architecture of Brandt's *Ostpolitik* could be developed only after the signature of the NPT – and after the West German signature, in particular – does not seem to be a mere coincidence, but it seems to confirm how one of the most important elements of *détente* was strongly influenced by the treaty. Once that it had given up (or that it had been forced to give up) the option of negotiating reunification from a position of strength, West Germany had no alternative to reaching its own accommodation with the Soviet Union in a separate way.

There are very few political analysis of the negotiating process that led to the NPT yet, and a limited exploration of the intentions of those governments who pursued it and of those who had to submit to its logic.²³ Regarded as just another facet of the technical, somewhat abstract logic of the Byzantine world of arms control, the NPT had on the contrary a powerful political impact and it was often regarded in Europe as a clear signal that the US was shifting its priorities: even a moderate, centrist politician such as the Italian Prime Minister, Aldo Moro, went as far as declaring that the Vietnam war and the NPT were two facets of the same nightmare scenario, which made him fear that their joint impact on Italy as well as on the rest of the West European countries would push them towards a more neutralist stance.²⁴

Elites and parties

Research on the Western bloc in the Cold War has been focusing mostly on governmental actors and policymakers, but there is a large network of very influential private and semi-private circles that was developed during the early years of the Cold War and that came to full bloom in the 1960s. Obviously this refers to all the western European political parties and their international linkages, but also to those other formal or informal organisations, which tried to bring together politicians and statesmen of different countries. How influential were they in shaping the mentalities and the perceptions of the times? Were they ever an instrument of policy or just a sophisticated international version of a bridge club?

To this day, there is only Donald Sassoon's book which tries to reconstruct the parallel evolution of the socialist parties of western Europe, but no story of the Socialist International.²⁵ Nor is there a study of the International Organisation of

the Christian Democratic Parties, of its contacts – how many people here have heard of the Geneva circle, a sort of inner club of leading European Christian Democrats – and its attempt to carve out for itself a role in Latin America; or of the semi-clandestine network of right-wing organisations that became more influential in Western Europe in the 1960s, in particular after the 1967 military coup in Greece.²⁶

As for the private circles, there are no recent historical analyses of those networks which year after year played a crucial role in staging meetings where policymakers and analysts could privately meet and discuss the evolution of the international system, be they famous ones such as the Trilateral commission the Aspen Institute, or the Bilderberg group created by Joseph Retinger and Prince Bernhard zur Lippe-Binnenfeld, or the short-lived, but influential, series of conferences known as the Harpsund meetings.²⁷ The latter, in particular, played a crucial role in bringing together members of the Social-democratic left from Sweden, Germany, and the UK with the more leftist leaders of the American TUs, namely the Reuther brothers, helping the construction of a leftist western European identity firmly set into an Atlantic framework. The story of the role that these networks played in creating and shaping the mental landscape of western Europe's political elites is still to be told, and any attempt to understand the evolution of the international system without looking at their influence would be seriously flawed.

All these issues could be probably subsumed into a larger heading, i.e. something akin to 'the role of western Europe and the world's views of its political forces in the early stage of *détente*'. Can one really understand the reactions of the western European political elites to the end of the Cold war without any previous investigation of how they perceived the possible world that was shaping up between the late '60s and the early '70s?

Such a perspective, which stresses the importance of the interaction between Washington and its European allies, leads to another consideration, namely the fact that as practitioners of 'international history' we often lack a central point of reference to our disciplines. Members of SHAFR and H-Diplo will probably be familiar with this argument, namely that there is an intellectual gap between the way the history of US foreign policy is studied in the US and the way European historians study and practice what they define as history of international relations. By focusing only on American foreign policy, and often neglecting a full reference to the history of the international system as such, US historians sometimes end up providing a rather distorted picture of the interrelationship between the US and the rest of the world. This is what Geir Lundestad called many years ago one of the risks of American exceptionalism: 'in their research and writing American diplomatic historians tend to analyse only US policies. They may make superficial references to the policies of the other countries, particularly those of the Soviet Union, but they make few efforts to really compare American policies to those of other countries'.²⁸

The writings of the old school of American diplomatic historians, raised in an age in which America was still learning that it had become a superpower, were

more similar to the traditional analysis of European diplomatic historians: America was just one of many powers in a multipolar world, whose interactions deserved the same degree of attention. US Cold War historians, on the other hand, sometimes end up studying US foreign policy in an intellectual vacuum, offering analyses which either blame the US for all the evil in the world or praise it as the source of all good. Let me therefore conclude this section by advocating an effort in order to prevent that the future leap into the 1970s and the '80s might be centred on the sole study of US foreign policy – or of US-Soviet or US-Chinese relations, important as they may be – and to write instead a true history of international relations.

The '70s and the '80s: was it still the Cold War?

This section of the chapter will discuss the relevance of the concept of the Cold War to understand the period after the mid-1960s. How pervasive is that concept in the international history of the 1970s–1980s? Is it still fruitful to support our investigations of the mindset of the key actors of that period? If the western European elites were thinking that the international system was moving in a new direction (whether they liked it or not, it's a different question), can the Cold War paradigm help us explain the tentative new world sketched out by the early seventies?

The answer to the question depends, obviously, on what one defines as the Cold War. While this is a subject with which one could easily fill a medium-sized library, for clarity's sake I shall try my hand at offering my own quick interpretation. I regard the Cold War as the result of the encounter between the unprecedented power (military, economic, political, ideological) of the US after the Second World War and the unprecedented power of the Soviet Union in the same years. (One may also want to add that the power of the two protagonists was not symmetrical, but this is irrelevant to my analysis since both were, in any case, in a category of their own when compared to the other countries.) From this encounter stemmed an original confrontation that tried to work out its own set of rules, and thus went through several stages (from acute crisis to the various attempts to establish a dialogue) until one of the two powers basically melted away. I find this basic and linear approach to be more relevant for the understanding of the period from 1945 to 1989 than all other attempts to deconstruct it in its various components, for a very simple reason: by and large, if one looks at the cognitive paradigm with which statesmen and politicians around the globe reflected *and acted* on the world around them, it was the presence of the ideological and military confrontation between the two superpowers and their blocs that shaped their view of the world and provided them with the filter through which they perceived the international system – even when the system seemed to be taking an entirely different shape and the confrontation seemed to be waning away, such as in the early years of *détente*.

A possible counter-argument to this interpretation would be that both powers had been around before World War II, and that both had been expanding for a long time. Let me then hasten to refine my point a little bit further: the fact that the

Soviet Union was a source of concern for many western European or American statesmen even before 1945 is not a very original argument – even if sometimes it pops up again in recent works such as David Foglesong's or Michael Carley's, which stress that anti-Communism was a strong political force in 1918–1919 or in 1938.²⁹ Of course it was: Arno Mayer had already demonstrated many years before how deeply the peacemakers at Versailles were preoccupied with events in Russia.³⁰ But this does not mean that the Cold War began in 1917, otherwise the interpretative value of the terminology becomes so stretched as to lose all its value: there is a huge difference between the concern about the Soviet threat of 1917 and that of 1945, and the difference is the obvious massive quantum leap in Soviet influence and military power. In my definition, on the other hand, the Cold War is marked by both the ideological dimension and by the crudest definition of power, the military one. Thus what made the Soviet Union look as a formidable threat to the other Western countries in 1945 was not just its subversive ideology or its military power, but the combination of both *plus* the contemporary vacuum which opened up in central Europe at the end of World War II – a vacuum which made Soviet power appear as even more impressive than it may have actually been.

As for the US, there is no need to spend too much time discussing the difference in American power between the beginning of the century and 1945. Of course FDR's and Truman's policies had their roots in Wilson's or Theodore Roosevelt's ones – but once again the US *relative* position by the early 20th century, strong as it was, cannot be compared with the huge prestige and power that Washington enjoyed in 1945. By then, American armies sweeping through western Europe had turned a country which existed mostly as a figment of imagination in the mental landscape of the Europeans into a very tangible model of modernity, power and progress, something which was enviable and desirable at the same time.

Yet another counterargument could be that US expansion would have taken place even without the Soviet Union, since American economic growth would have forced US policymakers to abandon their isolationism in any case. But such a counterargument does not take into account the fact that, as historians, we must consider the timing and the ways in which the US projected its power across the Atlantic, and from this point of view I think there can be little doubt that it was the confrontation with the Soviet Union that influenced and shaped the way in which the growth of US influence took place. This in turn led to a situation in which the existence of both superpowers and of their confrontation came to be regarded as a permanent feature of the international landscape. The confrontation could be tamer or harsher, but it had become one of the most important – if not *the* most important aspect – of the international system, even if it never totally excluded – not even at its harshest peaks – the possibility of an accommodation with the enemy, be it a limited, partial or an extensive one. From Truman's flickering hopes as late as 1948 to get back to some form of dialogue with Stalin, to Eisenhower and Dulles' latent search for some agreement, to Nixon's and Kissinger's desire for a set of rules for the joint management of the international

system, the possibility that an accommodation with Moscow might be found was the other, permanent side of the coin of the policy of containment.

As a final point, I do believe in the importance of ideology as one of the structural elements of the Cold War. What makes the difference between the Cold War and – say – the European system of the 19th century is not just the change from a multipolar to a bipolar system, but the fact that *both* the major powers of the Cold War had a strongly ideological view of the world surrounding them.³¹ One does not do justice to the Soviet leaders if one regards their ideology as just an ornament or a rhetoric device they used whenever they had to embellish or justify the crudest acts of realism: their ideology was the prism through which they read their own actions as well as the world they faced, through which they gave a meaning to its events and interpreted its evolution and changes. Nor can one assess the full impact of American foreign policy without taking into account the American persuasion to represent a unique chapter in the history of mankind and the recurrent US obsession to reshape the world according to its model and to export its own set of values.³² To be sure in both cases there are a number of variations and alterations, as each individual politician or statesman assigned to the national ideology a more or less prominent role in his view of the international system: but by and large it was a permanent feature of each superpower's foreign policy, and it influenced the behaviour of their policymakers to an extent that finds no comparison (with the partial exception of Henry Kissinger) in the more detached vision of the international system held by a Metternich, a Cavour or a Bismarck.

From this perspective, *détente* becomes a sort of a *contrario* demonstration of the importance of the ideological dimension. The US–Soviet dialogue was certainly the most serious attempt done by the US to eliminate the ideological dimension from the confrontation with the USSR, in order to achieve a steady equilibrium based on the nuclear balance of power. Its failure seems a clear-cut confirmation of the centrality of ideology in the international system of these years.

This also means that in order to understand the period from 1945 to 1989/91 it is hardly profitable to use the conceptual category of what Raymond Aron called 'pure diplomacy' (in his own definition, a traditional diplomacy that ignores what happens behind the other state's borders, and is concerned only with its external actions) while it seems to me much more useful to resort to the paradigm of 'international civil war', that Aron applies to those periods where the traditional confrontation based on power politics is reinforced by an ideological (or religious) one.³³ This of course does not mean that ideology should become the single crucial variable that explains all the other ones, the key factor to understand the whole period, but only that it was one of its most important constitutive elements.

In short, I do think that the concept of the Cold War is very much relevant to our understanding of the '70s and the '80s, as, in my own definition, it describes the underlying basic structure (military and ideological) of a system that takes shape around 1947 and ends between 1989/1991. The contradictions

and uncertainties of the late '60s and 1970s, in this light, seem to be the result of the attempts to move away from that system without having taken into account all its structural dimensions.

The fact that the superpower confrontation was the central feature of the international system from 1947 to 1989, on the other hand, does not certainly entail that its nature did not change throughout the period and that it cannot be subdivided into different phases, nor does it tell us much about the internal dynamics of each bloc and the possible repercussions of these dynamics on the blocs' relationship with each other – hence the need to explore all the issues discussed in the first part of the essay. It only means that most of the other trends of the post-World War II years must be assessed by taking this factor into consideration, from the process of European integration to the pace and rhythm of decolonisation. Both can be safely regarded as the two other crucial features of the international system that came out of World War II, and we must ask ourselves whether they would have been the same – indeed, we may go as far as asking whether they would have taken place at all – without the confrontation between the US and the Soviet Union. Having said that, given the relatively flexible system built by the United States in the Western bloc we must still define the evolving nature of the relationship between the US and its western European allies as well as the intra-European dialogue (if we don't want to use the expression 'jockeying for power'), taking into account the possibility that at least for a while in the 1970s most western European politicians felt a lesser need of the American military guarantee than in the past.

Notes

- 1 For a survey of the main memoirs, see Robert J. McMahon, 'Making Sense of American Foreign Policy during the Reagan years', in *Diplomatic History*, vol. 19 no. 2 (1995), pp. 367–84.
- 2 See among many others Jacques Attali, *Verbatim* (Paris: Fayard, 1993); Hubert Védrine, *Les mondes de François Mitterrand: à l'Élysée, 1981–1995* (Paris: Fayard, 1996).
- 3 Hans-Dietrich Genscher, *Erinnerungen* (Berlin: Sirdler, 1995).
- 4 Terry H. Anderson, *The United States, Great Britain, and the Cold War, 1944–1947* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1985); Victor Rothwell, *Britain and the Cold War, 1941–1947* (London: Cape, 1982); Ritchie Ovendale, *The United States, Great Britain, and the Cold War, 1944–1947* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1985).
- 5 For an overview of the issue, see Geir Lundestad, *The American 'Empire'* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 56–7; and Nikolaj Petersen, *Who Pulled Whom and How Much? Britain, the United States and the Making of the North Atlantic Treaty*, in 'Millennium: Journal of International Studies', vol. 11, no. 2 (Summer 1982), pp. 93–114.
- 6 Memoirs aside, the most recent biographical investigations are Stephen F. Ambrose, *Nixon*, 3 vols. (New York: Touchstone, various years); Robert Dallek's *Lone Star Rising and Flawed Giant. Lyndon Johnson and His Times, 1961–1973* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991 and 1998); Robert Schulzinger, *Henry Kissinger: Doctor of diplomacy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988) and Walter Isaacson *Kissinger: A Biography* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992). On US foreign policy of this period see Diane B. Kunz (ed.), *The Diplomacy of the Crucial Decade. American Foreign Relations during the 1960s* (New York: Columbia, 1994); Warren I. Cohen and

Nancy Bernkopf Tucker (eds.) *Lyndon Johnson Confronts the World. American Foreign Policy 1963–1968* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); H.W. Brands (ed.) *The Foreign Policies of Lyndon Johnson: Beyond Vietnam* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1999); William Bundy, *A Tangled Web. The Making of Foreign Policy in the Nixon Administration* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998). Richard C. Thornton, *The Nixon-Kissinger Years. The Reshaping of American Foreign Policy* (St. Paul, Minnesota: Paragon House, 2001). On US–European relations during the Johnson years, see Massimiliano Guderzo, *Interesse nazionale e responsabilità globale. Gli Stati Uniti, l'alleanza atlantica e l'integrazione europea negli anni di Johnson, 1963–1969* (Firenze: Il Maestrale, 2000); Thomas Alan Schwartz, *Lyndon Johnson and Europe. In the Shadow of Vietnam* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003).

- 7 The standard work remains Raymond L. Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation. American–Soviet Relations from Nixon to Reagan* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1985). See also Keith L. Nelson, *The Making of Detente. Soviet–American Relations in the Shadow of Vietnam* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995).
- 8 The only specific work on US–western European relations during the Nixon years was written at a time when most of the documentation was not available: Argyris Adrianopoulos, *Western Europe in Kissinger's Global Strategy* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988).
- 9 Georges-Henri Soutou, 'Le Président Pompidou et les relations entre les Etats Unis et l'Europe', *Journal of European Integration History*, vol. 6, no. 2 (2000), pp. 111–46.
- 10 Il Direttore degli Affari Politici, Roberto Ducci, al Ministro degli Esteri, on. Moro, 4 febbraio 1971, in *Roberto Ducci* (Roma: Ministero Affari Esteri, n.d.), p. 153.
- 11 Joan Hoff-Wilson, "'Nixingerism'", NATO and Détente', in Lawrence S. Kaplan (ed.), *American Historians and NATO* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1991), p. 97.
- 12 Rodolfo Mosca, 'La distensione come modello di diplomazia reazionaria', in *Affari Esteri*, no. 30 (April 1976), pp. 209–228; also reprinted in R. Mosca, *Le relazioni internazionali nell'età contemporanea. Saggi di storia diplomatica (1915–1975)*, ed. by Marta Petricioli and M.G. Enardu (Firenze: Olschki, 1981).
- 13 For the US opposition to a possible admission of the PCI in the Italian government, see Olav Njolstad, 'The Carter Administration and Italy: Keeping the Communists Out of Power without Interfering', in *Journal of Cold War Studies*, vol. 4, no. 3 (summer 2002), pp. 56–94.
- 14 Raymond Aron, *Mémoires. 50 ans de réflexion politique* (Paris: Juilliard, 1983), p. 631.
- 15 As seen in <http://hubcap.clemson.edu/~eemoise/bibliography.html#big>.
- 16 R. B. Smith, *An International History of the Vietnam War*, vol. I, *Revolution versus Containment, 1955–1961*, vol. II, *The Struggle for South-East Asia, 1961–1965* (New York: St. Martin's, 1981, 1985); Lloyd C. Gardner and Ted Gittinger, *International Perspectives on Vietnam* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2000); Judith A. Klinghoffer, *Vietnam, Jews, and the Middle East: Unintended Consequences* (New York: St. Martin's, 1999); Ilya Gaiduk, *The Soviet Union and the Vietnam War* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1996); Andreas W. Daum, Lloyd C. Gardner, Wilfried Mausbach, Christof Mauch and David Lazar (eds.), *America, the Vietnam War, and the World: Comparative and International Perspectives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). On China, see among other Cheng Guan Ang, *Vietnamese Communists' Relations with China and the Second Indochina Conflict, 1957–1962* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1997); Qiang Zhai, *China & the Vietnam Wars, 1950–1975*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Odd Arne Westad, Chen Jian, Stein Tonneson, Nguyen Vu Tung, and James G. Hershberg, eds., *77 Conversations between Chinese and Foreign Leaders on the Wars in Indochina, 1964–1977*. Cold War International History Project Working Paper No. 22 (Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center, 1998); Xiaoming Zhang, 'The Vietnam War,

- 1964–1969: A Chinese Perspective’, in *The Journal of Military History*, vol. 61, no. 3 (1997), pp. 731–62.
- 17 George Herring (ed.), *The Secret Diplomacy of the Vietnam War. The Negotiating Volumes of the Pentagon Papers* (Austin: Texas University Press, 1983); FRUS, 1964–1968, vol. IV, *Vietnam 1966*.
- 18 For an overall assessment on the war’s impact in Europe, see Frank Costigliola, ‘The Vietnam War and the Challenges to the American Power in Europe’, in Gardner and Gittinger, *International Perspectives*, cit., pp. 143–53.
- 19 Just to mention three – otherwise very good – analyses, the coup is not mentioned in Dallek’s masterful biography of Johnson or in Lloyd C. Gardner’s study of Johnson and Vietnam, and gets less than a third of a page in Nancy Tucker’s ‘Threats, Opportunities and Frustrations in East Asia’, in Cohen and Tucker (eds.), *Lyndon Johnson*, cit., p. 103. R. Dallek, *Flawed Giant*, cit.; Lloyd C. Gardner, *Pay any Price. Lyndon Johnson and the Wars for Vietnam* (Chicago: Ivan Dee, 1985). A good analysis from an American standpoint is in H. W. Brands, *The Wages of Globalism*, cit, Ch. 6, ‘Sheer Good Luck’. An attempt to link Vietnam to the events in Indonesia, not surprisingly, can be found in books that reflect a regional perspective on the war, such as the Australian one: P. G. Edwards and Gregory Pemberton, *Crises and commitments: the politics and diplomacy of Australia’s involvement in Southeast Asian conflicts, 1948–1965* (North Sydney: Allen & Unwin in association with the Australian War Memorial, 1995). For a more thorough analysis, comparing the perspectives of different actors, see John Subritzsky, *Confronting Sukarno: British, American, Australian and New Zealand Diplomacy in the Malaysian-Indonesian Confrontation, 1961–5* (London: MacMillan, 1999), and Matthew Jones, *Conflict and Confrontation in South East Asia, 1961–1965: Britain, the United States, Indonesia and the Creation of Malaysia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
- 20 I would like to use this opportunity to express my deep gratitude to Marc Trachtenberg and to acknowledge my strong intellectual debt to the many long talks we had on the political significance of nuclear weapons and the sturcture of the balance of power they underlined.
- 21 Marc Trachtenberg, *A Constructed Peace. The Making of the European Settlement, 1945–1963* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).
- 22 L’Ambasciatore d’Italia a Vienna, Roberto Ducci, al Ministro degli Esteri, Sen. Medici, 30 agosto 1968, in *Roberto Ducci* (Roma: Ministero Affari Esteri, n.d.), p. 128.
- 23 For an analysis of the NPT from a German perspective, see Wolfram F. Hanrieder, *Germany, America, Europe. Forty Years of German Foreign Policy* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989), as well as Christoph Bluth, *Britain, Germany and Western Nuclear Strategy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995) and Helga Haftendorn, *NATO and the Nuclear Revolution. A Crisis of Credibility, 1966–1967* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996). The American perspective is best narrated by one of its protagonists, Glenn Seaborg, *Stemming the Tide: Arms Control in the Johnson Years* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1987). For the UK, see J. P. G. Freeman, *Britain’s Nuclear Arms Control Policy in the Context of Anglo-American Relations, 1957–1968* (London: MacMillan, 1986), ch. 8, ‘The Search for a Non-Proliferation Treaty’.
- 24 See Moro’s thoughtful comments to Ambassador Ortona in late 1967, in Egidio Ortona, *Anni d’America. La cooperazione, 1967–1975* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1989), p. 55.
- 25 Donald Sassoon, *A Hundred Years of Socialism: The West European Left in the Twentieth Century* (London: Harper Collins, 1996).
- 26 I would like to thank Prof. Wolfram Kaiser for bringing the Geneva Circle to my attention. The essay he co-authored with Michael Gehler, ‘Toward a “Core Europe?”’ in a Christian Western Bloc: Transnational Cooperation in European Christian Democracy, 1925–1965’, in Thomas Kselman and Joseph A. Buttigieg, *European Christian Democracy. Historical Legacies and Comparative Perspectives* (Notre Dame: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 2003) is a pioneering attempt to explore this

dimension. The only scholarly study that I am aware of on the right-wing network is the Ph.D. Dissertation by Jeffrey Bale, 'The "Black" Terrorist International: Neo-Fascist Paramilitary Networks and the "Strategy of Tension" in Italy' (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California at Berkeley, 1994).

- 27 Both the Trilateral and the Bilderbergers have been more the object of a polemical, pamphlet-like literature than of serious scholarly analyses: see for instance J. Marrs, *Rule by secrecy: the hidden history that connects the Trilateral Commission, the Freemasons, and the Great Pyramids* (New York: HarperCollins, 2000); G. Virebeau, *Le monde secret de Bilderberg: comment la haute finance et les technocrates dominent les nations* (Paris: H. Coston, 1986). A scholarly interpretation can be found in S. Gill, *American Hegemony and the Trilateral Commission* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). For the Harpsund meetings, see Anthony Carew, *Walter Reuther* (Manchester: Manchester U. Press, 1993), pp. 113–15. For the role of Joseph Retinger in setting up the Bilderberg group, see Roberto Ducci, *I capintesta* (Milano: Rusconi, 1982), ch. 'Quaroni e Retinger, o dell'ispirazione', pp. 265–85.
- 28 G. Lundestad, *The American Empire*, cit., p. 19.
- 29 Michael Jabara Carley, 1939: *The Alliance That Never Was and the Coming of World War II* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1999); David S. Foglesong, *America's Secret War against Bolshevism : U.S. Intervention in the Russian Civil War, 1917–1920* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1995).
- 30 Arno J. Mayer, *Politics and Diplomacy of Peacemaking; Containment and Counterrevolution at Versailles, 1918–1919* (New York, Knopf, 1967). Another classic text that places the beginning of the Cold War in 1917 is André Fontaine, *Histoire de la guerre froide* (Paris: Fay, 1965).
- 31 For two books that share this belief in the importance of ideology for each camp, see Tony Smith, *America's Mission. The United States and the Worldwide Struggle for Democracy in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); Martin Malia, *The Soviet Tragedy. A History of Socialism in Russia, 1917–1991* (New York: The Free Press, 1994). In his more recent book, Malia changes his thesis a bit, arguing that the Soviet experiment was a sort of caricature of the West's own heritage of the Enlightenment and the French revolution Martin E. Malia, *Russia under western eyes: from the Bronze Horseman to the Lenin Mausoleum* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999); but in a recent exchange on this topic he repeated his central statement that 'under communism, ideology, though not everything, was the sine qua non distinguishing it from more prosaic forms of modernization'. 'Slutsky and History', letter from Martin Malia to the Editors, in reply to an article by Aileen Kelly, in *The New York Review of Books*, May 25, 2000, p. 64.
- 32 For an interesting reflection on these themes, see Michael E. Latham, *Modernization as Ideology. American Social Science and 'Nation Building' in the Kennedy Era.* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000).
- 33 Raymond Aron, *Gli ultimi anni del secolo* (Milano: Mondadori, 1984), p. 201.

4 The Cold War considered as a US project

Anders Stephanson

In July 1963, on the occasion of the Test Ban Treaty, John F. Kennedy remarked that the Treaty might come to 'symbolize the end of one era and the beginning of another'. A few months later he referred to 'a pause in the Cold War', a moment that, while not 'a lasting peace', might be extended 'into a period of cooperation'.¹ Such a period did in fact ensue. We remember it – in so far as we do remember it – as *détente*. One historical casualty of the current conviction that the Cold War subsumes the entire post-war period up to the collapse of the Soviet regime is the inconvenient advent of *détente*, explicitly understood as it was by both the United States and the USSR as the end of the undeclared war and the beginning of some form of 'conflictual cooperation' along the lines of more traditional Great Power relations. I myself have always thought that 'the pause' did turn into 'a new era'. In making that argument, I have also tried to develop (or 'produce', if you will) the Cold War as a genuine concept, as a historical category of explanatory power rather than the simple metaphorical term of description it now usually is. In a different register, finally, I have taken the view throughout that the Cold War was instigated by the United States, that it was, in fact, a US project. Persevering in this position may now seem a quixotic pastime. Perhaps one ought to accept the conventional wisdom and get on with it, on the assumption that what counts as the real is probably rational at some level. However, regardless of how *passé* one may consider it, this problematic reveals a curious capacity, for me at least, to generate new and irksome questions. Over time, my explorations of this issue have had less to do with the particulars of the epoch as an epoch and more with the historical conditions that made it possible for something like the Cold War to appear as a project in the first place.²

The view based on common sense seeks to uncover the essence of the Cold War either in the systemic differences between the United States and the USSR, or, more commonly, in the (revolutionary and/or totalitarian) nature of the USSR. According to the latter perspective, which coincides perfectly with the official view of the United States in the 1940s and 1950s, the USSR essentially continued the kind of relentless aggression short of war that marked the fascist powers in the 1930s. The 'Cold War', then, is a new name for the all-too-familiar mode of totalitarian expansion by means of compulsive aggression, an inherent quality

then graphically manifest in the surviving form of totalitarianism, namely, the Soviet dictatorship. The historical question then turns out to be whether or not Washington's response was adequate to this challenge.

Whether one focuses on systemic differences or on Soviet characters, however, the end of the Soviet Union consequently becomes, by definition, the end of the whole matter. Often, in fact, that blindingly obvious conclusion generates the putative premise of the argument, and not the other way around. I have polemicized against this way of looking at the problem elsewhere and will only point out now that a simple, 'epochal' conception, all-encompassing as it tends to be, occasions serious problems of demarcation. What exactly is the Cold War and where did it take place? After a metaphorical while, it turns out to be everything and nothing: suburban life in Los Angeles (why not?), educational reform in rural Australia, and decisional intrigue in the Pentagon. For better or worse, my argument goes in the opposite direction, towards, in the spirit of a delimiting critique, ever greater specificity. The Cold War as a concept, for one thing, should be kept analytically distinct from origins and effects. As initially a peculiar projection of US power, it was never everything that happened between the United States and the USSR in the post-war period up to 1963 (or 1989); it was a dominant, an overdetermining structure whose effects cut synchronically across a range of other levels and terrains. Similarly, from a diachronic perspective, its effects do not all come to an end in 1963. Thus, for example, the US escalation in Vietnam in 1965 was a residual (and catastrophically misconceived) Cold War policy; the massive intervention on behalf of the forces of violent reaction in the Dominican Republic that same year was, by contrast, Great Power management of a line already drawn.

My chapter begins with a summary of the first (taxonomic) moment in the evolution of my view of the Cold War, followed by a reconsideration of the second moment, wherein I trace anew the genealogy of the Cold War through the decisive succession of non-dialectical outlooks, strategies and policies that came to characterize the US 'way of being' towards the world during and after World War II. In a brief coda, I adumbrate a possible third moment by asking how this particular way fits other historical forms in which the United States has projected itself as a world empire (understood to mean a great power that assumes it can never have any legitimate equal). As the reader will already have sensed, I offer these remarks in the spirit of classical revisionism: that of William Appleman Williams, of course, but also the revisionism of Gabriel Kolko, who initially advanced the argument that the Cold War was really nothing other than massive expansion and violence on the part of the United States.³ In addition to ignoring the explanatory potential of the concept, Kolko was also guilty of an egregious example of reductionism, economic determinism, essentialism, historical simplification, crude anti-Americanism and assorted other ills; but he had a point.

Walter Lippmann's lucid critique of George F. Kennan's X-Article which popularized the Cold War as a term, together with Kennan's own subsequent though unannounced shift in recognition of that forceful broadside, inspired my original

argument. The columnist made (in our context) two simple but crushing points: (1) that Kennan's piece, along with the Truman Doctrine, expressed 'a disbelief in the possibility of a settlement of the issues raised by this war'; and (2) that diplomacy, contrary to Kennan's conception, is not about intimacy but about the political resolution of issues of mutual concern. Containment, therefore, implied a refusal to engage in what states in conditions of peace normally do. Consequently, Kennan's rejectionism seemed to Lippmann to be identical with that of the Truman Doctrine. Both gave expression, to gloss Lippmann's argument, to the conviction that the US-USSR relationship was marked by an incommensurability originating in the nature of the Soviet regime which thus made agreements of a lasting kind impossible.

For Lippmann, by contrast, the systemic or traditional differences between the Soviet Union and the West appeared less important than the imperatives of state interest; and agreements on concrete issues such as the withdrawal of troops from central Europe should have been eminently workable or at least easy to verify – troops were troops, and troops could be counted. The actual term 'Cold War', Lippmann's umbrella term for the continuing impasse, was probably based on the experience of the so-called Phoney War in 1939–40, when nothing much seemed to happen in the European theatre, as well as on the various non-declared wars of fascist aggression in the 1930s. Kennan himself would soon go on, famously, to a very long lifetime of brilliant critiques of Cold War thinking, critiques that were also *de facto* auto-critiques. Diplomatic rejectionism, meanwhile, became official US policy. I used Lippmann's critique in order to set forth a typology (or 'definition') of the Cold War as a series of features having to do with warlike conditions in a situation short of actual war, a war that might have been cold but was also essentially and maximalistically about the political liquidation of the other side. On this foundation, I offered a fairly precise periodization: the Cold War ended in 1963, after the apparently final division of Berlin, after the advent of full-scale Sino-Soviet conflict and, perhaps most importantly, after the horrendous implications of the Cuban missile crisis had induced, among other things, the Test Ban Treaty. The United States and the USSR ceased to operate on the assumption that the object of the exercise was to destroy the other. The one exception here, Ronald Reagan's fantasies of the early 1980s that are sometimes referred to, not unnaturally, as the Second Cold War, may indicate otherwise; but the comparative brevity of this episode only emphasized the shallowness of its structural underpinnings.

Even though this first moment rested on a taxonomy of the Cold War as a system and structure, the originating, defining 'abnormality' was located principally on the side of the United States. Kennan himself had eventually gone looking for the historical causes of the misreadings (as he perceived them) of his containment policy in the idealist peculiarities, if not perversions, of the United States. A historical inquiry, one coupled with a much stronger logical and conceptual aspect, seemed to me too to be the next sensible step in my critique. This program was pursued along two avenues. First, there was a history of the whole concept of a Cold War, its conditions of emergence, and its place within the general semantic field of peace and war. One basic feature of the Cold War as it had been delineated was,

as mentioned, a presupposition that no settlement or 'peace' in the traditional sense – traditional in the European context since the seventeenth century – was possible. Indeed, from that perspective, the Cold War constituted a return to the confessional, intramural wars of the preceding European era and to the extra-mural relationship between 'Europe' and Islam. Second, it became apparent that what more immediately enabled (and I emphasize the term 'enabled' as opposed to caused) this return to centuries-old early modern forms of war in the late 1940s was Franklin D. Roosevelt's specific conceptualization of World War II – a topic upon which I now wish to elaborate.

Roosevelt understood World War II to be not a traditional war, but a police operation, albeit a massive one, against gangsterism. Hence his insistence on 'unconditional surrender'. The fascist regimes had shown from the beginning, so far as he was concerned, that the distinction between war and peace meant nothing to them. Unleashing the big war was thus merely an exponential intensification of what had always been lawless aggression. To recognize the legitimacy of such regimes or to negotiate with them was preposterous: one does not negotiate with gangsters and outlaws. Roosevelt's polarity of gangsterism/order, in short, made retrospective sense of the international events of the 1930s. It also crucially allowed for the inclusion of the defensive Kremlin dictatorship among the forces of good. After the stunning events of June 1941, Roosevelt grasped (at least I think he did; interpreting Roosevelt always involves an element of guesswork) that 'dictatorship' was not an accurate indicator of what states will do in international relations. Some dictatorships might well be much in favor of order, if not exactly 'law'. Furthermore, by inserting a temporal dimension into the overall phenomenon, one could begin to see that cautious dictatorships contained the potential for favorable historical development if one dealt with them in an appropriate manner. Roosevelt's tactical and strategic vision, in other words, presumed two fundamentally diverging historical trajectories: fascism/gangsterism could intrinsically result only in disaster, death and destruction – the end of civilization; the forces of order, on the other hand, while not entirely made up of Wilsonian democrats, could intrinsically evolve, if given time and resources, into a civilized system. This explains Roosevelt's attempt to deal with Stalin as a proper member of the civilized club. With proper international order restored, the Soviet regime might develop into something recognizably closer to home.⁴ Though Roosevelt's tactical execution of this strategy was in many ways naive, clumsy and counterproductive, the strategy itself, given the nasty circumstances, was certainly defensible and perhaps even laudable.

It is important to note here that, contrary to Kennan's misconceived disgust at the time, FDR was not a typical US legalist. A little less forthrightly perhaps than his kin Theodore, Franklin Roosevelt was nevertheless always more interested in civilizational order than in the institutional sanctity of law as such. The Court Packing scheme of 1937 alone should give skeptics cause to ponder. It is often forgotten today, moreover, that 'the United Nations' was originally the name of the victorious wartime alliance, run in no uncertain terms by its three Great

Powers, rather than some legalistically conceived universal organization of formally equal members. And this was indeed how, with suitable modifications, Roosevelt wanted it to continue. Law as formality and procedure, then, was less important than law as an expression of a certain orderly content, the minimal precondition of which was pacification and 'policing'. All of this will immediately be seen for what it was, namely, an updated version of the old Progressive understanding of progress *circa* 1910, replete with paternalistic and indeed repressive aspects but not entirely without merit. In a wider perspective, however, (law-like) order has no positive value beyond itself. Roosevelt, hypersensitive to US opinion, or to what he imagined it to be, and probably feeling the need for something explicitly positive, also chose to introduce the thematic of 'freedom' into the picture by way of the Atlantic Charter and the Four Freedoms. Given what we know about ideology and the post-war epoch, this may now seem natural. In fact, it was mostly a contingent product of the immediately preceding, quite furious domestic struggles over the meaning of the New Deal which had, of course, been attacked from the right precisely as a form of creeping subversion of the eternal verities of US freedom, a view most illustriously embodied in the Liberty League, political residence, for a moment, of the right-wing Democrat Dean Acheson. A semantic field centering on 'freedom', thus, emerged that, though of very old lineage in the political language of the United States, had scarcely been a constant. The Progressive period, for example, the source of Roosevelt's own formative impulses, featured quite a different set of references. Political controversies over the New Deal, in any case, occasioned a left-liberal countermove whereby the concept of freedom was hurled back at the right after it had been reworked to include the novel notion of 'security', grasped as substantial rights to economic and social security for everyone. It took no great leap of the imagination to experience this combination of freedom/security as deeply persuasive, for these were times, after all, of extreme and continuous domestic insecurity. The idea that freedom was essentially about entrepreneurial rights to risk and roam without government restriction suffered a corresponding loss of resonance. Subsequently, once the place of the United States in the outside world had indisputably become insecure as well, Roosevelt was able to internationalize the domestic argument about the New Deal into a vision of a future world of peace and tranquility, a 'secure' world of orderly government, individual rights and freedom of thought. Because the whole field of meaning was predicated on some notion of inherent rights – rights of individuals and nation-states alike in their capacity as autonomous, self-determining subjects – their international translation was not without embarrassments: for example, British colonialism, massive domestic repression in the Soviet Union, race relations, quasi-colonialism, and internment of Japanese-American citizens in the United States. These problems were politically manageable, however, precisely because the gangsterism/order couplet was logically (and temporally) prior to freedom in its achieved form. This explains, for example, Roosevelt's resurrection of 'trusteeship' as a benevolent instrument of (temporary) rule over and for immature colonial peoples.

For domestic reasons, too, the appropriation of 'freedom' came to carry direct historical references to the US Civil War. Roosevelt himself, for example, liked to think that he took the formula of 'unconditional surrender' from U. S. Grant. More important, some of his chief Cabinet figures began to depict the struggle in the rhetoric of abolitionism. Thus, Henry Stimson, Roosevelt's future (Republican) Secretary of War, recycled and globalized Lincoln's famous biblical reference to a House Divided which cannot stand, but has to become either slave or free. Henry Wallace, on the left, spoke in the same spirit of a 'fight to death between the free world and the slave world', again, along the lines of the United States in the 1860s. The 'House' (grasped now as the whole world) might now be bigger, but there could still be 'no compromise with Satan'.⁵ For Roosevelt himself, this language was far less resonant, I think, than that of gangsterism, policing and order. The trope, however, of a global civil war to the death, taking place in quasi-biblical terms and concerning the abolition of slavery, was a potent one and had now been irrevocably introduced into public discourse.

In another crucial move, Roosevelt went on to connect order and freedom through a truly maximalistic claim concerning security, a claim that opened up unforeseeable and unfortunate consequences: there would and could be no final security for the United States (or for everyone else anywhere in the world) until the globe as a whole recognized and encompassed the freedoms that had been so unmistakably announced to be basic. The argument was no doubt directed at what is usually referred to pejoratively as 'isolationism' but which was (and still is) a view that favors unilateralism abroad, along with interventionism in the western hemisphere and sometimes in the Asian Pacific. Whatever its polemical target, however, Roosevelt's fusion of order, freedom and security had the effect of making every event everywhere in the world an a priori subject to an initial negative calculation. Rather than just having to demonstrate, positively, that a specific international occurrence might at times be a vital security concern, the policy-maker now had to show, in principle, that any given event or development anywhere could not possibly be any such thing. This was very hard to do if the ultimate content of security was a positive recognition of 'freedom'. If, moreover, the world was divided by a line defined by such a concept, then any gain anywhere by the forces of unfreedom would be an infringement on the security of the United States; and the size and significance of the gain would arguably be irrelevant since freedom itself was supposedly indivisible. The complications here were not apparent in Roosevelt's period, for a 'dividing line' in times of actual war was clearly drawn (as a front). What's more, that particular war not only affected the world as a whole but was decidedly about that world as well. 'The free world' during World War II was thus easily and minimally defined as all areas not under the control of fascism. 'Liberated' areas, more specifically, were those that had been cleared of fascist military power by means of violence. The free world, then, was in effect an anti-fascist concept and a clearly demarcated one.

This logic became considerably more difficult to handle once it was connected to anti-communism and Roosevelt's matrix had been projected on to a world technically at peace – once, in short, it had been explained to everyone's satisfaction

after the war that the House/world was indeed still divided, and that an evil empire occupied a huge and expanding part of it. The difficulties of the Truman administration in trying to write off such a catastrophic backward movement of the line as the 'loss' of China are readily understood: the line there was indeed still drawn as a military front and it moved visibly in one direction. Elsewhere, the graphics of the dividing line were far more diffuse and yet it had to be drawn. For once the game had been conceptualized in the manner of a real (if cold) war for security defined as the final victory of indivisible freedom, then there had to be a line drawn everywhere because, in principle, a line was there to begin with. One could not make it visible.

Hence, the idea of a civil war and unconditional surrender, together with the maximalistic notion of security as freedom, produced a solid theoretical foundation for US globalism. The completion of this ideological operation was greatly facilitated by the introduction of another concept, namely, 'totalitarianism'. It became available to Truman after the war as a way of making sense of what was read as Soviet intransigence and impositions: crude power moves, subversion and conspiracy, and unilateral takeovers, all in flagrant contravention of agreements honestly concluded. Tyrants, in the end, were tyrants, and tyrants recognized only the language of force, etc., etc. 'Totalitarianism', thus, served to collapse the differences between fascism and communism and, in the larger scheme of things, to render morally and politically suspect any argument in favor of defined limitations on US commitments. The only feasible 'American' counter-argument, that of the Republican right, was to say that such commitments threatened to create an un-American leviathan, a massive continuation not only of the wartime state but also, perhaps more frighteningly, of the hated New Deal apparatus. The globalist, however, could usually trump this. Had not the experience condensed in the names of Munich and Pearl Harbor conclusively shown what would happen when one played along with totalitarianism? Moreover, were these events themselves not, indeed, in large measure, the product of the Republican stab in the Wilsonian back after World War I? At any rate, the effects of merging two very different adversaries through the concept of totalitarianism are familiar: a simple, historical projection of fascist modes of aggression on to the Kremlin. What is less familiar is that 'Cold War' (though it never attained the terminological ubiquity in the late 1940s and early 50s it would later enjoy) became a useful category for the Truman administration by which to implicitly differentiate between fascism and communism. Both phenomena were inherently lawless and aggressive expressions of totalitarianism with which no lasting agreements could be made. The former, however, was adventuristic and prone to open (hot) war, while the latter preferred conspiracy, intimidation, secrecy, agents, proxies and creeping takeovers – in short, the tactics of a 'cold war'. An interesting shift from Roosevelt's original matrix was thus taking place. His dominant sequence 'gangsterism – liquidation – policing – order – progress' was giving way to a different one, 'totalitarianism – piecemeal aggression/cold war – counteraction (containment) – order in the free world – roll-back'. To put it another way, the reckless, hotheaded gangland figure of Al Capone was being replaced by a subversive,

ruthless Party/State, a disciplined, protean and patient machine of remarkable power and ingenuity, replete with agents and silent sympathizers, 'a farflung apparatus' in Kennan's celebrated phrase. What also made this form of totalitarianism such a formidable foe was that, unlike fascism, it evinced norms that seemed to overlap with one's own: no blasts against degenerate democracy but appeals to a presumably fuller version of it; no declarations and policies of racial superiority but critiques of it (not in the least as it was manifested in the United States); no rhetoric of geopolitical expansion but mobilization against 'American imperialism' in the name of national independence; no superman ideology but a politics of supporting the people, the underprivileged and the colonized; no sneers against legality and agreements as such but apparent insistence on them; no glorification of war but, quite explicitly, a political platform based on forceful adherence to and promotion of 'peace'. Condemning this communist world view as hollow propaganda was easy but the fact remained that, politically speaking, totalitarian communism was not the same as totalitarian fascism. 'The Cold War', then, was one way of coming to terms with that difference and to provide space for a vast range of possible countermoves.

The person who provided the administration with much of the source material for this picture of the Soviet Union was, of course, George F. Kennan. Ironically, the returning Soviet expert himself operated within a radically different framework. Kennan was only marginally interested in 'totalitarianism'. Moreover, he was not at all enamored with the shibboleths of what might be called the American tradition. Neither the Long Telegram nor the X-Article feature any accolades to 'freedom'. The author himself was, indeed, a forthright admirer of Salazar's right-wing authoritarianism in Portugal, not as a model but as a particular implementation of the organic values of hierarchical rule in a particular place and culture. With such sensitivity to specificity, as it were, how and why did Kennan's Soviet investigations lead to a Cold War posture?

I will add here to the vast quantities of ink that have been devoted to these questions by comparing the crucial rejectionist (or non-dialectical) component common to Roosevelt, Truman and Kennan – using the presidential names as convenient shorthand for something wider. For Roosevelt, there could be no proper relations with gangsters, only a struggle to the death by means of a (real) war. For Truman there could be no proper relations with totalitarians, only struggle to the death by means of a (cold) war. For Kennan, there could be no proper relations with regimes that operated outside, and fanatically against, the West, understood vaguely along Spenglerian lines as a decentered, varied world of many political traditions but anchored in the European West, a world of determinate limits, spiritually wracked, in fact, by a ruthless process of modernization and exhibiting signs of cultural disintegration that were evidenced nowhere more clearly than in the United States itself. Kennan's pessimism about the historical trends in the West, however, was muted in the immediate post-war years as he was called upon to articulate policy at the highest level. And the best policy towards antithetical, distasteful regimes was actually, all things being equal, a non-policy: dignified reserve, minimal interaction, pure distance. This was, in fact, his recipe

for dealing with the Third World, as it was later to be known. The case of the Stalinist regime called for something more active, for it was at once the most fanatical and powerful foe, one that historical accident and Western betrayal in the shape of Hitler's criminal folly had managed to position in the middle of the civilizational heartland. Hence, Moscow could not be 'ignored' in the manner that one could ignore unpleasant nationalist regimes in the decolonizing world. But it could perhaps be 'isolated'. The United States, Kennan argued, should consequently act resolutely and vigorously to rejuvenate the Western remains while also preventing, by every means possible, any advances of the adversary into such parts of the world as may be deemed strategically vital to that West. Once the inherent need to expand by opportunistic consumption of putrid Western body parts had thus been thwarted, the Stalinist regime would eventually either collapse, change into something qualitatively different or at least 'mellow' into manageable form.

All three strategic horizons begin, then, with the identification of a mortal threat whose nature and subsequent manifestations are given because of that threat's internal structure: a struggle to the death instigated by an opponent who denies one's right to exist and who has to do so because of his genetic composition. For Roosevelt and Truman, to engage that threat means to impose upon, to act upon, to eliminate; for Kennan (chiefly) it means to isolate and/or to ignore. All three insist that there can be no recognition of the opponent's political legitimacy. One can understand why Roosevelt thought this was obvious. Fascist war was obvious, the nature of fascism was obvious and the answer was obvious: all-out struggle to eradicate fascism once and for all. Things were, or should have been, far less obvious for Kennan and Truman. Soviet policy, as Lippmann realized, was in no little way a dialectical response to Western policy and not a product of any inner logic dictated by communist DNA; ample historical evidence demonstrated this. Stalin's policy, in particular, was ruthlessly traditional in its realism, a posture in turn eminently compatible with his coarse version of Leninist-Marxism. It was also (as Kennan noted without deeper analytical consideration) a policy inclined to view the sphere of security as an autarky.⁶

More vital at the moment, however, are the differences between Kennan and Truman, which tend to disappear behind their rejectionist similarities (hence Lippmann's understandable amalgamation of the Truman Doctrine and the X-Article). Among his numerous impulses and sensibilities, Kennan combined two political strands: realism and, to put it infelicitously, a vaguely Spenglerian culturalism *vis-à-vis* the West.⁷ The relation between the two was indeterminate, having affinities and overlaps, but also contradictions. The non-dialectical element at stake in the present context was a product of his overarching, 'Western' thinking. Real diplomacy – actually meaning, in a way – could only exist within a certain realm of 'intimacy', civilization as proximity as opposed to distance. On grounds of cultural and normative difference, therefore, the West should maintain its natural distance except where absolutely necessary. To the straightforward realist (such as Lippmann) this made no sense at all. Political forces, according to that view, are about power, interests and security, whatever the ideological or

cultural complexion of the regime in question. The central question is, thus, what sort of 'interested action' any given configuration of power might generate or allow. Paradoxically, Kennan swung around in 1948 to seeking the solution to his central culturalist problem – namely, that of 'Europe' itself – in such realist terms. Domestic experience in the United States had reawakened his misgivings about the capacity of his government – a hopelessly fractured machinery working against the universalist idealism of public opinion – to conduct a suitably agile foreign policy. Meanwhile, Lippmann's critique, the successful prevention of a communist election victory in Italy, Tito's break with Stalin, Stalin's own internal defeat over the issue of NATO, and the militarization of the division of Europe propelled Kennan to develop a realistic set of proposals for dismantling that division through an agreement with Moscow on Germany. Tragically, for him and for Europe, a simplistic version of his own containment policy was pursued instead, thus (in my view) not only postponing for decades the unification of the region but also rendering infinitely more difficult the positive development of the Soviet Union.

Though neither of Kennan's two ways of being towards the world had any extensive sanction in US traditions, his erstwhile account of fanatical Soviet expansionism lent itself to immediate appropriation within the universalist vision of the Truman Doctrine. Oddly, one facilitating factor here had to do with Kennan's Western culturalism, or, more precisely, its analytical effects. Culturalism traditionally tends to imagine that societies are integrated wholes and that these are also, metaphorically or literally, organic substances, bodies. (Contemporary culturalism is an interesting mirror inversion of this view since it perceives society as being purely a construction.) For Kennan, then, the real body, the body that matters, is the West. When he worries about this body – and he worries a great deal – it is consequently in the analogical terms of health and disease. The healthy body is already threatened by disease, from within as well as from without. The Soviet regime constitutes just such a disease: an external parasite which can become a cancerous growth (to muddle up the medical metaphors) if it finds suitably degenerate tissue inside. The parasite/disease, it stands to reason, can only be studied and understood when fixed under a microscope. Once scientifically illuminated and mapped, the disease can then be treated by appropriate measures: isolated rather than ignored, contained if you will. For in the absence (I suppose) of some injected gene therapy of sorts, the only possible countermeasure short of killing it by a vast violent smacking move was to prevent it from finding feeding grounds. Then, deprived of nourishment for growth, it would eventually die. The parasite, though active and alive, is to be treated throughout as an object – an object of knowledge and an object of action. It would be absurd to treat it as a subject or to recognize it as a dialectical other.

As it turned out, Kennan's morphological image of the object-parasite was immensely compelling to the Truman administration. Its particulars fit especially well into the grand narrative of freedom and totalitarianism: fanatical, devious, inherent expansionism understood as a malignant parasite, it was a creature whose behavior was innately predetermined. This non-dialectical, diagnostic

view, moreover, was easy to grasp in the United States and could accommodate, indeed explain, existing and seemingly irrefutable facts. Again, when combined with the totalitarian trope and the references to Munich and Pearl Harbor, it became a massively powerful ideology: it became Truth. The fact that Kennan's own frame featured a very different set of coordinates, constituting a sharp contrast to the universalist precepts of the Doctrine, was occluded by momentary political coincidence. Once, however, the analysis of the particular had served its universalizing purposes on behalf of 'the free world', Kennan's divergences began to manifest themselves and his political usefulness began to diminish. From then on there was no more need to delve into the peculiarities and possible internal dynamics of the Soviet Union. Ironically, though the universalizing policy of the Truman administration and its Republican successor was structured on the idea of winning a Cold War against the Soviet regime, the essence of the actual policy turned out to be nothing other than a version of the early Kennan's policy of isolation by containment. The Soviet Union itself became an axiom, a non-problem. Typically, none of the major policy documents after 1948 feature anything but the most perfunctory and sterile rhetoric on the subject. Accordingly, the experts in the field, while sometimes remaining prominent figures, found themselves largely overlooked when they offered any views of substance.

Whatever the analytical issues, a powerful 'material' factor in this development was found in the fact that the non-dialectical aspect allowed the Truman administration to resolve a colossal problem of structure: how to put the United States and its unexampled power into the world on a permanent, sustained basis. Only on the basis of the twin assumptions of a global, mortal threat, on one hand, and the impossibility of 'appeasing' it by political, that is, diplomatic, means, on the other, could this be accomplished. That is not to say that the threat was manufactured for some more fundamental and sinister reason. It is to say, however, that the Cold War made it possible for the United States to ascend to the position of 'leader of the free world', together with allowing for a restoration of order in the capitalist West and the imposition of order elsewhere outside the communist world proper. The last-named exercise was hardly a success but the achievement overall was formidable and makes it perfectly clear why there was never any great urgency in re-evaluating the ultimate premise and basis of the whole edifice, why in fact such attempts made little sense and were dismissed, if not outright silenced.

Now, too, the road had opened up for what may be grasped as the Americanization of the totalitarian thematic, a transmutation illustrated nowhere more eloquently than in NSC 68, the voluminous and foundational policy document produced by the State Department during the spring of 1950.⁸ Sometimes dismissed as nothing new, as insubstantial rhetoric, or (simply) as a crass pitch for mobilizing huge increases in military spending, NSC 68 actually expresses the Cold War posture in its highest form. Paul Nitze, Kennan's successor as head of the Policy Planning Staff (PPS), was in charge of the document's overall composition but other members of the PPS were responsible for the effusively ideological style and much of its actual content. The central feature in this regard was the

return to the wartime allusions of the Roosevelt administration, that is, to the American Civil War. NSC 68 dwells obsessively on the opposition between freedom and slavery, doing so in an idiom lifted directly it seems from the abolitionist movement of a century earlier. Once again, the idea of the world as a House Divided writ large gained currency. Freedom was permanently endangered on a global scale by the enslaving, despotic conspiracy, the latter by virtue of its nature, turning it into a struggle to the death. Just like the Southern slavocracy of the 1850s, the Kremlin too could not tolerate the existence of freedom elsewhere. Evil communism, consequently, is inherently condemned as destroying all vestiges of freedom by every means at its disposal. The opposition is not dialectical (to put it differently, it is not Manichean) for the two sides are not equals: they do not symmetrically presuppose one another. Freedom is posited as the natural condition of humankind, a condition of complete independence and autonomy that needs no other. Slavery, by contrast, has no independent existence. While certainly the opposite of freedom, it is a subversive perversion rather than a dialectical other. Slavery, therefore, can only exist parasitically, as an attempt to destroy freedom. It follows, then, that its exponents have no possible legitimate interests or concerns: their entire *raison d'être* is to engage in formidably ingenious 'designs' to undermine the plural 'purposes' of the free world, by definition the only realm invested with legitimacy. It also follows (in another Rooseveltian revival) that until everyone, everywhere, is free, freedom will be in peril, which is to say there could be no relaxation of effort on the part of the fortunate free in combating this savage enemy across the board in what was really (as NSC 68 says) 'a real war'. The document, predictably, climaxes in exhortations on behalf of a huge expansion of such efforts.

This language had sources of inspiration beyond the abolitionism of the 1850s and the ferocious struggle to force sinful slave drivers into unconditional surrender, sources indeed reaching back beyond the American revolution and towards the radical Protestantism of the English Civil War. In 1950, however, this is a thoroughly 'American' language, impossible to imagine in any other political culture. It made good American sense, however, and more existential sense perhaps, than did talk that was solely restricted to totalitarianism, which was not only itself alien but also somehow gave rise, as a name, to alien abstraction. Abolitionism offered archetypes and a re-enactment of timeless truths, the sort of universalism that Kennan had already condemned internally in the spring of 1948 as 'escapism', as avoiding 'the national peculiarities and diverging political philosophies of foreign peoples, which many of our people find confusing and irritating'.⁹ Thus, NSC 68 realized a sort of apotheosis of the non-dialectical view: abolishing degraded and degrading evil by means of an uncompromising, herculean struggle. While paying formal homage to the concept of containment, the paper is in substance already pervaded by the spirit of 'roll-back', the next great spatial metaphor which also presupposed a line already drawn. Containment is symptomatically translated as 'a policy of calculated and gradual coercion', and there are more than subtle hints that Kennan's version of it implied something altogether too passive (perhaps limited?). 'Frustrating the Kremlin design', a phrase soon to be

borrowed by the Republicans, necessarily entailed more offensive action, using the 'current Soviet cold war technique' against the Soviet Union itself and taking 'dynamic steps to reduce the power and influence of the Kremlin inside the Soviet Union and other areas under its control' so as to create 'friendly regimes not under Kremlin domination'. This was because the status quo, what NSC 68, in a key phrase, calls the 'diplomatic freeze', was morally and politically intolerable as such, tilting the situation, in fact, in favor of evil. To put it more plainly, the Cold War was putting the free world itself in increasing danger while liberating none of the enslaved. 'More of the same' (i.e. containment as hitherto practiced) had to be replaced by a policy whose foundation was military escalation, presumably in order to intensify the said 'calculated and gradual coercion'.

One could argue that this signified nothing more than a shift in coloration and certainly no real break with traditional containment, which had always presupposed a strong military component. One could argue, in short, that Nitze and the PPS were just readjusting the original, non-dialectical concept of containment to new and sombre strategic realities (China and the Soviet atomic test), giving it a supposedly more adequate activist and, above all, military tinge, all in preparation for the real object of the paper, namely, military expansion. This is true. Yet the abolitionism of NSC 68 raised the bar qualitatively and turned Kennan's 'particularist' reading of the Soviet problem into a universal, global quest for the eternal victory of freedom. Whereas even the non-dialectical Kennan of 1946–47 had allowed, in a minor key, for the possibility of a 'mellowing' Moscow with which one could deal – an image which, curiously, left it up to the policymaker to subjectively decide when that moment had arrived – and the Kennan of 1948 had decided on other grounds (indeed, somewhat paradoxically, in part because the very opposite of mellowing was taking place) that dialectical diplomacy was now fine and proper, NSC 68 in effect offered no such scenario. On the contrary, the document constitutes an emphatic reaffirmation of Lippmann's earlier verdict that the Truman administration had begun to rule out settlement of outstanding issues left over from the war. Another way of putting the matter is to say that NSC 68 had effectively reissued in amplified form Roosevelt's wartime matrix, with a reorganized concept of order and policing. The historizing concept of order and the attendant idea of freedom had now been exclusively transplanted into the non-communist world. Hence, the realm of freedom soon came to include a range of very orderly right-wing dictatorships: Roosevelt's idea about the Soviet regime as applied to oppressive regimes whose anti-communism (and 'authoritarianism' to order) made them potentially free in some imaginary future. And so it came to pass that, by the early 1950s, General Franco's fascist Spain was turning into a valued member of the free world.

As for the leader of that free world, the authors of NSC 68 insisted (this was Nitze's own chief point) that the United States had 'a wide gap of unactualized power' and had 'scarcely begun to summon up its forces'. Herein lay, of course, the fundamental divergence with the ensuing Eisenhower administration, for which such unbridled summoning up also meant unbridled statism. Yet, at the same time, the Republicans had upped the ante by committing themselves in no

uncertain terms to the very same logic of invigoration as contained in NSC 68, indeed rendering explicit the latter's *sotto voce* criticism of containment as too passive and as reinforcing the status quo. Thus, the Eisenhower campaign in 1952 casts (and castigates) containment as a policy of merely holding the fort, as *de facto* appeasement and, to use the clever slogan of the time, as a surrender on the installment plan. Containment was a disgraceful failure, forcing the United States to such deeply un-American stalemates as the one vividly demonstrated in Korea.

The imaginary resolution to the Republican dilemma of more activism and less statism was, of course, less people and more things nuclear. But this was no more than tinkering. The basic orthodoxy of NSC 68 remained in place. Perhaps the best index of that is the continuing inability to come to terms with the issue of negotiation. If sticking to the existing line (i.e. containment) without much diplomacy was really appeasement, then actual negotiation was clearly far beyond the pale. Moreover, the actual political project was overwhelmingly about the non-communist, as opposed to communist, world, and negotiating with the latter would only jeopardize the axiomatic divisions that enabled the project in the first place. Nonetheless, it proved impossible to entirely avoid the issue. NSC 68 wrestled with it, on the whole disingenuously, always tellingly. Mention was made that one ought to develop a negotiating position. After all, world opinion might be in favor of negotiations, in itself a supposedly good and Western thing to do. The truth of the matter, however, was that to negotiate in the given circumstances could only mean one of two alternatives, the one worse than the other: recognition of the status quo or compromise and concessions. Neither was acceptable since the existing House Divided was a moral outrage and a historical impossibility – again, one does not compromise with Satan. As NSC 68 wistfully admitted in passing, the only politically correct kind of negotiation would be one concerning ‘a settlement which calls for a change in the Soviet system’. This is then correctly dismissed as an absurdity, leaving negotiations as either tactical propositions designed to make Moscow look bad or a simple registry for expected successes in the ‘policy of gradual and calculated coercion’. The Eisenhower administration inherited the frame, the quandary and the fictional solutions. It is amusing to note the handwringing and unease that arose whenever the issue came up during the frequent seminars Eisenhower used to run in the form of National Security Council meetings. Once in a blue moon, some Cabinet member from the Republican heartland, someone not exactly in the international ‘know’, would unwittingly reveal the nature of the game by thinking aloud that maybe there was no use in ‘trying to kick Russia in the shins’ or, with reference to personal experience of domestic labor relations, that the United States ‘could no more bully the Soviet Union than we could bully the labor unions’.¹⁰ Typically followed by Eisenhower’s waffling about essential agreement amidst confusing abstractions and some tactically soothing words from John Foster Dulles, the matter would expire in vagueness and in direction.

The central Republican policy document of the period, NSC 162/2, appearing, symbolically enough, under the rubric ‘Reduction of the Soviet Threat’, is thus remarkably wishy-washy on the topic.¹¹ Negotiations did of course happen at

times, but as Dulles said in a moment of candor regarding the cases of Berlin and Geneva, 'we did not actually desire to enter in either negotiation, but felt compelled to do so in order to get our allies to consent to the rearmament of Germany'.¹²

By now a third moment in the development of my argument is discernible, one which raises the question about nothing less than the sources of US conduct. Having followed a certain pattern of non-dialectical rejectionism, one would proceed to ask if there was historically something in the formation and development of the United States that was conducive to such a posture. D. W. Meinig has suggested in his monumental historical geography that the development of the United States was peculiarly non-dialectical, a process of quantitative addition rather than any genuine 'situatedness'.¹³ Its astonishing success, a product of unrepeatable historical circumstances, could thus be structured and imagined as the final world empire, a 'Weltreich' in Otto Hintze's sense of a power that, while knowing there is an outside beyond its actual control, cannot conceive of itself as having any equal, or that the outside is in fact ever essentially similar.¹⁴ While the United States is the world, in other words, the world is not the United States. That gap opens up the space for a potential decision to act or not to act: the actual, degraded world outside can be redone or rejected, in both cases because of the same logic of difference. US expansion and expansionism have moved within both frames, sometimes simultaneously. Its initial phase (from 1789 until the Civil War), the 'empire for liberty', was thus an expansion that resembled a cellular replication of the same: an ongoing addition of states reproducing an originary essence while ignoring the outside as much as possible. The second phase, civilizational empire (from 1898 to 1910), featured European-style imperialism as filtered through the ideology of civilizational uplift typical of Progressivism; this was a case of continuous connection to the European and of reforming an objectified outside. The third phase was the brief but world-historical interlude of Wilsonianism, the United States as a Mosaic lawgiver to a putatively grateful world. The Cold War, finally, is abolitionism on a global scale, a metaphorical re-enactment of the American Civil War, a thrust which provides the possibility of becoming the hegemonic 'leader' of the only world that could be deemed genuine and proper. It ends in failure, in concessions and recognition of the enemy, in a nuclear stalemate of balanced terror where nothing much of substance can be abolished. Yet, in a way that I am tempted to describe as curiously dialectical, that very recognition of failure eventually gave rise to the abolition which abolitionism could never achieve.

Notes

- 1 John F. Kennedy, *Let the Word Go Forth: The Speeches, Statements, and Writings of John F. Kennedy*, T. Sorensen (ed.) (New York: Delacorte, 1988), pp. 293, 300.
- 2 See (mainly) Anders Stephanson, 'The United States', in D. Reynolds (ed.), *The Origins of the Cold War in Europe: International Perspectives* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994); Anders Stephanson, 'Fourteen Notes on the Very Idea of

- a Cold War', in G. O'Tuathail and S. Dalby (eds), *Rethinking Geopolitics* (New York: Routledge, 1999), which was originally written for H-Diplo, where it appeared during May–June 1996; Anders Stephanson, 'Liberty or Death: The Cold War as American Ideology', in O. A. Westad (ed.) *Reviewing the Cold War* (F. Cass, London, 2000).
- 3 Gabriel Kolko, *The Politics of War* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1969); Gabriel and Joyce Kolko, *The Limits of Power* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972).
 - 4 This argument is inspired by Warren Kimball's voluminous and authoritative work on Roosevelt, especially his *The Juggler: Franklin Roosevelt as Wartime Statesman* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).
 - 5 Henry A. Wallace, *The Price of Free World Victory* (New York: 1943), p. 375. Stimson's use can be found in the *New York Times*, 15 June 1940.
 - 6 Limited space does not permit any elaboration, but for a catastrophic example of what Stalin's political realism – or hyper-realism as I prefer to think of it – could produce, see Gabriel Gorodetsky's fascinating account, *Grand Delusion: Stalin and the German Invasion of Russia* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999) regarding his diplomatic maneuverings in relation to Hitler during 1940–41. One can argue, of course, that Moscow (or Stalin) 'caused' the Cold War because, in his realism, he failed to grasp the nature of US foreign policy and that by playing the game in traditionally cynical fashion he ended up triggering the Cold War policy he actually dreaded. Yet, this argument misses the real 'origin' of the Cold War, whose fundamental condition of possibility is the United States itself.
 - 7 I draw here on Anders Stephanson, *Kennan and the Art of Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989); and Anders Stephanson, 'Kennan's Abendland: On Nationalism, Europe, and the West' (unpublished). I have also benefited from conversations with Patrick Jackson.
 - 8 All quotations from NSC 68 as reproduced in *FRUS*, 1950, vol. I, 237–92.
 - 9 Kennan's point is made in the wide-ranging policy paper PPS 23. See *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, vol. I: 2 (Washington, DC, various dates), p. 526. His target is legalist versions of universalism but the argument is applicable to any form.
 - 10 These pronouncements were made by Secretaries Humphrey and Wilson, respectively, at the NSC meeting on 21 Dec. 1954. See *FRUS*, 1952–54, vol. II: 1, National Security Affairs [1984] 837, 840.
 - 11 NSC 162/2, finally passed on 30 Oct. 1953, can be found in *FRUS*, 1952–54, vol. II: 1, National Security Affairs [1984].
 - 12 *FRUS*, 1952–54, vol. II: 1, 843. Dulles made the remark on 21 Dec. 1954.
 - 13 D. W. Meinig, *The Shaping of America: A Geographical Perspective on 500 Years of History*, vol. I: *Atlantic America, 1492–1800* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986), and vol. II: *Continental America, 1800–1867* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993).
 - 14 Otto Hintze's formulation in his *The Historical Essays of Otto Hintze* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 468.

5 Beginnings of the end

How the Cold War crumbled

Odd Arne Westad

The Cold War, as an international system, had not one but many endings, which were spread out over several continents and over the decade or so prior to 1989. All of these belonged to larger processes of change, some closely connected to the functioning of the Cold War system of bipolarity and some that developed at its geographical and social periphery. If one compares the end of the Cold War to the demise of earlier international systems, such as the Franco-British rivalry of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, or the wars of religion two centuries before that, the period of its decline can be said to have been relatively brief. This was perhaps a result of the twentieth century's revolution in communications: news of the system's fragility spread much more quickly than did, say, word of the weakening of the Qing empire in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

While this chapter attempts to identify several of the preconditions for the political changes of the late 1980s and early 1990s, it is vital to understand that these preconditions were manifested in specific historical moments. Such moments were not only representative of general trends. They were also decisive events in their own right in which choices were made or given expression that linked preconditions to outcome. These are moments, in other words, that are both constituent and constituting. They throw light on why men acted as they did, and thus had direct and far-reaching consequences.¹

There is obviously great variation in how and when the Cold War ended for people of different groups and nations. In the Middle East, it could be argued that the Cold War ended with the Iranian revolution of 1978–79, a political, religious and social revolt in which both pro-Western modernizers and pro-Soviet communists were outmaneuvered by Islamist groups whose agenda only tangentially related to central Cold War concerns.² In China, the Cold War possibly ended with Sino-Soviet normalization in the spring of 1989, a process that, like the killings of students in Beijing the following month, could be undertaken without seriously interfering with Deng Xiaoping's relations with the West. Both of these 'end-points' serve as useful reminders that the Cold War did not always have a happy ending for the people who had previously lived in its thrall.

The endings discussed and analyzed below are only five among many that were proposed at the conference from which this chapter grew. They have a variety of geographical as well as topical centers. Nevertheless, they all underline the fact

that the gradual end to the Cold War often had less to do with spectacular events, such as the fall of the Berlin Wall, than with changes in perceptions and priorities. In simple terms, at given points, these were issues that began to matter more to a society than its Cold War concerns. The Cold War system, thus, to most people in most places, did not so much collapse as become increasingly irrelevant. Perhaps more than anything else, the events presented below sketch a history of the end of the Cold War that shows how leaders, East and West, responded to such changing concerns.³

Willy Brandt in Warsaw, 1970

One of the strongest images in European post-war history is that of West German Chancellor Willy Brandt on his knees in the December snow, paying homage to the Poles killed by Germans after the 1944 Warsaw uprising. Brandt had come to Warsaw in 1970 to sign a treaty normalizing the Polish–West German relationship, made possible by Bonn’s formal acceptance of the post-war Oder–Neisse line as the border between the two countries. But the visit’s significance was not merely born of the Federal Republic’s acceptance of the permanent loss of the German eastern lands, which advanced Brandt’s policy of dismantling the divisions of post-war Europe (*Ostpolitik*). It rested no less on the symbol of a German Chancellor, whose own return to Germany after the war had been in an *Allied* uniform, who by a spontaneous act personally accepted German guilt for the unspeakable crimes committed during World War II. For the millions who watched the live broadcast on television – especially in eastern Europe – Brandt’s gesture represented an end to the post-war era, undermining as it did those fears of German revanchism that had helped legitimize the Soviet–east European alliances.

As the Polish intellectual Adam Michnik recently remarked, a direct line connects Brandt’s kneeling gesture in Warsaw and the Polish and Czech entrance into the Western economic and military alliances 30 years later. Without the policies represented in Brandt’s act, those elements from the past that perpetuated the division of Europe into two enemy blocs could have remained in place much longer. It is, I would argue, the image of Germany that is the crux of the story here. With a revitalized Germany (slowly) being transformed from bugbear to trading partner, the Soviet hold on eastern Europe (and especially Poland) began to slip. The east Europeans of course had plenty of other reasons to complain about communist domestic and national oppression and to oppose an alliance with Moscow in the first place. But the image of a fascist/revanchist Germany, assiduously cultivated by the KGB and its friends, remained remarkably current among the peoples of the East even in the late 1960s, and was an obstacle to their ability to envision a different European state system.

Among many possible projects that could be devoted to the study of the changes that occurred in eastern Europe, I am particularly fond of recommending a comparative study of how the terms and concepts of history were transformed during the 1970s and 1980s. When talking to friends from that part of Europe, I was struck at the time by how the ‘liberation’ of 1945 was being replaced with

'occupation', how Hitlerite and Stalinist tyranny gradually became equated (and the links between them became observed and explicit), and how, especially in Poland, an increasing awareness of German history worked to weaken the perception of the Third Reich (and the GDR) as 'the real Germany'. Once Brandt represented the real Germany – he was elected in the autumn of 1969 largely due to his foreign policy platform – this alternative became increasingly real. Brandt's own comment on election night – 'Now Hitler has truly lost the war' – meant more than simply the fact that an *émigré* had become the first SPD chancellor since 1930.⁴

While deliberately changing the image of Germany by validating the outcome of World War II, Brandt's *Ostpolitik* was also an activist policy. In place of 'Germany as the enemy', he and the SPD leadership sought to promote the image of 'Germany as a leader'. Economically as well as politically German involvement in eastern Europe grew from almost nil in the mid-1960s to a position of prominence a decade later. Instead of dealing with eastern Europe and the GDR through Moscow, as Adenauer had done, Brandt used German economic power in order to establish direct relationships with the countries to its east. One of the reasons the Soviets 'feared Brandt more than they did any of his predecessors' was that his government deliberately sought to increase all levels of contact across that Iron Curtain which was increasingly becoming a protective wall for the Soviets. For the Soviets, Brandt's slogan '*Wandel durch Annäherung*' came to mean 'change through getting too close', just as domestic criticism of Brandt – spearheaded by the spiteful campaigns of Axel Springer's *Bild-Zeitung* – considered it to mean 'change through becoming more like the East'.⁵

Brandt's policies no doubt led to greater contact between the two halves of Europe and prepared the way for European *détente* and the Helsinki Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) in 1975. It is also relatively obvious that the permeability of borders benefited the West more than it did the East, ultimately contributing to the collapse of the east European regimes. By the mid-1980s, those regimes were most anxious to limit ties with the West in order to ensure their own survival. But by then it was too late. It was only right, then, that Willy Brandt, chairman of the SPD at the time, was the first foreign leader received by Mikhail Gorbachev in the Kremlin after the latter's election as General Secretary in 1985.

The question remains over whether the collapse of communism was an *intentional* or *unintentional* effect of *Ostpolitik*. In other words, did *Ostpolitik* constitute an acceptance of the European status quo, with the resulting defeatist connotations, or was it a deliberate German strategy intended to weaken and ultimately destroy Soviet positions on the continent? The posthumous reinvention of Willy Brandt as an all-European saint has done little to advance this debate.⁶ Brandt, like almost everyone else in Europe in the early 1970s, clearly expected the communist regimes in the East to last for a very long time. He also clearly preferred, as did his successors, to give and take with the east European elites, neither foreseeing nor encouraging revolt from below. On the other hand, Brandt was perhaps the first Western leader who regarded his east European opponents

as *politicians* who would have to respond to pressures from various segments of their societies as the links with the West grew closer. Brandt fully expected this long-term process to loosen the ties that bound these countries to the Soviet Union. In other words, Brandt expected the Eastern elites to eventually *open up* to change. In the end, however, it was popular participation and the attraction of a strong Germany within an integrated western Europe that made these changes irreversible.

Enrico Berlinguer in Rome, 1979

At the Festa dell'Unità in Rome in June 1979, the General Secretary of the Partito Comunista Italiano (Italian Communist Party, or PCI), Enrico Berlinguer, spoke out publicly for the first time against the structure of Soviet socialism, demanding free elections and freedom of information as essential preconditions for popular rule. For the Moscow leadership, Berlinguer's remarks came as no surprise. They were accustomed to criticism from Italian communists, expressed both in bilateral meetings and in *l'Unità*, the PCI newspaper. However, for millions of *west European* communists it was the first time the head of the largest communist party in the West – which received more than 30 per cent of the Italian popular vote – had delivered *ex cathedra* a comprehensive and personal critique of Soviet socialism. To many, Berlinguer's remarks meant that he now viewed Moscow as an enemy of the goals his party was struggling for. The 'light from the October revolution', which Berlinguer's predecessor Togliatti so often held up to his audiences, seemed finally to have been extinguished in western Europe.⁷

The emergence of Eurocommunism, as presented by leaders of the Italian, French and Spanish Communist Parties, altered the conditions under which the Cold War was fought and helped to transform the framework in which political developments took place in Europe – both west and east – and in the Soviet Union. In the western states, Eurocommunism meant that the majority of communists accepted those very institutions – parliamentary, social and educational – that had stood at the core of the communist critique of capitalist society for generations. Most historians and political sociologists agree that in the wake of the unrest of the late 1960s CP leaders decided that, for the time being, they had more to fear from *challenges* to bourgeois institutions emanating from both the right and the left than they had from their political opponents *within* these institutions. General apprehensions over social stability could be translated into brokered deals with other parties that met the short-term demands of their working-class members. The communist parties further expected that their electoral fortunes would improve as a result of such 'social compromises' and that, by the end of the decade, they would be close to assuming power through the ballot box.⁸

Many anti-communist observers at the time, both in Europe and in the United States, dismissed the new-found communist dedication to bourgeois institutions as solely tactical, comparing Eurocommunism to earlier periods of moderation and predicting that it would eventually be overtaken by renewed revolutionary activism. They viewed the communist criticism of the Soviet Union as an obvious

expression of such tactics and anticipated a renewal of allegiance to Moscow once the Soviets and west European communist leaders considered that to be opportune. Historical sources reveal that in the first half of the 1970s these suspicions might have been well founded. In Italy, for instance, the PCI fully expected that a return to 'revolutionary mass action' would be necessary in order to defend the gains the party would make *within* bourgeois institutions. At the same time, the 'independence' of the west European CPs was not only accepted but actively encouraged by Moscow as a tactic intended to attract support and help uncouple western Europe from the United States.⁹

But, as sometimes happens, things turned out rather differently. As criticism of the Soviet Union became legitimate, party intellectuals began to look critically at their own history and started to develop a more profound critique of the Soviet experience, focusing on the *causes* of oppression and stagnation. Such activities were at first restricted to a distinct minority within the CPs. But because they were allowed to make themselves heard, such critiques gradually began to influence the discussions among party leaders and set the tone for party discourse. Berlinguer, a restless soul, felt that his loyal criticism of Soviet policies – concerning eastern Europe, for instance – was not taken seriously by the Moscow leaders. Influenced by critical intellectuals within the Italian party, he initiated a move that would ultimately lead his party to exit entirely from the Soviet orbit.

The first serious challenge to Moscow's world view was Berlinguer's remarkable statement in mid-June 1976 in which he claimed that Italy's NATO membership would *facilitate* the creation of socialism in Italy. 'It is better to be in this area. This guarantees us the kind of socialism that we want, to be precise, socialism in liberty, socialism of a pluralist type.'¹⁰ The new PCI position on Italian NATO membership provoked a furious personal letter from Moscow to Berlinguer. But the Italians would not relent. In 1977 the PCI's newspaper and party journals began to report on Soviet and east European dissidents, including Brezhnev's personal *bêtes noires*, Iurii Orlov and Aleksandr Ginzburg. They also took up the cause of the Czechoslovak opposition movement, Charter 77, condemning the Prague government for its violations of human rights. When criticized by the Soviets for sabotaging Moscow's attempts to negotiate with the United States, the PCI responded that it was fully possible to both criticize human rights abuses *and* support arms-control negotiations, a position remarkably similar to that taken by the new US administration of Jimmy Carter. From the spring of 1978, the PCI also attacked the Soviet military presence in Africa and began to support the Eritrean liberation movements in their armed uprising against the Soviet-backed regime in Ethiopia.¹¹

Nevertheless, Berlinguer attempted to keep channels open to the Soviets up to mid-1979, characterizing the Soviet Union as 'socialist', sending delegations to Moscow and receiving delegations from the CPSU in Rome.¹² But uncertainties in the relationship to the 'fatherland of socialism', together with a lack of results in Berlinguer's *compromesso storico* (historical compromise) with the ruling Christian democrat government of Giulio Andreotti, contributed to a decline in support for the party. Berlinguer's decision to go public with a comprehensive

criticism of the Soviet Union was probably connected to the PCI's withdrawal of support from the Andreotti government and the need to create clarity before the resulting mid-1979 elections. At the 15th PCI Congress that spring, Berlinguer criticized internal as well as external Soviet policies. The assertion that the *compromesso storico* could mean competition as well as cooperation with the Christian democrats – and that it was up to Rome, not Moscow, to judge what best suited Italy – seems to have been the basis for the PCI's final liberation from Soviet leadership.

From the summer of 1979 the relationship between the Italian party and Moscow rapidly deteriorated. Berlinguer took a strictly neutral position on arms-control controversies over intermediate nuclear weapons in Europe, refusing to join the East bloc criticism of the NATO decisions. When the Soviets invaded Afghanistan in December 1979, the leader of the Italian Communist Party did not just deplore Moscow's actions but termed them 'acts of aggression'.¹³ He decided to boycott the CPSU 26th Congress in February 1980. After martial law was declared in Poland in December 1981, Berlinguer uttered the phrase that some PCI party activists had waited for over a decade to hear: 'The innovative impulse that had its origin in the October revolution has been exhausted'.¹⁴

The Italian critique of the Soviet Union was not just important in terms of west European politics. It served as an inspiration for socialist dissidents in eastern Europe and for reformers within the Soviet Communist Party itself. Many of the intellectuals who came to advise Mikhail Gorbachev after 1985 have testified that their own attitudes changed as a result of encounters with Italian communist leaders in the 1970s. It was, says one of them, Georgii Shakhnazarov, not just the criticism of the Soviet system itself but the Italians' strident conviction that democratic politics suited socialism best that began to create doubts among the younger generation of Soviet leaders. Over time, fueling that doubt may have been Eurocommunism's main contribution to European history.

The Ayatollah Khomeini in Qum, 1980

When Ruhollah Khomeini returned to Iran on 1 February 1979 after over 15 years of exile, his world view presented a sharp contrast to the left–right division that had dominated Iranian politics for more than a generation. Instead of popular power or authoritarian reform, the center of Khomeini's political doctrine was God, which meant that the ultimate purpose of man's life was to obey the precepts of the Holy Koran. At the beginning of the rebellion against the Shah, none of the superpowers took the Muslim leader seriously as a political contender in his own right, and both Washington and Moscow suspected him of 'objectively' serving the purposes of their enemies in Tehran. But as Khomeini and his followers outmaneuvered all of their political opponents in 1979–80, primarily by means of commanding greater popular support than anyone else, it became clear even to the most myopic intelligence official that the political discourse in all Muslim countries was changing and that neither side in the Cold War would necessarily benefit from the outcome.

By 1979 the Ayatollah Khomeini had himself come a long way from his early days as an introspective Islamic cleric. Contrary to Western and Soviet conceptions of Khomeini in the 1980s that emphasized his 'fundamentalism' and traditionalism, more recent interpretations have placed him and his movement, both within and outside of Iran, in a decidedly radical populist category. While there is no doubt about Khomeini's deeply felt religious faith and his belief that all answers to societal questions could be found in the Holy Koran and the Hadiths, his willingness to interpret Islam in political and social contexts was a function of his last decade in exile. The Ayatollah himself admitted that some of the pressure to address the world more directly came from the young generation of nationalist and often left-wing Iranians who demonstrated against the Shah in the 1960s and 1970s and who often paid a high personal price for their endeavors in the regime's prisons or execution chambers.¹⁵

After returning to Iran in 1979 the Ayatollah found that his political messages drew persons closer to his faith while the strong role of Islam in society secured the widest possible audience for his political sermons. It was an unbeatable combination in the battle against the Shah, the Shah's liberal successors and ultimately the Iranian communists – the Tudeh Party. As historian Ervand Abrahamian argues, Khomeini was completely conscious of mediating between religion and politics. His constant references to 'Islamic masses', 'oppressed peoples' and 'revolutionary martyrs' borrowed heavily from leftist political traditions and made it possible for him to appear as the sponsor of a home-grown revolutionary doctrine.¹⁶ On the other hand, his obvious personal piety and his insistence that returning to 'the words of God' meant establishing an 'orderly' society in which the 'excesses' of the Shah and the infidelity of the communists would be done away with secured him an audience among the *petit bourgeois*, who later constituted the core of his support.

In expounding his world view, Khomeini presented the United States and the Soviet Union as 'the party of the Devil' in quite literal terms. The United States' satanic influence was manifest in its support for the ungodly and unjust regime of the Shah, as well as through its encouragement of the Wahhabi occupation of Islam's holy cities and its arming of Israel's crusade against the Muslims. The Soviet Union propagated the Devil through its declared atheism, had 'attacked and exterminated' Muslim peoples in central Asia, and entertained designs regarding the lands of Khomeini's Islamic Republic. The two powers were basically run by the same faith in man's perfectibility which Khomeini viewed as the global counterpoint to 'the party of God'. In his message to Iranian pilgrims issued in the great mosque at Qum on 12 September 1980 Khomeini asserted that he saw no difference between them:

America plans to destroy us, all of us ... We have turned our backs on the East and the West, on the Soviet Union and America, in order to run our country ourselves. Do we therefore deserve to be attacked by the East and the West? The position we have attained is an historical exception, given the present conditions in the world, but our goal will certainly not be lost if we are to die, martyred and defeated.¹⁷

Khomeini's world view is presented as a clear and universal alternative to *both* capitalist exploitation and communist unbelief. It resulted from two generations – Khomeini was born in 1902 – of trying and failing to superimpose the Cold War discourse on the situation in Iran and elsewhere in the Third World. Khomeini's Islamism was a forerunner of many who would argue later in the twentieth century that the tragedy of the post-colonial experience was connected to such attempted superimpositions. For Iranian or Afghan Islamists the examples were close at hand. In their view, the Shah had dragged his own country through the dirt in an attempt to achieve a 'modern' capitalist society, just as the Afghan communist rulers, the People's Democratic Party, had broken all compacts with their people in the race to achieve socialist modernity. The failure of both was, in the Islamists' view, a sign that the project could not be accomplished and that an alternative, simultaneously repudiating Soviet and US modernity, had to be developed.¹⁸

During the 1980s political Islam – Islamism – provided an anti-capitalist and anti-communist platform from which to seek political power among Muslim peoples. As a doctrine, albeit varying enormously in its different settings, Islamism gave new hope to millions of persons over the following two decades. The victory in Afghanistan meant that Islamism had delivered a 'permanent blow' against the party of the Devil, although continued warfare against the other 'wing' of devilry, the United States, proved much less effective at the end of the Cold War and after. The main point is that the Cold War dichotomy had lost its relevance to the political discourse. Of course, the intellectual hegemony of modernity had never been global even before the 1970s, but it is nevertheless clear that revolutions such as that which occurred in Iran began pointing in new and different directions. Cold War concerns were becoming less important among both the elites and the public at large because these concerns were no longer perceived to be a mirror of the problems faced by their countries.

Marshal Viktor Kulikov in Warsaw, 1981

By the early 1980s the Soviet Union had begun a slow and painful reorientation from the interventionism of the late 1960s and 1970s. The optimistic, not to say opportunistic, interventions in Africa in the mid-1970s and the more pessimistic, defensive, invasion of Afghanistan later that decade were replaced by a decided unwillingness to intervene, even when what had been projected as basic Soviet interests were threatened. The symbol of this reorientation was the refusal in December 1981 by Warsaw Pact supreme commander Marshal Viktor G. Kulikov to commit his troops to support martial law in Poland. Kulikov's orders from the Politburo were clear. There was to be no intervention, even if Polish strongman General Wojciech Jaruzelski botched the crackdown on the opposition. At the Politburo meeting on 10 December, Iurii Andropov, a strong supporter of the Afghan intervention and destined to succeed Leonid Brezhnev the following year as party leader, told his colleagues that, 'even if Poland were to be ruled by Solidarity, so be it'. 'We have to take care of our own country,' Andropov said. The Polish communists were astonished and some of them, including Jaruzelski, were dejected. In the 1980s they would have to fend for themselves.¹⁹

The two years that separated the Afghan invasion from the non-intervention in Poland seem to have been crucial for the reorientation of Soviet strategy. We are now slowly discerning a debate that took place within the Moscow leadership whose main premises were the perceived failure of Soviet-backed Third World regimes, the unwelcomed postponement of a withdrawal from Afghanistan, and the gradual decline in the relative economic capabilities of the Soviet state. It was a debate whose outcome was not certain until much later in the decade, well after Mikhail Gorbachev had taken over the leadership, and which moved back and forth in the jockeying of positions for primacy in the late- and post-Brezhnev transition races. But in spite of the uncertain outcome, the arguments over interventionism showed to everyone involved that the room for maneuver in Soviet foreign policy was becoming increasingly restricted, and that assertive action in one area was bound to have disastrous repercussions in other areas, including in the relationship with the West. As Vojtech Mastny wisely observes, 'the tired leaders of the declining superpower proved to have greater sensitivity to long-term Western pressure and the subtle power of ideas than most of their contemporaries, misled by the formidable appearance of the Soviet military machine, were prepared to believe'.

Soviet disenchantments in the Third World seem to have played a much more important role in provoking the foreign policy reorientation of the early 1980s than was earlier believed.²⁰ A number of experts in the Central Committee, including some of the very leaders who had argued most forcefully for a Soviet need to involve itself more expansively in Third World affairs in the early and mid-1970s, had become disillusioned by the late 1970s and were arguing that there were no real communists to be found in Africa, Asia or Latin America. To some of them, the difficulties in directing Marxist-Leninist regimes outside eastern Europe – from Vietnam and Ethiopia to Cuba – proved that local leftists were unable to learn from the Soviet experience and, with Soviet economic and military assistance, were making a mockery of the global relevance of the October revolution. While the difficulties of transferring the Soviet experience to different climes were clear from the very beginning, some of the reports from the late 1970s emphasized the lack of progress in established socialist regimes such as Vietnam and Cuba, together with the inability of 'new democratic' countries such as Afghanistan and Ethiopia to move in the right direction.

For persons who believed in the universal application of the Soviet version of modernity, observing and explaining these negative developments constituted a severe course in disillusionment, similar, in many ways, to the intellectual trajectory of those who renounced modernization theory in the United States as Vietnam was 'being lost'. It is interesting, though, that the beginning of this process in the Soviet Union took place *before* the experience of a lost war. This, I believe, can only be explained by the particularly important role that political theory played in Soviet elite ideology. Up to 1975, most Soviet leaders had observed the Third World by means of images produced and reproduced in Moscow. By the late 1970s some leaders had themselves visited the new 'socialist' republics and were astonished by what they saw. As Andrei Kirilenko exclaimed to the Politburo when

Afghanistan descended into chaos in early 1979, 'Look what Marxists we have found!'

It is typical of Soviet thinking that only *after* realizing that these regimes could be neither easily directed nor controlled did the economic cost of Moscow's involvement emerge as a concern. Besides saying something about the poverty of Soviet alliances, it also tells us much, as Robert English and Andrew Bennett have observed, about how perceptual change occurred within the system. In ways similar to what has been argued about Western 'Third-Worldism' in the 1960s and 1970s, it seems that the Soviet debate on Third World development became a mirror for more elusive debates about the situation at home. Seen in that perspective, it is not surprising that many of those who had first engineered, and then rejected, Soviet interventionism later re-emerged as reformers during the Gorbachev era.²¹

Ronald Reagan in Reykjavik, 1986

Ronald Reagan, elected in 1980, was in many ways the first post-modern US President. His view of the world was consciously determined by the personae he had created on and off screen. His ideologies were *positional* rather than cultural or historical – he did not recognize any fundamental differences between the trajectory he foresaw for his own country and those that could be possible for others, and he created a series of stories of international affairs in which concepts such as 'power', 'trust', and 'victory' took on very different meanings, depending on the direction of the narrative. Over the course of his presidency Reagan became the leader who, better than anyone, spans the gap between the Cold War and the post-Cold War world, perceptually as well as politically.

Attempting to understand this President has proven to be one of the most difficult tasks for historians analyzing the Cold War era. To some, Reagan the decision maker simply does not exist. He is submerged in the general body of the 'Reagan administration', which is then perceived as following an aggressive Cold War policy and, in the histories of some, ends up winning the global contest. To others, Reagan is at the center of events, and his policies, though at first largely disconnected, ultimately point in consistent fashion to a new way of viewing the United States and the world. Almost as a by-product, they ended up defeating the Soviet Union. At the moment, both are plausible accounts, as are others, and it is unlikely that we will get close to determining which avenue we want to follow until the documents of the Reagan administration become available for research.

What I want to do here is to suggest a possible link between the neo-conservative anti-communist Reagan, on the one hand, and the Reagan who was the critic of traditional Cold War nuclear doctrines. Both types have been spotted in the recent literature. While fully accepting, at least for now, the contention that Reagan's policies were, to put it mildly, amorphous, it is interesting to note how these dissonances did not render him politically ineffective. He could, in his inimitable way, appeal to roughly the same political constituencies with policies that would have, a decade before, been considered to be severely dislocated. The best way of understanding how this was possible is, in my opinion, to underline the

changing concerns of US public opinion in the 1980s: how the Cold War ceased to be the lens through which all domestic and foreign issues were generally viewed.

When Ronald Reagan came to the Reykjavik summit on 11 October 1986 he had already made up his mind to offer deep cuts in US nuclear arsenals in return for Soviet acceptance of the, as yet unrealized, Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). It could be argued that the reason why some of his political supporters and, certainly, the Soviet delegation were taken aback by the proposals was that they had not been listening to what the President had been saying publicly for at least two years. Reagan wanted, in a phrase he borrowed from the distinguished nuclear physicist and fellow conservative, Edward Teller, 'a shield rather than a sword'. He wanted a reduction, as he saw it, of the possibility of an all-destructive nuclear war while the United States put its own house in order and the Soviet Union got set to follow the same road to capitalism as most of the world was already traveling on.

What is remarkable about the 'Reagan reversal' is that, as political scientist Beth Fischer has pointed out, it began well *before* Mikhail Gorbachev's reformism became apparent in the Kremlin.²² By mid-1984, and possibly even earlier, the US approach to dealing with the Soviet Union had begun to swing from the hard-line confrontation of the late Carter and early Reagan years to a policy stressing the need to make all future conflicts containable, a policy that viewed arms control as one way of achieving this aim. Fischer believes that the extraordinary tension that came to the fore during the 'Able Archer 83' NATO exercise – when the Soviet leadership seems to have suspected preparations for a US nuclear first strike – was the main cause for Reagan's change of tack. But though undoubtedly important, it is unlikely that the 1983 war scare was the only reason why someone who had made anti-communism and a strong defense two of the cornerstones of his political career began to retool halfway through his presidency.

As Fischer admits, Reagan's hawkishness had never extended all the way to nuclear weapons. Even in the early 1980s, while signing programs to upgrade the US nuclear arsenal, Reagan had been the first President to ever refuse to sit through White House SIOP briefings, always finding an excuse to absent himself when the matter was brought up. To the horror of some of his officials, this most anti-communist of presidents refused to even contemplate nuclear retaliation as a possibility, and preferred to talk about US 'power' in the most general of terms. Reagan was an optimist who believed that the world would slowly begin moving in the right direction, inspired in part by his 'American miracle'. In this scenario there simply was no room for nuclear war.

By the mid-1980s it seemed to the President that he had found a way to tie up the loose ends of his approach to the prospects of nuclear warfare. On the one hand, the United States was getting 'stronger' domestically through a mix of prosperity and responsibility that Reagan often celebrated. He had won the battle against what probably had been, in his own vision, the main enemy the whole time: a US liberalism with its mix of collectivism, moral uncertainty and foreign appeasement. On the other hand, SDI provided Reagan with the perfect antidote to the threat of nuclear warfare. While the world was changing for the better, the

United States and its allies could solidify their role as examples for others under the protection of the laser umbrella.

The 'Zero Option' – the elimination of all nuclear weapons – that Reagan accepted at Reykjavik can only be understood in this context. As he told Gorbachev, all Soviet concerns about the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty could be put aside since 'what the hell use will ABMs or anything else be if we eliminate nuclear weapons?'²³ Though it may be going too far to call him a 'nuclear abolitionist', it is quite clear that Reagan *anno* 1986 had come to view concepts such as 'the strategic balance' as directly opposed to the changes he wanted to bring about. In this respect, Reagan's views reflected the concerns of the US public, although, as usual, with a more optimistic twist. For most Americans, the world had become a more dangerous place by the mid-1980s, not because of Soviet missiles but because of a whole range of new challenges, from trade deficits to terrorism. The Soviets remained a threat, but even conservative voters could hardly hold them responsible for the rise in car imports from Japan or the relocation of US blue-collar jobs to Mexico.

It could be argued that Ronald Reagan's main story was always about the United States and its future and that the Cold War was a minor thread. This puts him in the role of a transitory political leader, pointing towards a new era. If we choose to see the whole neo-conservative project of the late 1970s and early 1980s as primarily about regaining control of the United States and decisively defeating liberalism at home, then the victories seemingly won by 1986 permitted Reagan to end the Cold War arms race in order to more effectively deal with the United States' threats from abroad. As seen even from within the United States, the Cold War was, if not actually receding, then at least rapidly changing its shape by the mid-1980s.

A whimper, not a bang?

Dramatic as the images of 1989 and 1991 are, they do not help us much in establishing the genealogy of the Cold War's demise. The changes of the late Gorbachev era had their roots in the manifold events and processes of previous decades, although often in ways that are difficult to uncover. This article has attempted to rescue some of these events and processes through explicating how five historical moments between 1970 and 1986 symbolized profound changes that, in the end, contributed to the end of the Cold War. The re-establishment of German foreign policy, the transformation of west European communism, the emergence of political Islam, the decline in the Soviet will to intervene, and the domestic political successes of the United States' neo-conservative movement all had a determining influence on how and when the Cold War ended. They should, thus, be studied as part of that broader process. Obviously, there are many other end-points in need of additional research – the economic and financial changes of the 1970s and early 1980s, for instance – but I gladly leave these cases to others to make.²⁴

Some scholars believe that moving the beginning of the end of the Cold War back by a decade would deny Mikhail Gorbachev and his Soviet leadership their

place as the *primes movens* of change. This is of course not the case. Gorbachev's greatness consisted in recognizing many of these trends shortly after coming into office and having the courage to act in accordance. As Karl Marx liked to point out, the wages of those who complete historical processes – especially when the completion is long overdue – are rarely gratifying. Historians should be the last to deny Gorbachev his prize as the main terminator of the Cold War.

But just like the existence of the Cold War had causes other than the Soviet Union, the end of the Cold War had causes other than Gorbachev. Many of them are to be found, I believe, at the periphery of the Cold War system itself: in legacies from the past and in processes of social change within Europe; in the resistance to Western domination that bridges the pre- and post-Cold War eras outside of Europe. As with the study of the fall of other international systems, it is likely that only by broadening our view will the many roads leading to the end of the Cold War come into sight.

Notes

- 1 See Michel Foucault, 'Afterword: The Subject and Power', *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, 2nd edn, ed. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1983).
- 2 Another possible end-point for the Cold War in the Middle East is of course 1973, when the Soviet Union was excluded from the post-war peace process.
- 3 Asked to pick a year from which the countdown to the end of the Cold War began I choose 1979 – Iranian revolution, Afghanistan, oil crisis, stagflation, Thatcher, Eurocommunism, and the publication of Jean Francois Lyotard, *La condition post-moderne: rapport sur le savoir* (Paris: Minuit, 1979).
- 4 Brandt was always a divisive figure in Germany, largely because of his *émigré* background. His election victory in 1969 was narrow – the CDU/CSU remained the largest party and Brandt could only form a government with support of the small FDP.
- 5 The term '*Wandel durch Annäherung*' could probably be best translated as 'change through *rapprochement*'. It was first used in 1963 by Brandt's close adviser Egon Bahr.
- 6 See recent hagiographies, such as Barbara Marshall, *Willy Brandt: A Political Biography* (London: Macmillan, 1997). Brandt is a most unlikely saint. His expansive tastes for alcohol, tobacco and extra-marital affairs were legendary (and made a profound impression on the Soviets when he first visited Brezhnev in the Crimea in 1971).
- 7 Author's notes of Berlinguer speech; see also Berlinguer's report to the PCI's 15th Congress in March 1979, *XV Congresso del partito comunista italiano: Atti e risoluzioni* (Rome: Riuniti, 1979), vol. I.
- 8 For summaries see Joan Barth Urban's excellent *Moscow and the Italian Communist Party: From Togliatti to Berlinguer* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986).
- 9 Soviet funding for the PCI continued, however, right up to the collapse of the Soviet Union. See Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, *The Mitrokhin Archive: The KGB in Europe and the West* (London: Allen Lane, 1999).
- 10 In an interview with *Corriere della sera*, reprinted in *La politica internazionale dei comunisti italiani* (Rome: Editori riuniti, 1976), pp. 149–60.
- 11 For early East bloc criticism of the Italians, see the Bulgarian leader Todor Zhivkov's heavy-handed 'Year of Peace, Year of Struggle', *World Marxist Review*, 19, 12 (December 1976), pp. 3–15; for changing PCI views of the United States, see the travelogue by Enrico Berlinguer's brother Giovanni, *Un Eurocomunista in America: Note di viaggio* (Bari: de Donato, 1980).

- 12 This was a different path from that of the PCE, which broke openly with Moscow, and the PCF, which gradually mended its ties with the Soviets.
- 13 Berlinguer's remarks, quoted in *l'Unità*, 27 January 1980.
- 14 Quote from Berlinguer's televised address in *l'Unità*, 16 December 1981. See also Enrico Berlinguer, *After Poland: Towards a New Internationalism*, ed. and trans. Antonio Bronda and Stephen Bodington (London: Spokesman, 1982).
- 15 Ervand Abrahamian, *Khomeinism: Essays on the Islamic Republic* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 13–38.
- 16 As Abrahamian notes, the Khomeini regime had clear similarities with other authoritarian populist regimes elsewhere, both in inter-war Europe and in Latin America. For the collapse of the Tudeh, see Maziar Behrooz, *Rebels with a Cause: The Failure of the Left in Iran* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1999).
- 17 Khomeini, 'Message to Pilgrims', in *Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini*, trans. Hamid Algar (Berkeley, CA: Mizan Press, 1980), p. 306. The message was presented at a time when Khomeini saw his revolution to be under extreme threat by the Iraqi invasion, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and the US hostage crisis.
- 18 The Islamic Republic's first Foreign Minister, Sadeq Qotbzadeh, is a good example of someone who shared the Islamists' critique of the superpowers, but not their long-term plans for Iran. Qotbzadeh was executed in 1982.
- 19 By far the best account of the Polish–Russian negotiations in 1980–81 is Wojciech Mastny, *The Soviet Non-Invasion of Poland in 1980/81 and the End of the Cold War*, CWHIP Working Paper 23 (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars, 1998).
- 20 'Disenchantment', according to the OED, in the eighteenth century often meant 'discovery' or 'inspection', which suits our present purposes very well. See also Jürgen Osterhammel, *Die entzäuberung Asiens: Europa und die Asiatischen Reiche im 18. Jahrhundert* (Bochum: C. H. Beck, 1998).
- 21 See Andrew Bennett, *Condemned to Repetition? The Rise, Fall, and Reprise of Soviet-Russian Military Interventionism, 1973–1996* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), and Robert D. English, *Russia and the Idea of the West: Gorbachev, Intellectuals, and the End of the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000). These are the two best books yet on the causes for change inside Soviet politics in the late 1970s and 1980s.
- 22 Beth Fischer, *The Reagan Reversal: Foreign Policy and the End of the Cold War* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1997), esp. pp. 147–9.
- 23 Gorbachev–Reagan Reykjavik talks, 11 October 1986, afternoon, at <http://www.cnn.com/specials/cold.war/episodes/22/documents/reykjavik/>
- 24 Other possible end-points discussed at the conference included the Cuban missile crisis, 1962; Lech Wałęsa at the Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk, 1980; the opening of the Austro-Hungarian border, 1989; the CPSU Politburo discussion of economic advances in East Asia, 1984; and the Chinese counter-revolution, 1976–78.

6 Karol Wojtyla and the end of the Cold War

Agostino Giovagnoli

The Vatican and the Cold War

Relations between the Holy See and the Soviet Union began in 1917, when the Vatican initiated a series of attempts to institute more or less formal relations with the Soviet regime while, during the same period, it issued a series of negative pronouncements attacking communism, culminating in 1937 with Pius XI's *Divini Redentoris* (though the best-known event of this kind was the excommunication of 1949). As Andrea Riccardi has observed, while the conflict with communism deeply affected the entire history of the Catholic Church during the twentieth century, the face-to-face confrontation between communism and the Holy See was relatively short in duration, coinciding with the papacy of Pius XII.¹ It may consequently be said that, for the Vatican, the 'Cold War' in the strict sense of the term lasted for less than 15 years, ranging from the post-World War I period until the death of Pius XII. Things began to change thereafter, with the ascension of John XXIII. In 1963 John XXIII published his encyclical *Pacem in terris*, which may be defined as the 'Vatican's reflection', alongside the US and Soviet responses, on the Cuban missile crisis (a crisis in which the Pope himself had played a role). This was the same time that Monsignor Casaroli made his first visit to an eastern European nation, marking the birth of the Vatican's policy of *Ostpolitik*.

The Vatican's *Ostpolitik* is known to have advanced most significantly under the leadership of Paul VI, who transformed John XXIII's intuitive openness into a full-fledged diplomatic program closely linked, as Paul saw it, to a particular vision of European unity. Moving away from the views cultivated by Pius XII, Paul VI was a convinced Europeanist, vigorously upholding the cause and process of European integration. His vision was informed by three aims, all quite dear to him: to succeed once and for all to pacify Europe; to turn Europe into a sort of 'laboratory' for overcoming the tensions and oppositions of the Cold War; and to encourage European assumption of a role as a world leader, no longer in any colonial sense, of course, but as supporter and source of aid to the underdeveloped countries of the Third World. Paul VI often summarized these three objectives in a single term, 'peace', which referred to John XXIII's encyclical. Without a doubt, the Vatican's *Ostpolitik* subscribed to these objectives even though its

actual practice primarily addressed religious concerns: facilitating the life of the Catholic churches and promoting ecumenical contacts in eastern European countries and in the USSR itself.

Within the Soviet bloc, beginning with the Poles, these visionary goals were considered the potential grounds for a partial convergence with the Holy See. In 1967, the Vatican became involved in what would eventually develop into the Helsinki conference. The path was cleared by agreements between the Western Germans and the Soviets that formalized the European borders that had been established at the end of the Second World War. This allowed the Catholic Church to normalize its internal structure in such areas as Silesia, which had been transferred from German to Polish sovereignty after the war. Paul VI made a linkage between this border stabilization and the recognition of human rights, which was then confirmed by the Helsinki Conference, where Monsignor Casaroli represented the Holy See. Indeed, the representatives of the Vatican and the Soviet Union were even seated near one another at the conference, owing to their states' alphabetical proximity.

Many have argued that the papacy of John Paul II marked a resumption of the Cold War mentality, that the new Pope supported a renewed frontal assault against the communist world (which eventually resulted in its ruin). The mass media has made much of the contribution by the Catholic Church, and by the Pope in particular, to the changes that brought about the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Soviet Union's demise. The Pope's critical contribution has been identified as an ability to foster a vast 'ideological' mobilization, made possible by Karol Wojtyla's clear, courageous 'global' anti-communism.

This view of Wojtyla's pontificate is not a new one. It was initially fed by hopes raised in the wake of Paul VI's death and the election of a Polish Pope among opponents of Paul VI's conciliatory policy towards the communist regimes. They were eager for a radical revision of this policy, that is, for a transition from *Ostpolitik* to *Ostmission*.² Similar views on John Paul's anti-communism, although opposite in character, were advanced (mostly during the early years of his papacy) by those who saw his native Polish Catholic culture as foreign to the Western approaches of those years. Some perceived John Paul as representing a kind of return to the days of Pius XII. With time, opposition to communism became the main prism for interpreting this pontificate in general.³ Gorge Weigel's biography of the Pope is a clear reflection of such an orientation, describing as it does John Paul II from a highly 'American' perspective, through a comparison with Ronald Reagan. As Weigel contends, both Reagan and the Pope shared a similar perception of communism as a 'moral evil' and both embraced 'interests basically in agreement as regards challenging the Yalta system...committed to liberating what their generation called the "imprisoned nations"...[T]hey took different paths to achieve the same goal.'⁴

Nevertheless, John Paul II's championing of human rights and, in particular, religious freedom cannot be equated to Western diplomacy's promotion of these same causes. Those who emphasize Karol Wojtyla's anti-communism – for instance, his explicit condemnation of communist ideology and the political

regimes that rested on it, the moral rebellion encouraged by his denunciations of communism, his refusal to negotiate or to compromise with communist regimes, and his rejection of Paul VI's *Ostpolitik* – reduce complex questions involving historical, cultural, geographical and religious forces of great consequence to a uni-dimensional issue of ideology.⁵ Although John Paul II's anti-communism is beyond question, so was that of Pius XII, of John XXIII and of Paul VI. What distinguishes John Paul II from these other popes, and what can explain the greater practical impact of his opposition to communism, is not to be found on the ideological level but, rather, in this pontiff's Slavic origins and his roots in Polish history, in his experience of World War II and in his own personal encounter with life under a communist regime. These are what inform John Paul II's unique spiritual, cultural and geopolitical vision.

***Ostpolitik*: from Paul VI to John Paul II**

Many popular interpretations of Wojtyła's papacy identify an opposition between Paul VI's *Ostpolitik* and Wojtyła's Eastern policy. According to his critics, Paul VI yielded too much and made too many compromises in his relations with the communist regimes. His Polish successor, as staunch an adversary of communism as was the 'church of silence' from which he came (definitions Karol Wojtyła was not enamored of), refused to endorse similar compromises. This critical view of Paul VI often points to his role in the Helsinki accords, which were formulated through the direct participation of Monsignor Casaroli.⁶ Much has been made of Paul VI's expectations – ultimately disappointed – that the agreement would bring about a practical improvement in the condition of civil rights and thus in church life in communist countries.

Such a simplistic version of events is contradicted by a number of factors, beginning with the fact that the Catholic Church did not escalate its anti-communist rhetoric after the ascension of John Paul II to the papacy (even though his teachings certainly contained explicit criticism of the communist regimes).⁷ Even more significant was Casaroli's appointment as Secretary of State following the sudden demise of Villot. This choice in favor of continuity was confirmed by John Paul II's decision not to dismantle the Vatican's diplomatic team that was responsible for implementing the *Ostpolitik* policy. The new Pope's election, in other words, did not signal a reversal of the Vatican's Moscow policy but, as Andrea Riccardi has observed, marked 'a strengthening of those very themes of religious freedom which, as Paul VI's pontificate was drawing to a close, that Pope and his Helsinki document had indicated as fundamental'.⁸ And so we see that the cause of religious freedom, considered by some as especially characteristic of John Paul's vigorous anti-communism, was not a new Vatican policy at all.

John Paul II gradually supplemented the continuing Vatican policy with personal emphases that were designed to 'strengthen' *Ostpolitik*. This was the case, for example, with Wojtyła's approach to the issue of dialogue, so typical of Paul VI's papacy and diplomacy. Dialogue meant that 'protest [did not] preclude realistic contacts with governments'.⁹ For John Paul II, dialogue came to mean, above

all, an unwavering expression of one's values together with a demand for the basic human respect to which one is entitled. Another important feature 'added' by this Pope to the ongoing policy of *Ostpolitik* was its linkage to a more intense pastoral dynamic. Diplomacy was not seen to be the only sphere of praxis; the national Church itself was expected to take part in the struggle on behalf of its growth and development. In this sense, John Paul II rejected the model represented by Cardinal Lekai in Hungary, where diplomatic agreements had guaranteed a certain degree of tranquility for the Church but at the cost of restricting it to certain areas of life.

John Paul II's view of the Church's problems and future in eastern Europe were given expression during his first papal journey to Poland, and most particularly in the speech he delivered at the Jasna Gora sanctuary. In that speech John Paul stressed the importance of the role of the national Church and extolled the unity of the episcopate, a 'source of spiritual strength' for a Church able to defend and preserve the nation's identity even in times of aggression and division so commonplace in Poland. Citing the example of St. Stanislaus who also opposed the use of political power, John Paul II aspired to a normalization of relations between Church and state that would be based on religious freedom. This program was not only meant for Poland; the Pope aspired to see a strong, united Church in other eastern European countries that would be capable of assuming an important social role in the service of the entire nation, and that would eschew a political role when that would be necessary in order to pursue its other aims. Clearly, this strategy was not aimed at immediately overturning or radically delegitimizing communist governments. Rather, John Paul sought to strengthen the Church to the point where it could function as the 'soul' of an entire nation, as was the case in Poland.

Karol Wojtyla and Poland

This original program does not coincide with the actual impact John Paul's papacy had on the communist regimes of eastern Europe. Gorbachev is known to have recognized the great significance of John Paul II's papacy for the future of communism, an opinion shared by many. But while there exists a general consensus over the role of John Paul II's ties to his native Poland in the break-up of Soviet rule in eastern Europe, opinions differ as to the practical ways these ties actually influenced the situation in Poland and, more generally, in the Eastern bloc in general.

John Paul II's relationship with his native land cannot be understood without taking into account the prior 30-year history of the Polish Church, as experienced by Karol Wojtyla, under communist rule.¹⁰ In fact, the attitude of Polish Catholics towards communism diverged from Catholic sentiment prevalent elsewhere in eastern Europe. Deeply rooted in history and society, the Church in Poland simultaneously opposed the regime and stood for a sense of national responsibility, at once displaying intransigence towards communism and realism towards the communists in power. This position was advanced, above all, by Stephan Wyszyński, the great leader of Polish Catholicism, who, after years of harsh imprisonment,

chose the path of collaboration with his great adversary, Gomulka. He considered this to be for the good of both Church and nation. Wysinsky did not always receive Rome's support and understanding for his policy. Karol Wojtyla grew up in a Church that suffered from Pius XII's inability to comprehend its choices.

Much of what truly distinguished John Paul II from his predecessors was his direct experience of life under a communist regime: first-hand knowledge of the sufferings inflicted by the regime on the Church, and of communist reality itself, including both its strengths and weaknesses. This is why John Paul II's attitudes cannot be interpreted in strictly ideological terms. He accepted the need for a considerable degree of realism, not so much in the political and diplomatic meaning of the term but as the result of his extended familiarity with people and events. What's more, this experience unfolded in a country where Catholics constituted the majority and the Church had always played a socially important role. Thus, engaging in a dialogue or even negotiating with the government did not necessarily mean that the Church was yielding – as exemplified in the behavior of Wysinsky, whom no one could accuse of cowardice.

Such an orientation was evident during John Paul II's first journey as Pope to Poland in 1979. The circumstantial link between the popular enthusiasm generated by the trip and the rise of the Solidarity movement is often emphasized. This relationship, debated by scholars, was considered emblematic of John Paul II's ability to excite a 'moral revolt' against communism in the public conscience. It is no less noteworthy, however, that this Pope (and the Polish episcopate, at his urging) exercised constant vigilance in ensuring that domestic disturbances did not provoke Soviet intervention. In his memoirs, Cardinal Casaroli, then Undersecretary of State, recalled the questions and concerns raised by Kanja during the trip. Casaroli notes that all polemic was avoided, as if to ask for 'understanding and assistance (the shadow of the Soviet Big Brother, although not explicitly evoked, fell continuously not so much on the Pope as on the Polish leaders)'.¹¹

John Paul II was later known to be fond of the Solidarity movement and to have supported its cause, perhaps more than Wysinsky himself or the other Polish bishops. Nevertheless, although supported by the Church, Solidarity was primarily an expression of a profound break between the working class and the communist party brought on by economic and social factors. It was the significance and justness of this break that attracted the sympathies of John Paul II. But regardless, he was ever vigilant in trying to keep the Solidarity movement and other opposition forces from weakening the Polish government in Soviet eyes.

This perspective is confirmed in John Paul II's letter to Leonid Brezhnev, brought to light by Gorge Weigel, insisting on respect for Poland's national sovereignty and on the internal nature of Poland's problems.¹² This was a clear attempt to stave off military invasion, adopting diplomatic arguments likely to impress his interlocutor, including an appeal to the Helsinki agreements. Information obtained from the so-called Mitrokhin Archive suggests that Jaruzelski's later *coup d'état* met with a 'certain understanding' from the Polish episcopate and, in particular, from Cardinal Glemp, who always took positions close to those of the Pope's.

In the long run, this 'moderate' choice proved to be the winning one. In fact, it established a link, even if characterized by conflict, between the Church and the Polish authorities based on a common interest in preventing Soviet intervention and resolving issues 'among Poles'. The Mitrokhin documents shed light on the growing tension between Polish and Russian communists, and even between the two nations' secret services. The battle lines had already been drawn during John Paul II's first journey to Poland, which Brezhnev himself had sought to prevent.¹³ The Soviets did all they could to hamper these trips, repeatedly accusing the Polish communists of excessive leniency in their policies towards the Catholic Church and the Solidarity movement. In fact, as Andrew observes, a deep difference in perspective separated Polish and Soviet communists. For the Poles, the policy towards Wojtyla and the Polish Church was an internal Church-state matter. For the Soviets, it was part of a larger question regarding the USSR's struggle against the Vatican. In the end, this difference proved decisive. And so, we can understand that John Paul II's role in the collapse of communism in Europe lies not in his political and diplomatic activity – however important that activity was – but in his influence on the Polish Church and the consequent resumption of geopolitical, social and cultural rifts within the Eastern bloc that eroded Soviet hegemony.

Pope John Paul II's spiritual geography

More significant than what he *did*, John Paul II 'destabilized' the Soviet Union and its allies because of what he *was*: the first leader of universal Catholicism from a communist country. The KGB, and particularly Andropov, were known to have vividly perceived the danger that his election constituted. This suspicion appears to have informed Soviet policy as a whole. Indeed, much of the Soviet bloc's religious policy was conducted directly by the secret services of the USSR or by those of other communist nations.¹⁴ Right away in 1978 the KGB viewed the election of a Polish Pope as disastrous. Karol Wojtyla had already been the target of onerous 'attention' by the Polish secret services while he was Archbishop of Krakow. Two of their agents managed to win the trust of one of his colleagues, consequently allowing the security services to be aware of the relations between the Archbishop and the opposition movement (although such clandestine means of intelligence gathering were patently unnecessary, the main 'proof' of Wojtyla's anti-communism being found in his homilies; even when in Poland, that is, Karol Wojtyla acted in public fashion, never hiding his views and positions).

The conflict between John Paul II and the Soviet bloc may be defined as 'geopolitical' rather than ideological. The Pope's Slavic roots lie at the base of a world view, a 'spiritual geography' particular to him, that also affected his actual behavior. As a Pole, Wojtyla always conceived Europe as a unitary whole, 'from the Atlantic to the Urals'. This formula had been promoted by de Gaulle before him. In a certain sense, the same vision inspired the Helsinki accords. Clearly, Wojtyla's Europe did not correspond to any political plan but expressed, rather, a

historical and cultural vision resting on common Christian roots. Save for the Christian element, this vision paradoxically brought him closer to his Soviet adversaries (or at least to some of them; Gromyko's own memoirs make similar allusions) because it emphasized long-standing continuities – of a more geographical than political nature – difficult to ignore. From the Soviet point of view, however, this very complicity made John Paul II, who spoke the same language and shared the same perspective as those populations living under communist regimes, particularly 'dangerous'. John Paul II posed a problem for the USSR and the other communist nations of eastern Europe because his person and attitudes were born of long-standing tendencies deeply rooted in the history and culture of eastern Europe. This is probably the sense of the papacy's discussion of an 'alternative' to communism. Rather than opposing those regimes ideologically, Wojtyla embodied and proposed an alternative to communism's explanation of the needs of those populations, an alternative that the communist regimes were 'ideologically' unable to defeat.

John Paul II's 'spiritual geography' found several expressions in the sphere of relations between the Churches, or, better put, between the various Christian traditions. It is no accident that his teachings frequently adopt the well-known 'two-lung' image: there is only one Church to be reunited that has always breathed with two lungs, the Western and the Eastern one. One indication of Wojtyla's vision is his decision to make Cyril and Methodius patrons of Europe. This was a religiously elegant way to claim equal dignity for both the eastern and western European traditions, as well as to call attention to the Church's unitary roots in the diversity of traditions and rites. This vision of European unity is particularly pleasing to the Slavic world, which has always been attracted to western Europe while also being apprehensive of its hegemony.

Wojtyla's European vision is thus a deeply Slavic one. But it is also a Polish vision that necessarily clashes with a Russian understanding of European geography. This was manifest in Wojtyla's approach to Eastern-rite Catholics in the Ukraine. Immediately upon his election he resolutely defended this Church's tradition, guaranteeing a succession to the aged Cardinal Slypij while also trying to satisfy Orthodox requests.¹⁵ These decisions were unwelcome both to the Soviets, who feared a Church alliance with Ukrainian nationalism, and to the Russian Orthodox Church, which traditionally opposed 'interventions' by Rome.

This conflict was not only with the Soviets but with the Russian world as well. Not coincidentally, it began before John Paul II's pontificate and continued after the fall of the Soviet Union. For example, Andropov was 'obsessed' with the 'ideological subversion' wrought by the Holy See in the USSR through the Ukrainians. The KGB sought to provoke divisions among Ukrainian Catholics forced into hiding by the regime's persecutions. The Soviet secret service aspired to extend its activities to Rome as well. After Patriarch Slipyi was freed, the KGB attempted to discredit his successor, Vasyl Velychowsky, in his eyes. Although the campaign succeeded in infiltrating the clandestine Ukrainian Church, the results were not those hoped for. There is no trace of a break between Slipyi and Velychowsky. Such episodes are emblematic of the Soviets' general failure to

defeat this unique adversary – a weak, persecuted body like Ukrainian Catholicism, and the Catholic Church in general.

Other issues, less well known and studied than human rights but no less rooted in John Paul II's 'religious geography', are worthy of consideration in trying to understand this Pope's contribution to the fall of the Soviet bloc. One of those is peace, an issue often skillfully mobilized by the communist world to call attention to a problem difficult to oppose: the peril of war, and of nuclear war in particular. This is a recurring theme in John Paul II's teachings, one that dissented from the positions of Western governments. His pronouncements on the Gulf War and, later, on the Kosovo action are well known. The issue of peace again shows that John Paul II did not constitute a 'danger' to communism because of his ideological antagonism or his pro-Western positions, but because of his origins in the Slavic world and his 'geopolitical' affinity with the populations living in the Soviet bloc. Those affinities were what made him feared even more than his predecessors who, like Pius XII, were deeply committed to the struggle against communism.

Notes

- 1 A. Riccardi, *Le religioni dei due 'imperi'*, in A. Giovagnoli and L. Tosi (eds), *Un Ponte sull'Atlantico. L'alleanza occidentale 1949–1999*, Guerini e associati, Milano 2003, pp. 79–92.
- 2 A. Riccardi, *Il Vaticano e Mosca (1940–1990)* (Roma and Bari: Laterza, 1992), p. 47.
- 3 G. Weigel, *Testimone della speranza. La vita di Giovanni Paolo II protagonista del nostro secolo* (Milano: Mondadori, 1999), p. 546.
- 4 Weigel, *Testimone della speranza*, p. 549.
- 5 Riccardi, *Il Vaticano e Mosca*, p. 349.
- 6 Weigel, *Testimone della speranza* p. 763.
- 7 Riccardi, *Il Vaticano e Mosca*, p. 349; Weigel, *Testimone della speranza*, p. 50.
- 8 Riccardi, *Il Vaticano e Mosca*, p. 355; Weigel, *Testimone della speranza*, p. 475.
- 9 Riccardi, *Il Vaticano e Mosca*, p. 351.
- 10 Riccardi, *Il Vaticano e Mosca*, p. 366.
- 11 A. Casaroli, *Il martirio della pazienza. La Santa Sede e i paesi comunisti (1963–89)* (Torino: Einaudi, 2000), p. 318.
- 12 Weigel, *Testimone della speranza*, p. 505.
- 13 C. Andrew and V. Mitrokhin, *The Mitrokhin Archive: The KGB in Europe and the West* (London: Allen Lane, Penguin, 1999), pp. 634ff.
- 14 This holds true above all for the Russian Orthodox Church, to which, during World War II, Stalin restored a kind of 'right to exist', albeit under harsh conditions. KGB documents speak of Russian bishops, metropolitans and patriarchs as 'our agents', not only subjected to extremely close monitoring but also forced to accept choices, orientations and initiatives dictated by the authorities.
- 15 Weigel, *Testimone della speranza*, p. 759.

Part II

The end of the Cold War and the downfall of Soviet communism

7 Economic information in the life and death of the Soviet command system

Mark Harrison

Without the most careful examination of all the statistical data which we possess in far larger measure than at any other time and in any other country, without organizing these data, without analyzing them and generalizing from them, no scholarly economic work is possible. It is a source of regret that the statistical data are still classified as secret in the central statistical administration in Comrade Starovskii's safes.¹

What is the problem we wish to solve when we try to construct a rational economic order?... It is... a problem of the utilisation of knowledge not given to anyone in its totality.²

Introduction

This chapter is about the value of information in a command system. Paul David and Dominique Foray define information, in contrast to knowledge, as follows: knowledge is the cognitive capability that empowers its owners to act, intellectually or practically; in contrast, information is merely the 'structured and formatted data that remain passive and inert' until those empowered by knowledge use it.³ On board an aircraft, the instruments and charts provide information. The pilot, on the other hand, has the knowledge for flying the plane which allows him to use this information. Thus, information is of a lower value than knowledge. That is to say, information is only a small part of the stock of intangible capital that is used in order to fly the plane or manage a society. Nevertheless, information remains very important. In the classic formulation by Kenneth Arrow, the value of information is contained in the fact that it reduces uncertainty.⁴ The most knowledgeable pilot cannot pinpoint the plane's position and altitude relative to the ground when flying in clouds or in darkness, for example, without checking the dials on the instrument panel.

Three factors make an investigation of the economics of information in command systems a timely one. First, any study of information in command systems necessarily raises the problem of official secrecy. Why are there official secrets and why does official secrecy vary over time and across countries? While a rich literature exists on the economics of concealment, including commercial secrecy, the question of official secrecy does not appear to have been addressed. This

generates a gap in our understanding that should be remedied. Second, the historical literature on Soviet official secrecy is written almost exclusively in moral and psychological terms, and focuses on the leadership's paranoia: the excessive or pathological secretiveness of Soviet rulers. This focus diverts us from the important task of understanding secrecy as a rational-choice process. Lastly, several recent studies based on materials in the former Soviet archives provide us with a growing mass of 'information about information' that can assist us in addressing these questions.

In terms of the economics of information, however, this mass is almost entirely unstructured. That means that a daunting empirical task still lies ahead. Not only do we lack measures for this information. We do not know how to measure it in the first place. There is an aggregate stock of information in the economy that continually depreciates as it becomes outdated or loses its relevance. Information is continually added. Some of it updates or replaces old information and some of it is new. Because information becomes dated and technology is continually changing, information of varying chronological origin is heterogeneous in character.

Information can be digital or analogue. Digital information is measured in internet pages, disk files, bytes and bits. Analogue information that is written and bound can be measured in volumes, pages and characters. It also exists in film, tape, newsprint and manuscript. This technical heterogeneity makes the stock of information and its growth difficult to measure in any certain or exact terms. In addition, the uses of information are numerous and varied. We cannot usually even distinguish between information that serves the economy's productive needs and that which serves our human curiosity and is therefore a consumption good.

The value of information depends on our knowledge. New knowledge can have unexpected effects, for it can turn some kinds of information into completely obsolete information while making others suddenly valuable. We are, for example, continually discovering new ways of using historical information.

But for the most part, we are not very good at measuring information. Indeed, what we tend to measure is not information itself but the spread of information *technology*: computer units, telephone lines, pounds of newsprint and so on. I will attempt to focus here on the concept of stocks of economically valuable information of various kinds. Nevertheless, the reader should not expect quick results.

This chapter is organized as follows. The first section argues that the increasing role information plays in modern market economies is not just a consequence of its falling cost. The growing role of information also results from rising incomes. The evidence shows that, as economic development proceeds and incomes rise, information is demanded in much larger quantities and may even display increasing returns. The next section contrasts the distinct uses of information made in command and market systems, respectively. I will focus in particular on the intermediate uses of information rather than on information as a consumption good. I will assume that information is exchanged in order to permit transactions that create a surplus for someone and that the distribution of the surplus is likely to be very important. I will not, however, analyze the creation of the surplus itself. The next section will consider several specific uses of information,

keeping in mind that information adds value to transactions that increasingly take place as incomes rise because it supports reputations, permits customization and provides yardsticks. In the Soviet economy such information was frequently not produced and, if produced, was often concealed in 'Comrade Starovskii's safes' or elsewhere. It was often of poor quality, but regardless of its quality this information often suffered from low credibility outside the ruling circle. In short, the Soviet command system generated economic growth that was based on a relatively low-value information stock. The penultimate section considers the implications of this condition for post-war Soviet economic growth and economic slowdown, the collapse of the command system, and the persistence of a low level of output after the Soviet Union's demise. The final section will present a conclusion of the paper's main points and findings.

Falling costs, rising demands

We are sometimes told that we are living in a 'new economy'. The basis of this new economy is said to be found in the rapidly falling costs and diffusion of new technologies for information storage, handling and transmission, ranging from the desktop computer and mobile phone to the internet. Other aspects of the new economy, whether or not it has truly accelerated growth, are said to include the decline of old industries, the growth of new industries producing machinery (and specifically IT equipment), the rise of the information and financial services sectors, and globalization.⁵

I single out the rise of services because the products of the services sector are relatively information intensive. Information is a final product of the news, entertainment and publishing media. Agencies engaged in business consulting, market research, credit evaluation and economic forecasting both consume this information and supply it to other business users. It is essential to the provision of personal services ranging from education, health care and the long-term treatment of sick, disabled and the aged, to housing, the labor market and financial services. Community services such as defense, policing, the administration of justice, and public accounting rely in obvious ways on the flow of information.

The growth of services has recently accelerated. Nevertheless, it has a long history, suggesting that the new economy may not be as new as is often touted, and that it has probably been emerging for centuries. Table 7.1 shows that the employment share of the services sector in three of the most developed industrial economies in the world has been rising since 1870. This rise has been continuous in the United States, whereas in Britain and Germany the industrial efforts of World War II interrupted the trend. But if we take 1930 as an intermediate benchmark, the table also reveals that the gain in the employment share of the services sector over the last 60 years was at least twice that of the first 60 years in each of these countries. This supports the notion of an underlying acceleration in the structural shift from production towards services since World War II.

No factor has been more closely associated with the rise of the 'new economy' than diffusion of the personal computer. Over the past 20 years the United States

Table 7.1 Employment in distribution, finance and services, 1870 to 1990: USA, UK and Germany, selected years (per cent of total employment)

	<i>United States</i>	<i>United Kingdom</i>	<i>Germany</i>
1870	18.3	27.0	16.0
1910	26.2	32.3	19.5
1930	33.1	35.2	22.3
Increase, 1870 to 1930	+14.8	+8.2	+6.3
1950	40.0	31.7	21.1
1990	62.2	57.0	36.1
Increase, 1930 to 1990	+29.1	+21.8	+13.8

Source: S. N. Broadberry, *The Productivity Race: British Manufacturing in International Perspective, 1850–1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 64.

has gone from a position of negligible availability of computers to one in which one PC exists for every employable adult. Other leading economies do not lag far behind this figure.⁶

Current rates of decline in information and communications costs are dramatic by any standard. For example, in the three decades from 1930 to 1960 the cost of a three-minute transatlantic telephone call fell by 5.4 per cent a year. The rate then increased to 8.4 per cent annually over the next three decades, from 1960 to 1990. In the three decades from 1960 to 1990, the US Department of Commerce computer price deflator fell at 14.9 per cent a year. The annual rate for the 1980s alone was 27.6 per cent.⁷ More recent estimates reveal further acceleration, with performance-adjusted personal computer prices falling at 30 to 40 per cent annually through the 1990s.⁸ It is a striking irony that the years of accelerating global decline in information costs are also roughly the same period in which the Soviet economy decayed and then collapsed.

There may be historical parallels to past diffusion curves of radios and televisions, telegraph, postal services and mail order, and newsprint and books. The cost of the printed word followed a similar curve in the years after the introduction of the printing press. Before printing, a single book might represent months or years of a scholar's income. In such circumstances, only the Church or the Crown could maintain a library.⁹ With the introduction of printing to Italy in 1465 the price of books is said to have fallen by 80 per cent in just three years. This precipitous decline was repeated in the years that followed because falling prices widened the market and enabled a rapid increase in printing runs. By the early sixteenth century, editions of 3,000 were not uncommon. Afterward, however, book prices stabilized for a lengthy period.¹⁰

The decline in information costs during such episodes may be astonishing and spectacular but it is only part of the story. Conventional analysis of the information

age focuses on falling costs because our attention is naturally drawn to periods of dramatic cost decline such as the one in which we are living today. Moreover, it cannot be denied that falling costs are extremely important. However, the relationship between information and economic growth has roots that are both longer in historical terms than often imagined, and also deeper than a singular focus on falling costs would imply. We are not just observing a slide down a fixed demand curve that widens the market as costs fall. The uses of information have been driven by rising incomes as well as by falling information costs. Income growth is slow and gradual but there is unambiguous evidence that shows that information becomes more useful as incomes rise and would be demanded in greater quantities even if costs did not change.

International comparisons at a point in time clearly show how the demand for information-handling capacity rises with income when costs are given. This relationship is well established and robust, and it can be observed in distinct historical periods. As far back as the 1930s, incomes were related to the availability of national information and communications facilities as much as they were to ingots of steel or kilowatts of electric power.¹¹ Lenin and Stalin thought they were living in the age of steel and electricity but they were wrong. A new era was already overtaking them. Similar figures from contemporary evidence confirm the observation that the age of information is not driven by falling costs alone.¹² For given technologies available at given costs, relatively wealthy countries have found it advantageous to invest much more heavily in information capacity than poor countries. This may be because information is a luxury good, which means that rich people are willing to spend proportionately more to obtain it, or because information has higher returns in those activities in which rich countries specialize.

It seems likely that information displays diminishing returns when other factors are controlled. However, network externalities clearly ensure increasing returns, over a certain range, from items of information technology *equipment* such as video and fax machines, telephones and PCs.¹³ Furthermore, while returns from information may strictly diminish at the margin for a given activity, it is possible and even likely that average returns tend to be higher in those activities such as services that grow most rapidly as incomes rise. Hence, the value of information may rise with incomes and levels of economic development.

Hierarchy and secrecy

In order to understand the scope and purposes of information stocks in the Soviet economy, it is necessary to observe the differences between command and market systems. In a market that is competitive the important relationships are horizontal: buyers and sellers meet and compete on approximately equal terms. Market information is available to all or, if costly, is itself a commodity that can be supplied and demanded. A hierarchy is a vertical network of principals and agents.¹⁴ In the Soviet command economy most enterprises were state-owned and most producers were agents of a government principal, usually a minister, the ministry being the legal fundholder. Horizontal relationships of supply and

demand were organized by order from above through vertical hierarchies rather than directly between buyers and sellers on a voluntary basis. Vertical subordination was based on the principle that orders flowed downwards while information flowed upwards and did not leak downwards or sideways.

An essential feature of the Soviet command system was the complexity of its hierarchies. There were numerous parallel hierarchies with necessarily specialized functions that were often overlapping, and that converged at the top in a unified authority such as the Council of Ministers and the Politburo. And, of course, there existed minor parallel hierarchies within every major hierarchy. None of these could fulfill their functions in isolation, that is, without horizontal exchanges that required contact with others. For example, the Defense Ministry had to purchase equipment and fuel from industry and food from agriculture. The Ministry for Engineering had to buy metals from the steel industry and power from the electricity-generating industry. These exchanges were initially authorized in very broad terms in high-level plans and decrees. The ministries themselves then had to negotiate detailed contracts for specific commodities in order to implement the plan.¹⁵ Implementation of these contracts rested on budget authorization by the Ministry of Finance, and credit authorization by the State Bank. Meanwhile, the criminal and security police, planners and party activists selectively monitored activities and transactions and tracked their consequences.

Within these complex hierarchies, principals were faced with two kinds of opportunistic action by agents that might restrict or dissipate the principal's rents. One was the agent's ability to influence the principal through the former's control of the upward flow of information. The other was the agent's ability to collude with contacts in parallel hierarchies in unauthorized horizontal transactions that might profit the agent at the expense of the principal.

The practice of secrecy was a mechanism that effectively supported vertical structures at the expense of horizontal ones. Secrecy itself had two aspects. The first was the strict rules that limited the downward transmission of information. For example, between 1930 and 1941 the government and its main economic committee issued more than 32,000 decrees. Fewer than 4,000 of these were openly published. More than 5,000 received the highest security classification, which meant that they remained known only to a very small number of top officials.¹⁶ This secrecy extended both to decisions and to the decision-making process itself. The principles of 'conspirativeness' (*konspiratsiia*), approved by the party Politburo in the late 1920s, were aimed at limiting knowledge of the business of the Politburo and Central Committee to the narrowest possible set of participants and, in the process of transmitting decisions downwards, to deny information to lower levels concerning the sources and contexts of higher-level decisions. Moreover, on 5 March 1931 the Politburo resolved 'categorically to forbid people with the right of acquaintance with the decisions of the C[entral] C[ommittee], when passing instructions onward in the apparatus, to refer to the fact that these instructions are decisions of the C[entral] C[ommittee]'.¹⁷

Such secrecy cannot have been designed only to prevent breaches of national security or to prevent society from holding the government and ruling party to

public account. It was also designed to influence the behavior of those located within the state apparatus, but below the apex of power. If officials and activists at the middle level of the *nomenklatura* knew nothing of the decisions being made above them and of the superior bodies making them, they could be prevented from learning how to shape and direct information and to lobby superiors in order to influence decisions concerning their own private interests.

Secrecy also entailed the construction of elaborate 'firewalls' within the state to inhibit horizontal transfers of information between parallel hierarchies. Again, these firewalls could hardly have been justified on grounds of national security or even by a desire to protect the authority of the state as a whole *vis-à-vis* society. Even within the government, information was shared on the basis of need rather than the right to know, and the need to know was defined within limits that appear at times to be extraordinarily narrow. For example, in August 1948 the deputy chief of the Interior Ministry (MVD) Ivan Serov wrote to his boss Lavrentii Beria that in the process of drafting the 1949 budget the Ministry of Finance was demanding to be provided with the numbers of persons to be found in prisons, labor camps and prisoner-of-war camps 'and their physical condition', the numbers of internal security personnel, and the figures for gold output and the gold content of ores. Such figures were required in order to budget for MVD outlays for wages and subsistence. Serov warned that 'provision of these figures will lead to familiarization with especially important information on the part of a wide circle of staff of the USSR Ministry of Finance, the State Bank and the Industrial Bank'. An accompanying memorandum advised Beria that in previous years such figures had been temporarily loaned to the Finance Ministry where they were processed by no more than two or three highly trusted workers and then returned. The memorandum also noted that the Ministries of the Armed Forces and State Security provided the Finance Ministry with financial summaries only and not with head counts. It proposed that the MVD do the same.¹⁸

Such firewalls were often buttressed by a low-trust environment that helped align the incentives of agents with those of their principals. For example, the archives reveal that in the 1930s industrial producers of military products frequently refused to release information about the production cost of weapons to the Defense Ministry, which was the purchasing department. They justified this refusal on the grounds that equipment costs were a military secret to which the Defense Ministry was not privy. Of course, this was a crude excuse. The real problem was that the refusal promoted the producers' horizontal bargaining power.¹⁹

A number of interlocking mechanisms, thus, inhibited horizontal transactions. Unauthorized contracts among lower-level agents with the aim of engaging in horizontal trades were prohibited. In addition, vertical networks of patronage and protection encouraged agents to invest in relationships of trust and dependence with superiors rather than with their opposite numbers in parallel hierarchies.

By protecting their information from horizontal spillage, principals successfully strengthened their vertical hierarchies. However, the reinforcement of hierarchy was achieved at a cost, which was paid in the diminished quantity and quality of

information that flowed upwards from agent to principal. The quantity of information that flowed upward was restricted to the common interest of both principal and agent. The upper reaches of the hierarchies consequently had a limited information-handling capacity. This was only partly due to technological limitations, though it should not be forgotten that, until the end of the Soviet regime, many officials had nothing more sophisticated on their desks than an abacus. In addition, the Politburo and ministers clearly preferred to rely on small staffs of experts. This evidently made it easier to share motivation and sustain unified leadership.²⁰ There were many kinds of information that the commanders of the system simply did not want to know. They did not want to be bothered with every petty setback or failure, preferring to place responsibility for such events at lower levels, which would sort the problems out without the assistance of higher authorities. Keeping their superiors uninformed helped those at the lower levels of the hierarchy to preserve their own freedom of action.²¹

In addition, vertical relations spoiled the quality of information. Because there was no lack of profitable opportunities for horizontal exchanges that would undermine the plan, principals needed good information about what their agents were doing. For the same reason, however, agents had strong incentives to conceal or lie about their activities. They had another reason as well: even if the returns from concealed horizontal exchanges were sometimes low relative to the high risks and penalties involved, the most profitable alternative for the agent was not necessarily to obey orders. The fact is, carrying out instructions required effort, which meant that doing nothing entailed as much concealment as doing something that was actively illegal. And thus, while downward and horizontal transfers of information were successfully impeded, the flows of information vertically upward became sluggish and frequently distorted.²²

While principals generally discouraged inferiors from lobbying, there were circumstances in which they actively encouraged it as a means of overcoming the reluctance of agents to volunteer information. In the competition for resources and favors, rival agents were all too willing to supply principals with information of two kinds: on the relative worth of rival spending projects that were available to the principal to choose, and on the relative loyalty of competing agents. This was the strategy that was followed, for example, in creating a 'market for inventions' in the defense industry.²³ The resulting information could be plentiful, though recognizably biased. It depended on enforcing rivalry among agents at lower levels through a policy of 'divide and conquer'. If these agents formed horizontal links and learned to collude, then the flow of information deteriorated in both quantity and quality.²⁴

In summary, the role of information is pointedly distinct in the command system as compared to a market setting. In the former, principals had strong incentives to collect true information, although these incentives were substantially weakened by the high costs of collecting and handling it. Agents often had only weak incentives to collect information or provide true information to principals, while they had strong incentives to either withhold or distort it. The resulting equilibrium was characterized by limited information stocks of poor quality.

Market information in a command system

Austrian economic thought emphasizes the role of markets as information systems in which prices make reallocation possible by acting as signals.²⁵ Indeed, this was the argument with which the Austrian tradition sought to establish the superiority of the capitalist economic system over socialism. The focus of this paper is a little different: it examines the various ways in which the exchange of non-price signals can add value to transactions. Without this information, the transactions taking place would be of lower value or they would not take place at all. I discern three ways in which information adds value to transactions: it supports producers' and consumers' reputations; it permits customization of products; and it provides yardsticks that are useful to all agents in making comparative evaluations of products, producers and investments. Reputation and customization depend on the diffusion of specific information, information about individual consumers and producers. Yardsticks, on the other hand, are enabled by 'general knowledge', knowledge about the economy in various aggregate dimensions.

Brands, advertising and reputation

In markets for goods and services where there are many brands and many sellers, advertising informs consumers of the availability and price of new products, reducing the costs of searching for them.²⁶ Where the quality of a product matters and consumers cannot easily distinguish good products from bad ones before purchase, producers can command a premium if they invest in a reputation.²⁷ For the same reasons that Soviet producers did not need to know their markets, they had little reason to acquire a reputation with the ultimate users of their products. For related reasons, producers did not advertise. Most Soviet consumers took what they could get without having to choose among brands or seek out the lowest price. It was enough to be able to buy at all.

In a seller's market the information of most value to consumers is knowing for certain that a given commodity will be available in a given quantity at a given time and place. Knowledge of availability is more important than knowledge of quality or even price. Market research that predicts availability serves consumers but is of no interest to producers. Without it, market intelligence circulates along the twin axes of rumor and privilege, traded in an 'economy of favours'.²⁸

It would be wrong to conclude that business reputation did not exist at all in the command system. Reputations were attached to both products and agents. Particular brand products were widely known for high quality. These included Stolichnaia vodka, the Red October chocolate confectionery, the Bolshoi ballet and MIG aircraft. This reputation was primarily based on consumers' experience but the payoff came when reporting within the vertical hierarchy. That is, the market reputation brought no return. It was the reputation in the hierarchy that won rewards for the producers. These rewards were extremely varied. Organizational team benefits took the form of priority access to financial and material resources for production and the establishment of privileged retail, housing and welfare

clubs for employees. Individual benefits ranged from cash premiums and state awards to the chance to travel abroad and retain some foreign earnings.

What informed the business reputation of an agent? Again, such reputation could be formed on both horizontal and vertical lines. But whereas the market reputation of a product reinforced its reputation in the hierarchy, the reputation of an agent followed a more complicated provenance.

An agent's reputation with superiors rested on both productivity and loyalty. Nevertheless, the relative weight of these two factors varied and the size of the return was uncertain as well. For example, a study of Soviet regional policy has shown that Stalin used investment allocations to reward loyal regional agents in his struggle against the opposition in the late 1920s. During the 1930s, however, his regional agents were called in to account for their wasteful use of these resources.²⁹ A detailed study of the Soviet allocation system for motor vehicles in the 1930s also shows that the dictator held a stock of vehicles in reserve for use as rewards to loyal agents.³⁰ In aviation research and development, in contrast, although Stalin had clear favorites and proposals required investments in lobbying in order to receive their initial financing, a reputation for loyalty was no protection against deprivation of funding or even punishment in the event of production failure.³¹ It appears, thus, that loyalty alone was not enough under Stalin. However, the slowdown of elite circulation that followed the dictator's death might have led to an increase in the importance of loyalty relative to that of productivity, with adverse consequences for the health of the command system.

The ability to complete transactions in unauthorized horizontal contacts depended on a business reputation for plain dealing and keeping one's word. Eugenia Belova has described the unauthorized 'relational' contracting system that arose when contracts were too costly to enforce or were unenforceable by other means.³² Relational contracts typically rested on a handshake and were made possible to begin with by personal contacts and friendships. Only such mutuality could overcome the culture of low trust.³³

An agent could exploit a good horizontal reputation in order to support a vertical reputation. Vertical reputation rested on fulfilling the plan, while the plan was highly aggregated and did not anticipate or take into account the numerous practical details inherent in inter-ministerial transactions that were necessary to achieve the plan. The system of inter-ministerial contracting that underpinned the aggregate plan was also highly incomplete. In order to supplement the plan and eventually fulfill it, agents were frequently compelled to make unauthorized horizontal contacts and deals. Consequently, a horizontal reputation for honesty among equals could be support for a vertical reputation for serving superiors. This created a problem for principals, however, who found it difficult to distinguish between those unofficial deals that agents made so as to fulfill the plan and those deals that allowed agents to cheat the state and line their own pockets. An agent's horizontal reputation could perhaps be 'too good': to be well thought of by all persons involved could too easily cover up embezzlement or worse.

A vertical reputation that was 'too good' could similarly damage a horizontal reputation. Eugenia Belova finds evidence that a bad vertical reputation was often

a signal of readiness to do unofficial business on horizontal lines. While relational contracting should have become more efficient as personal networks increased in scope, she argues, it was not in the interest of principals to allow such horizontal networks to expand without limit. As a result, horizontal reputation could only develop privately or within small groups.³⁴

An additional dimension of reputation in market economies concerns consumers. Consumer reputation is primarily important for consumer credit. Banks, loan societies and credit card agencies prefer to lend only to individuals with desirable characteristics such as fixed places of residence, collateral assets and good repayment records. In the Soviet command system these factors were mostly unimportant. Without a freehold property market no one sought to acquire a housing mortgage. Consumer debt did not become an issue either since, in a shortage economy, most consumers had plenty of liquidity in the form of either cash assets or waiting time.

The individual's status as a producer and his or her political reputation with superiors carried more weight than any financial credit rating. That meant that the currency by which a person's creditworthiness was measured and his ability to accumulate debts was one of loyalty and favors. This 'currency' was privately traded, subject to special rules of reciprocity. It was not convertible into rubles. The information that drove this trade was correspondingly private and not available for general dissemination.

Customization

In the early twentieth century mass production brought the cost of consumer durables down to the point where they became items of mass consumption. The result was a high degree of market penetration by relatively uniform, standardized products. As Henry Ford said of his family automobiles, 'You can have any color you want, as long as it's black.'³⁵ The same was true for radios, telephones and television sets. For lower income levels, price naturally tended to be more important than variety although, when controlling for income, consumers in various countries differed somewhat in their willingness to trade off for variety or quality.³⁶

In market economies, customized products are able to command a premium over standardized, mass-produced commodities. But customization entails a considerably greater exchange of information in order to complete a transaction. In the era of mass production the consumer bought a uniform product whose attributes were determined by the producer. Flexible production today means that, by recombining product attributes in different ways, suppliers can customize goods and services to the needs of individual purchasers without any accompanying loss of economies of scale.

Mass customization, which is also called 'mass personalization', is made possible by an increase in information that producers can acquire about consumers. In wealthy countries, large companies today carry out market research or employ specialized research agencies to develop gigantic databases that store household, or individualized, data on consumer characteristics and preferences. For more

complex products, consumers themselves provide information about their preferences 'just in time'. For example, a buyer ordering a computer over the internet specifies the processor make and speed he desires, along with the chip and disk memory, additional drives, modem capacity, display type, sound card, multimedia facilities and so on. This information is then transmitted directly to the assembly line program.

In the Soviet economy such detailed information about product prices and characteristics was not readily available. Indeed, it may not even have been created. For example, the Soviet statistical archives appear to hold price and quantity information about every product ever produced in a state-owned enterprise. However, even for the most complex and costly machinery, this information does not appear to extend beyond two or three product characteristics.³⁷ By comparison, the marketing and mail order catalogs available to most US consumers from the early twentieth century onward contain an innumerable greater quantity of information per product. That information was not only enough to sell the products. It also served to support subsequent studies of hedonic pricing of durable goods, studies that have routinely used such catalogs as their primary data.³⁸ The information held in the Soviet archives, in contrast, was explicitly collected to support planning targets based on quality-adjusted pricing. In fact, it did not do so. Rather, this information made it possible to conceal inflation.³⁹

Similarly, Soviet producers did not need to, nor did they, carry out market research of consumer characteristics. Mass production displaced the artisanal system of producer-driven customization in the 1930s and 1940s.⁴⁰ Thereafter, the Soviet economy remained wedded to mass production. Standardized clothing, household durables, and civilian and military machinery supplied an undifferentiated market. The state procured and distributed output, breaking the link between supplier and final purchaser. The seller's market left producers with no incentive to become informed about the market, and no means of doing so because the state insulated them from market responses. The state monopoly in foreign trade cut producers off from the export market even more thoroughly than from the home market, and exporters were given no special incentives to tailor their production to the requirements of foreign buyers.⁴¹ Only the Defense Ministry had the power to enforce customization upon producers through its institutionalized presence in the defense industry and its power of veto in the procurement process.⁴²

In practice, there were two ways in which Soviet products and services could command a real premium in return for variations of attributes. The first was provided by the command economy, which allocated an implicit premium to new and regraded products by pricing them favorably in relation to existing products. This was not a deliberate policy. Rather, it developed as follows: prices were based on product costs in order to assure that cost cutting was not rewarded at the expense of product quality. But the authorities could not process complex information about product quality in a way that distinguished cost increases associated with the customization of products to the market from those designed to attract a rent at the expense of society. Thus, 'simulated' innovation had a greater payoff than

did true innovation, and producers obtained rewards for product variations that increased costs rather than quality.⁴³ The outcome was customization of products *vis-à-vis* the plan rather than in relation to the final consumer.

The other way in which products and services could command a return on a variation of attributes was through illegal trade and side payments. In these respects the Soviet economy returned the concept of customization to an artisanal framework of semi-legal or illegal self-employment or unregulated small-scale trade. For example, Western imports were one source of customized products that commanded a premium. The main positive attribute of Western clothing or household equipment to the consumer was simply in its divergence from the standardized Soviet article. The premium was reduced, however, because access to imported commodities depended more on privilege than on purchasing power. Thus, for instance, the possibility of buying denim jeans from tourists was restricted mainly to those with a Moscow or Leningrad residence permit. Similarly, personal services ranging from housing maintenance to medical care were often customized to the individual consumer through bribery and side payments, though in an 'economy of favours' the ability to trade a privilege could count more than purchasing power.

'General knowledge' and yardsticks

Specific transactions in market economies are enabled by combining various kinds of information. Information specific to the transaction itself ('What am I buying? How much does it cost? How much do I need it?') is essential but often alone not enough. To complete the transaction general knowledge is required as well. Are similar products available elsewhere for less? What other products are available? For durable goods, time also enters into the equation. Will the price fall? Will something substantially better come along in a year or two? Will needs change? Typically, transactions involving time, such as investment choices or providing for retirement, are most demanding of general knowledge. Producers must forecast aggregate trends as well as those specific to their own market. Individuals must predict their lifetime capacity to save and the lifetime return to saving in the context of macroeconomic and demographic trends.

In all these cases we use general knowledge of trends in the economy as a whole to provide yardsticks against which we can judge individual firms and products.⁴⁴ For example, we may judge product prices against the retail price index, share performance against the Wall Street index, or fixed-interest financial products against the Bank of England's discount rate.

Yardsticks also play an essential role in informing policy choices and choices in political markets. We rank police forces by crime and detection rates and use this information to judge the performance of the police chief. We judge health administrators by waiting lists and operation success rates in hospital league tables, teachers by pupils' exam performance in league tables of schools, and politicians by the economy's place in league tables of unemployment, inflation, real growth and environmental quality. An external yardstick for the Soviet economy in this sense was sometimes the economic performance of the West, as when

Stalin set the goal to 'make good the distance we are lagging behind the advanced capitalist countries' or to 'outstrip the principal capitalist countries economically'.⁴⁵ Soviet leaders also benchmarked their own technologies against specific Western products and processes. Stalin himself sometimes withheld support from new ideas until they had been tested by Western experience.⁴⁶

Such uses of general knowledge can generate intense pressure on the independence and objectivity of those who produce it: business consortia, academic organizations and government bureaucracies.⁴⁷ This pressure is exacerbated in so far as all have a natural monopoly on the supply of information about themselves that cannot be easily checked. Therefore, the structure of the market has an important influence on the quality of statistics. Assuring this quality most often requires a combination of transparent sources and methods, regulation through audit, and constitutional guarantees of independence from operational concerns.

In the Soviet economy much of this information of a potentially 'yardstick' character was not required. This was because restrictions on agents' freedom of action would have prevented them from benefiting from it. And even when required, such yardsticks were frequently not supplied, remaining locked in 'comrade Starovskii's safes' or elsewhere. And even if supplied, such yardsticks were often of unreliable quality. The quality of statistical information was usually unsupervised. The government statistical service was allowed to exercise a monopoly over statistical work and was itself a loyal instrument of the political class.⁴⁸ And whether or not they were reliable, the general public often found government statistics not to be credible, as was reflected in the popular idiom '*Izvestiia* [The News] isn't the truth [*ne Pravda*] and *Pravda* [The Truth] isn't news [*ne izvestiia*].' Interestingly, government statistics found credibility only within the closed world of the ruling circle. The leaders, for example, relied on the official growth rates when no one else did. This may be seen to be an important and interesting paradox, sometimes described in terms of an out-of-touch elite believing its own propaganda, propaganda that the rest of the world recognized as transparent falsehood.

Let us specifically examine two aspects of this dynamic: the changing propensity to conceal useful information, and the credibility gap between rulers and society. To begin with, consider the availability of information that would have usefully contributed to general knowledge: for example, crime rates, rates of alcoholism, disease and death rates, harvest levels, the money supply, and real growth and inflation rates. All these were at one time or another on the list of secret information. Such concealment inhibited the establishment of yardsticks by which the performance of government and the economy could be evaluated. As such, it diminished accountability. It also resulted in two kinds of waste. First, in the absence of yardsticks some persons made costly mistakes. Many Russians, for example, counted on the command system to provide them with pensions in retirement, saving less for their old age than they might have otherwise. Or they saved in the wrong form, such as in rubles that are now worthless. As a result, they are now unable to retire, or they live in poverty. Second, those for whom yardstick information mattered had to waste resources in duplicating it, for example in disseminating information about society by costly *samizdat*.⁴⁹

Soviet yardsticks were not all consistently concealed. The propensity to suppress developed along a protracted cycle, from relative openness in the 1920s to the almost total statistical blackout of 1937 to 1956, followed by a return to greater openness in the 1960s and 1970s, always characterized by qualifications and partial retreats, up until the flood of revelations associated with *glasnost*.

Why were such facts revealed in some periods but not in others? There appear to have been three reasons. First, without providing general information from time to time, the regime could not credibly claim responsibility for economic advances and thus hope to win the population's loyalty.⁵⁰ A regime choice that shifted the underpinnings of power away from repression towards loyalty could thus tip the balance in favor of a policy of revelation that would allow the establishment of performance yardsticks. Second, resting on the same reasons of regime change, it often suited a new leader to reveal the failings of his predecessors in order to avoid responsibility for their failures. Third, when the regime chose to seek a wider involvement by the intelligentsia in solving economic and cultural problems, greater openness became necessary in fostering critical discussion and evaluating existing policies. All three motives were evident in the spring of 1956, in Mikoian's public plea to 'comrade Starovskii' to open his safes.

In one respect, a command system that practiced a degree of statistical openness might be regarded as providing better information than a market economy. The information that is needed for making optimal production and consumption decisions includes information about the future prices of commodities. In market economies such futures markets do not, on the whole, exist. The command system did not provide information about future prices. It did, however, provide guidelines about future quantities in the shape of detailed plans for future national economic development.⁵¹ Nevertheless, this information was of limited value in practice since plans were not implemented in any detail. In the words of Eugene Zaleski, the Stalinist plan was a 'vision of growth... The Soviet experiment shows that, in order to exert a real influence, the vision does not have to be very accurate.'⁵²

Periods of greater openness revealed another problem: much of the information was itself of such low quality that it constituted an unreliable basis for making decisions. The very fact that Soviet statistics were designed to be used as success indicators led to their distortion in ways that have been well known for many years.⁵³ Some observers attributed large consequences to low-quality macroeconomic yardsticks in Soviet history. For example, Grigorii Khanin has argued that exaggerated claims of success made the Soviet regime complacent about economic stability, encouraged an official belief in the ability of society to shoulder fresh burdens, and inhibited adaptations to changing economic conditions in the 1970s and 1980s.⁵⁴ The official data largely failed to detect the worsening Soviet economy. While serious long-term problems were acknowledged, no crisis was recognized. Meanwhile, unofficial experience told all too clearly of the sharply deteriorating quality and availability of goods and services. The reliance of Soviet leaders on official yardsticks that left the true picture a blank and thus shielded them from the necessity to act explains the general uncomprehending complacency.

The upsurge of economic discontent that was followed by a turn to terminal disintegration quite simply took the leadership by surprise.

Khanin has shown that there were individuals involved in the making of policy who understood the defective character of their information and attempted to improve it.⁵⁵ They were opposed, however, by strongly entrenched interests that were vested in distortion and concealment. In hindsight we can see that the 'errors' in the data were a permanent feature of the Soviet command system: distorted statistics suited the policy biases that led to famine and demographic disaster in the 1930s, and to less dramatic but still costly losses in the post-war period.

Why, then, did Soviet statistics command more credibility in the Kremlin than in the street? An answer may be found in the literature on signaling, which shows that a divergence of preferences between sender and receiver may limit the information that can be credibly conveyed.⁵⁶ Consider the possible range of preferences for high effort and high accumulation on one hand, versus low effort and low consumption on the other. Stalin's brutal treatment of statisticians in the 1930s may be interpreted as a process of aligning their preferences with his, which were for high effort and accumulation. Once accomplished, this ensured that the statistics they produced were accepted as credible by the Kremlin. But the dictator's preferences diverged from social reality. As a consequence, officially 'honest brokers' were officially believed while they were perceived as dishonest in unofficial circles. This can also explain the sudden brutality with which Stalin reacted whenever he began to doubt the statisticians' loyalty, which was essential to his mechanisms of power.⁵⁷

Soviet growth, transition and information

At the 20th Party Congress in 1956, Mikoian claimed that the Soviet state possessed statistical data 'in far larger measure than at any other time and in any other country'. Can he have told the truth?

In a superficial sense, possibly. Our growing acquaintance with the Soviet archives has revealed that the statistical resources of the Soviet state were vast. Nevertheless, the huge scale of these resources should be discounted because of two factors: first, the sheer size of the Soviet economy; and, second, the fact that the Soviet state assigned government with functions undertaken by the private sector in market economies. When that is the case, it is less clear whose system has the statistical advantage. Moreover, most Soviet information that was collected was narrowly circulated, and most of it was unreliable. Many kinds of information were not collected at all, or, if collected, they were not disseminated. Most officials usually had little idea about the true value of the physical and human resources at their disposal, the true productivity of the producers that they commanded or the true degree of satisfaction of the firms and households that they supplied. In short, the Soviet command system forced economic growth on the basis of an information stock of relatively low quality and low value.

Soviet and Russian post-war economic growth displays four features that require explanation: rapid growth from the 1920s through the 1950s; the slowdown that

began in the 1960s and intensified in the 1970s; the economic collapse that came at the end of the 1980s; and the persistence of a low level of real output in the 1990s and into the present decade. The restricted information capacity of the Soviet economy can help explain all four events. But given the present state of our knowledge, its explanatory power is also limited. This is because all four questions already have too many possible solutions.⁵⁸ It does not seem particularly useful to propose an extra solution to each problem when the available data do not allow us to discriminate between the solutions that have already been advanced. It may nevertheless be constructive to outline some possible avenues for further investigation.

Given low-value information stocks, how did the Soviet economy rapidly grow from the 1920s up through the 1950s? Soviet economic growth was based on the rapid expansion of output of standardized goods and services (but mostly *goods*) with low information requirements. Let me emphasize: I do not argue that this growth was an illusion. The Soviet economy did grow in real terms and at several times during these decades. According to the best measures available, Soviet real income per head increased by a factor of approximately five between the 1920s and the 1980s.⁵⁹ Real consumption grew by less, however, and the extra welfare gained from the increasing supply of consumer goods and services was clearly counterbalanced by shortages and other restrictions on variety and choice and by social and intertemporal inequalities. Moreover, although the level of the information stock may have been low relative to real output, it was presumably possible to widen this stock as output grew so that information shortages did not constrain growth. The result was that the Soviet Union had achieved by the 1980s an income level many times higher than could have been predicted on the basis of its endowment of information-handling equipment measured by computing power.⁶⁰

New research on long-run trends in the organization of market economies suggests that the conditions under which the Soviet economy could grow in this manner were impermanent. The century between 1870 and 1970 was characterized by two special conditions in which large hierarchical organizations could flourish: industry was providing a rising scale of production while the modern office had reduced costs of information and monitoring to a level that was, as yet, 'neither prohibitive nor trivial'. Since then, however, further declines in information costs have favored a switch away from hierarchies back to horizontally organized networks based on trust, reputation and customized production.⁶¹ In short, the Soviet model of rapid industrialization that relied on standardization and sparse information was favored by the peculiar conditions of the last century, conditions that no longer exist.

The character of Soviet information stocks may help to explain the slowdown in Soviet post-war productivity. The Soviet real growth series evidenced a sharp deceleration in the mid-1970s that cannot be explained by any exogenous shock.⁶² This was just when information costs began to rapidly fall in other countries and demand decisively shifted towards more information-intensive products and services. On a global level, the return from information was perhaps increasing

relative to other resources such as labor and other kinds of capital, where returns were falling. If we suppose Soviet information channels could not be deepened enough to supply the information that would have maintained the returns to other factors in the Soviet economy, then a slowdown of aggregate and productivity growth would be the inevitable result.

In considering more specifically how information relates to knowledge, it is clear that knowledge in the sense of 'how to' and 'can do' is useless without information. Decade after decade the Soviet education system increased the numbers of knowledgeable persons whose desire for information was perhaps increasingly frustrated.⁶³ As a result, the returns from investments in human capital fell or proved to be unexpectedly low.

The low value of Soviet information stocks may also contribute to our understanding of how the Soviet command system eventually collapsed. According to Mancur Olson, a dictator of the stationary-bandit type will invest in public goods, such as protection of the physical and human assets under his control, up to the point where his share in their return to society equals the cost to him of doing so.⁶⁴ Public information is a public good, but, if information is costly and the return on publication accrues mainly to society, the dictator will keep the information to himself or not provide it at all. The dictator administers his assets through agents. Each agent will remain loyal to the dictator provided that his share in the dictator's expected rents from the assets he administers exceeds the expected value of the asset if he were to steal it. We must count among these assets the dictator's secrets. These secrets have a value to the dictator if kept and a value in the economic or political market place if disclosed. One aspect of the process that began with *glasnost* and ended in the dismantling of the Soviet state was the moment when agents began to realize that the market value of state secrets long under their control exceeded their value if left concealed. At this point, stealing information became one more dimension of what Steven Solnick has called 'stealing the state'.⁶⁵

Finally, the inheritance of a low-value information stock may help to explain the persistence of a low level of output after the transition to a market system. The important role of intangible 'social capital' for long-run economic development has long been recognized by economic historians.⁶⁶ More recently, the poor economic performance of the former Soviet republics since the collapse of the command system has been attributed to low social capital in the form of an institutional quality deficit.⁶⁷ Earlier optimism about the growth prospects of transitional economies is necessarily tempered when this deficit is fully taken into account.⁶⁸ The command system impeded the accumulation of social capital but could force economic growth instead by relying on coercion. Now that the command system has gone, a market economy will not prosper in Russia until the necessary accumulation of social capital has taken place, a process that could take decades, or centuries.

Social capital is conventionally measured along several dimensions: education and knowledge, the rule of law and property rights, a civil society and so on. What makes these things 'social' rather than private in nature is that their benefits spill

over the narrow limits of private profit and loss. In this sense, information stocks are also a part of social capital. The Russian economy today is suffering from a shortage of the information stocks that make transactions valuable and make markets work. Accumulating the missing information stocks will take time and will not even begin until there is progress in the complementary dimensions of social capital that are already recognized in the literature.

Conclusions

The economics of information analyzes some of the ways in which information adds value to transactions in market economies. While markets thrive on information, hierarchies may choke on it. In the Soviet command economy, valuable information was frequently not produced; if produced, it was often concealed; whether concealed or not, it was often of poor quality; and regardless of quality, it often suffered from low credibility outside the ruling circle. In short, the Soviet command system generated economic growth on the basis of a relatively low-value information stock. This may help explain aspects of post-war Soviet economic growth and slowdown, the collapse of the command system, and the persistence of low output since the collapse. At the moment, however, such suggestions are no more than speculations because we have virtually no empirical measures of trends in the quantity or value of the command system's information stocks, flows or transfers.

Notes

I thank the following for their comments: Stephen Broadberry, Yoram Gorlizki, Paul Gregory, Peter Law, Valery Lazarev and the participants in two conferences: 'The End of Soviet Communism in Europe', held at the Gramsci Institute Foundation, Rome, 10 and 11 May 2002; and the Economics Summer Research Euro-Workshop at the University of Warwick, 8 to 19 July 2002. I also thank Oleg Khlevniuk and Martin Lowry for helpful advice and additional references.

- 1 A. I. Mikoian to the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Moscow, 16 February 1956. Vladimir Nikonovich Starovskii was chief of TsSU (the central statistical administration of USSR Gosplan, later of the USSR Council of Ministers) continuously from 21 October 1940 to 6 August 1975.
- 2 F. A. Hayek, 'The Use of Knowledge in Society', *American Economic Review*, 35, 4 (1945), pp. 519–20.
- 3 Paul A. David and Dominique Foray, 'An Introduction to the Economy of the Knowledge Society', All Souls College, Oxford (2001).
- 4 Kenneth J. Arrow, *Collected Papers of Kenneth J. Arrow*, vol. IV, *The Economics of Information* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), pp. 106–14.
- 5 For a survey of uses, leading and misleading, of the idea of a 'new economy' see Jeff Madrick, 'The Business Media and the New Economy', Harvard University, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Joan Shorenstein Center Research Paper R-24 (2001).
- 6 World Bank, *World Development Indicators* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2001). In the United States in 1999 there were 511 PCs in use per 1,000 of the population, followed by Australia (469) and Switzerland (462).
- 7 Calculated from figures cited by the International Monetary Fund, *World Economic Outlook* (Washington, DC: IMF, 1997), p. 46.

- 8 J. Steven Landefeld and Bruce T. Grimm, 'A Note on the Impact of Hedonics and Computers on Real GDP', *Bureau of Economic Analysis Survey of Current Business*, 17–22 December (2000), p. 19.
- 9 H. E. Bell, 'The Price of Books in Medieval England', *The Library*, 4th series, 17, 3 (1936), p. 331; Carlo M. Cipolla, *Money, Prices, and Civilization in the Mediterranean World: Fifth to Seventeenth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1956), pp. 57–63.
- 10 I thank Martin Lowry for this information, based on his own research and reference to Giovanni Andrea Bussi, *Prefazioni alle edizioni di Sweynheym e Pannartz prototipografi Romani*, a cura di Massimo Miglio (Edizioni il Polifilo, Milan, 1978), and Anna Esposito, Anna Modigliani and Paola Scarcia Piacentini, 'Il costo del libro', in *Scrittura, biblioteche e stampa a Roma nel Quattrocento, Atti del Seminario 6–8 Maggio 1982*, a c. di M. Miglio, 3 vols (Citt Adel Vaticano, 1983), vol. II, pp. 323–553.
- 11 Mark Harrison, 'GDPs of the USSR and Eastern Europe: Towards an Interwar Comparison', *Europe–Asia Studies*, 46 (1994), pp. 249–51.
- 12 For data on the present-day cross-country distribution of personal computers, televisions, telephone mainlines and mobile phones, strongly correlated with incomes, see World Bank, *World Development Indicators*.
- 13 On network externalities see Michael L. Katz and Carl Shapiro, 'Network Externalities, Competition, and Compatibility', *American Economic Review*, 75, 3 (1985), pp. 424–40.
- 14 On vertical and horizontal networks see Ronald Wintrobe, *The Political Economy of Dictatorship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 212–13.
- 15 Our knowledge of inter-ministerial contracting in the Soviet economy was virtually non-existent before the archives. See Mark Harrison and Nikolai Simonov, 'Voenpriemka: Prices, Costs, and Quality in Defence Industry', in Mark Harrison and John Barber (eds), *The Soviet Defence Industry Complex from Stalin to Khrushchev* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), pp. 223–45; Eugenia Belova and Paul R. Gregory (2002). 'Dictators, Loyal and Opportunistic Agents: The Soviet Archives on Creating the Soviet Economic System'. *Public Choice*, vol. 113, nos 3–4, 265–86.
- 16 Davies, R.W. (2001) 'The Making of Economic Policy'. In Paul R. Gregory, ed., *Behind the Façade of Stalin's Command Economy: Evidence from the Soviet State and Party Archives*, 61–80. Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press.
- 17 O. V. Khlevniuk, A. V. Kvashonkin, L. P. Kosheleva and L. A. Rogovaia (eds), *Stalinskoe Politbiuro v 30-e gody. Sbornik dokumentov* (Moscow: AIRO-XX, 1995), p. 85; see also pp. 73–82.
- 18 Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii, Moscow, fond 5446, op. 50a, delo 4043, fos 1–2. On Serov's memorandum is noted by hand: 'Comrades Popov and Serov: consider and resolve. L. Beria.' I thank Oleg Khlevniuk for this reference. For a similar example from the 1930s see Mark Harrison, 'Providing for Defense', in Paul R. Gregory (ed.), *Behind the Façade of Stalin's Command Economy* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2001), p. 96.
- 19 Harrison and Simonov, 'Voenpriemka', pp. 232–5, and further John Barber, Mark Harrison, Nikolai Simonov and Boris Starkov, 'The Structure and Development of the Soviet Defence-Industry Complex', in John Barber and Mark Harrison (eds), *The Soviet Defence-Industry Complex from Stalin to Khrushchev* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), pp. 19–23.
- 20 Paul R. Gregory, ed. (2001), *Behind the Façade of Stalin's Command Economy: Evidence from the Soviet State and Party Archives*. Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press.
- 21 Belova and Gregory, 'Dictators, Loyal and Opportunistic Agents, and Punishment'.
- 22 As a result the detailed information that reached the summit was sometimes not trusted as a basis for planning decisions, and supra-ministerial agencies incurred costs in gathering data independently to duplicate and cross-check that supplied through the

- ministerial hierarchy. See Paul R. Gregory, *Restructuring the Soviet Economic Bureaucracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 37–8.
- 23 Mark Harrison, 'The Soviet Market for Inventions: The Case of Jet Propulsion, 1932 to 1944', PERSA Working Paper No. 9, University of Warwick, Department of Economics (2001); Mark Harrison, 'The Political Economy of a Soviet Military R&D Failure: Steam Power for Aviation, 1932 to 1939', *Journal of Economic History*, 63(1), 2003, 178–212.
- 24 Mark Harrison, 'Soviet Industry and the Red Army under Stalin: A Military-Industrial Complex?', *Les Cahier du Monde Russe* 44(2–3), 2003.
- 25 Hayek, 'Use of Knowledge in Society'.
- 26 George J. Stigler, 'The Economics of Information', *Journal of Political Economy*, 69, 3 (1961), pp. 213–25.
- 27 According to Stigler, 'Reputation commands a price... because it economizes on search.' Ibid., p. 224. For elaboration see Carl Shapiro, 'Premiums for High Quality Products as Returns to Reputations', *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 98, 4 (1983), pp. 659–80.
- 28 On Russia's 'economy of favours' see Alena V. Ledeneva, *Russia's Economy of Favours: Blat, Networking and Informal Exchange* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
- 29 Harris, James R. (1999) 'The Great Urals: Regionalism and the Evolution of the Soviet System', Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press.
- 30 Valery Lazarev and Paul R. Gregory, 'Dictators and Cars: A Case Study in the Political Economy of Dictatorship', PERSA Working Paper No. 5, University of Warwick, Department of Economics (2001).
- 31 Harrison, 'Soviet Market for Inventions'; Harrison, 'Political Economy of a Soviet Military R&D Failure'.
- 32 Belova, 'Contract Enforcement under Dictatorship'.
- 33 Gregory, *Restructuring the Soviet Economic Bureaucracy*, pp. 91–2.
- 34 Belova, 'Contract Enforcement under Dictatorship'.
- 35 This is what Henry Ford is said to have said in 1929, or in 1933, or at some other date, of the Model A, the Model T or some other Ford vehicle, according to hundreds of internet references registered by www.google.com.
- 36 S. N. Broadberry, *The Productivity Race: British Manufacturing in International Perspective, 1850–1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 77–89.
- 37 Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Ekonomiki, fond 1562, contains the files of the USSR central statistical administration (TsSU SSSR) that have been declassified up to 1963.
- 38 For example Robert J. Gordon, *The Measurement of Durable Goods Prices* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1990), especially pp. 417–89.
- 39 Mark Harrison, 'Prices, Planners, and Producers: An Agency Problem in Soviet Industry, 1928–1950', *Journal of Economic History*, 58, 4 (1998), pp. 1032–62; Mark Harrison, 'Soviet Industrial Production, 1928 to 1955: Real Growth and Hidden Inflation', *Journal of Comparative Economics*, 28, 1 (2000), pp. 134–55.
- 40 On mass production in the defense industry see Mark Harrison, 'Wartime Mobilisation: A German Comparison', in Mark Harrison and John Barber (eds), *The Soviet Defence Industry Complex from Stalin to Khrushchev* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), pp. 99–117.
- 41 Franklyn D. Holzman, *Foreign Trade under Central Planning* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974).
- 42 Harrison and Simonov, 'Voenpriemka'.
- 43 Joseph S. Berliner, *The Innovation Decision in Soviet Industry* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1976), pp. 375–80; Harrison, 'Prices, Planners, and Producers'.
- 44 Shleifer proposed 'yardstick competition' as a means of regulating franchised monopolies. Franchised monopolies typically have little incentive to reduce costs. However, if the price that the regulated firm receives is made to depend on the costs of identical firms, then in equilibrium each firm will choose a socially efficient level of cost reduction.

- Yardstick competition is recognizable in a Soviet context as the idea behind 'socialist emulation', with the difference that Soviet competition was aimed not at cutting costs but at increasing gross output. Andrei Shleifer, 'A Theory of Yardstick Competition', *RAND Journal of Economics*, 16, 3 (1985), pp. 319–27.
- 45 'The Tasks of Business Executives' (4 February 1931) and 'Report on the Work of the Central Committee' to the 18th Party Congress (10 March 1939), both reproduced in Joseph Stalin, *Leninism* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1940), quoting from pp. 367 and 634 respectively. For a survey and history of Soviet expert attempts to benchmark the Soviet economy against Western yardsticks see V. M. Kudrov, *Sovetskaia ekonomika v retrospektive. Opyt pereosmysleniia* (Moscow: Nauka, 1997).
- 46 David Holloway, *Stalin and the Bomb: The Soviet Union and Atomic Energy, 1939–1956* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), p. 147.
- 47 In the terms of Arrow, yardstick information is indivisible and inappropriable. It is a public good by definition and this explains why it is not typically supplied on a private basis. Arrow, *Economics of Information*, p. 142.
- 48 S. G. Wheatcroft and R. W. Davies, 'The Crooked Mirror of Soviet Economics Statistics', in R. W. Davies, Mark Harrison and S. G. Wheatcroft (eds), *The Economic Transformation of the Soviet Union, 1913–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 24–37. On planners and statisticians as 'honest brokers' within the Stalinist dictatorship see Belova and Gregory, 'Dictators, Loyal and Opportunistic Agents, and Punishment'.
- 49 Arrow specifies a third cost of secrecy when secrets can be traded privately, the destruction of markets for sharing risks. In the Soviet case such markets were precluded anyway. Arrow, *Economics of Information*, p. 143.
- 50 For the underlying theoretical argument see Ronald Wintrobe, 'The Tinpot and the Totalitarian: An Economic Theory of Dictatorship', *American Political Science Review*, 84, 3 (1990), pp. 857, 864.
- 51 'Even as a graduate student', writes Arrow, 'I was somewhat surprised at the emphasis on static allocative efficiency by market socialists, when the nonexistence of markets for future goods under capitalism seemed to me a much more obvious target.' Arrow, *Economics of Information*, p. 160.
- 52 Eugene Zaleski, *Planning for Economic Growth in the Soviet Union, 1918–1932* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1971), p. 297.
- 53 Alec Nove, 'The Problem of "Success Indicators" in Soviet Industry', *Economica*, 25, 97 (1958), pp. 1–13; Vladimir G. Treml and John P. Hardt (eds), *Soviet Economic Statistics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1972); Wheatcroft and Davies, 'Crooked Mirror of Soviet Economics Statistics'. 'Goodhart's law' states: 'any observed statistical regularity will tend to collapse once pressure is placed upon it for control purposes', in the Soviet case, for example, the relationship between observed and true real output. See C. A. E. Goodhart, *Monetary Theory and Practice: The UK Experience* (London: Macmillan, 1994), p. 96.
- 54 G. I. Khanin, *Dinamika ekonomicheskogo razvitiia SSSR* (Novosibirsk: Nauka, 1991), pp. 41–51.
- 55 Ibid., pp. 51–102.
- 56 Vincent P. Crawford and Joel Sobel, 'Strategic Information Transmission', *Econometrica*, 50, 6 (1982), pp. 1431–51.
- 57 Stalin's treatment of planners and statisticians in the 1930s is discussed by Belova and Gregory, 'Dictators, Loyal and Opportunistic Agents, and Punishment'. In 1949 Stalin lost confidence in his formerly much favored chief of the State Planning Commission, N. A. Voznesenskii, when the latter was alleged to have engaged in covering up a plan failure. This was the start of a process that ended in the latter's trial and execution; for relevant documents see O. V. Khlevniuk, I. [Yoram] Gorlitskii [Gorlizki], L. P. Kosheleva, A. I. Miniuk, M. Iu. Prozumenshchikov, L. A. Rogovaia and S. V. Somonova (eds), *Politbiuro TsK VPK(b) i Sovet Ministrov SSSR. 1945–1953* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2002), pp. 274–85.

- 58 For a survey and investigation of competing explanations of Soviet economic growth and post-war slowdown see Mark Harrison, 'Trends in Soviet Labour Productivity, 1928–1985: War, Postwar Recovery, and Slowdown', *European Review of Economic History*, 2, 2 (1998), pp. 171–200; for various explanations of Soviet economic collapse and a proposed solution see Mark Harrison, 'Coercion, Compliance, and the Collapse of the Soviet Command Economy', *Economic History Review*, 55, 3 (2002), pp. 397–433.
- 59 Angus Maddison, *Monitoring the World Economy, 1820–1992* (Paris: OECD, 1995).
- 60 See Maurizio Iacopetta, 'Dissemination of Technology in Market and Planned Economies', New York University, Department of Economics (2001) for this finding and a new investigation and analysis of the Soviet post-war failure to adopt new information technologies. Probably the gap that Iacopetta found between incomes and computing power was eliminated in the 1990s by the collapse of Russian incomes. The classic general investigation of the poor Soviet innovation record is Berliner, *Innovation Decision in Soviet Industry*.
- 61 S. N. Broadberry and Sayantan Ghosal, 'Networks, Hierarchies, and Economic Performance', University of Warwick, Department of Economics (2001); S. N. Broadberry and Sayantan Ghosal, 'Technology, Organisation, and Productivity Performance in Services: Lessons from Britain and the United States, 1870–1990', University of Warwick, Department of Economics (2001); and Naomi Lamoreaux, Daniel M. G. Raff and Peter Temin, 'Beyond Markets and Hierarchies: Towards a New Synthesis of American Business History' (UCLA–University of Pennsylvania–MIT, 2000), from which the quoted words are taken. I thank Stephen Broadberry for many discussions on these issues.
- 62 Harrison, 'Trends in Soviet Labour Productivity, 1928–1985'.
- 63 The idea that the spread of education would eventually force a more open society in the USSR is not new; see for example Isaac Deutscher, *The Unfinished Revolution: Russia, 1917–1967* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 59–60: 'The force of the revolutionary tradition has been great enough to compel the bureaucracy to give the workers much more education than has been required on narrow economic grounds, and perhaps more than is safe for the privileged groups. It may be argued that the bureaucracy is thus breeding its own grave-diggers.'
- 64 M. Olson, 'Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development', *American Political Science Review*, 87, 3 (1993), pp. 567–76.
- 65 Steven L. Solnick, *Stealing the State: Control and Collapse in Soviet Institutions* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998).
- 66 Moses Abramowitz, 'Catching Up, Forging Ahead, and Falling Behind', *Journal of Economic History*, 46, 2 (1986), pp. 385–406.
- 67 World Bank, *From Plan to Market: World Development Report, 1996* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 1996).
- 68 Nicholas Crafts and Kai Kaiser, 'Long-Term Growth Prospects in Transition Economies: A Reappraisal', London School of Economics (2002).

8 Ideas and the end of the Cold War

Rethinking intellectual and political change

Robert English

Introduction

Ideas played a critical role in the Soviet ‘new thinking’ that brought about the end of the Cold War. However, their importance as a historical force has been consistently overlooked. This is to be contrasted to perceptions of other aspects of the story. For instance, the ‘near-term’ significance of a Soviet political leadership deciding to implement a conciliatory, integrationist policy was immediately evident to observers. Likewise, the ‘mid-term’ significance of material factors in the creation of these policies has been a consistent subject of study and debate. And yet, the long-term impact of intellectual change on the course of events – its function as a vital precondition for other changes – remains little understood.

This imbalance can be redressed by reconceptualizing the rise of the ‘new thinking’. It should be viewed as a process consisting of two distinct, yet interconnected dynamics. The first dynamic was informed by the development, over the early post-Stalin decades, of a small yet dynamic intellectual elite characterized by strongly unorthodox views of their country’s past history, its present problems and its proper future place in world civilization. This group subscribed to non-Soviet beliefs and values, including a social democratic, ‘neo-Westernizing’ orientation. This new thinking was already far advanced by the early 1970s. In the early to mid-1980s the academics and policy analysts who pioneered it were influencing the ideas and subsequent initiatives of an even smaller political elite, grouped around Mikhail Gorbachev and his reformist allies.

Straitened material circumstances were a crucial factor in the Gorbachev group’s receptivity toward the new thinking. Nevertheless, a close study of how philosophy was translated into policy shows that its success owed as much to its normative power as to its instrumental utility. This is the second of the two dynamics important to an understanding of the sweeping changes in Soviet policy that brought about the end of the Cold War. The fact is, there were conservative alternatives to the new thinking. The triumph of the latter cannot be understood without a better appreciation of both its great normative appeal and the personal relationships between its advocates. This directs our attention back to the earlier, decades-long development of the new thinking, which was a process of social learning and identity transformation whose depth and breadth is little studied and poorly understood.

The post-Stalin roots of the new thinking

To understand the emergence of the new thinking it is necessary to apprehend the 'old thinking' against which it contended. One of the most intriguing findings of *glasnost*-era research has been the powerful role of ideology in Soviet foreign policymaking. True, the paranoia of Stalin's 'hostile capitalist encirclement' ebbed considerably under Khrushchev. Over the Brezhnev years, too, the hubris of the Thaw-era confidence in socialism's rapid overtaking of capitalism was supplanted by a cynicism in which preservation of communist party rule at home, the empire abroad and the powerful interests vested therein was uppermost. But numerous documents and participants have provided us accounts that also underline the enduring role of a 'hostile-isolationist' view, one that split the world into irreconcilable camps that continued to fear capitalism's innate hostility to socialism, and that still believed in the latter's expansion and ultimate triumph over the West.¹

For leaders born during the Russian civil war, which included the intervention of foreign powers in the country's internal struggles, and then bred during Stalinism's battle with 'external and internal enemies' that ranged from the terrorized 1930s through to the Cold War of the early 1950s, belief in a hostile world was axiomatic. This cohort ruled the Soviet Union right up to Gorbachev's accession in 1985. Even for a younger generation of elites who came of political age during the Thaw and were presumably shaped by the relative calm and liberalization of the late 1950s and early 1960s, hostile-isolationist precepts remained strong. This was not only the result of the crises in Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968, both of which seemed to confirm capitalism's axiomatic hostility to the Soviet Union. Such old thinking was also reinforced by a highly ideologized set of perceptions – an 'ideocracy', in one observer's terms – that systematically distorted information about the West while rewarding fealty to Leninist-Stalinist dogmas and punishing heresy in all areas of political, academic and cultural life.² Time and again, from Cuba in 1962 to Afghanistan in 1979, these hostile-isolationist instincts stymied opportunities to improve East–West relations, encouraging impulses that, in fact, ultimately doomed those relations.

But if Stalin's successors could not decisively break with the old thinking, they did create the conditions for the emergence of a radically new outlook among a particular subset of the post-Stalin generation, a young policy-academic elite. Most came of age in the Thaw's emancipatory atmosphere, while they were students in Moscow or other urban centers where openness and diversity were greatest. They listened to unsanctioned poets and read unpublished manuscripts, discussed Orwell and Gramsci, and debated issues ranging from the party's former complicity in the Terror to its current policies toward Hungary and Yugoslavia. And when new foreign affairs institutes were established, exchanges with the West began and opportunities for working abroad (or in Moscow's corridors of power) arose – positions which afforded unprecedented access to ideas and information – this group was prominent among the beneficiaries.³

Nikita Khrushchev's 1956 'secret speech', usually considered to be the signal event in domestic Soviet change during the Thaw era, had an equally momentous impact on foreign relations. Exposing the fictions that had justified Stalin's

Terror – the millions who had been presumably tied to plots engineered by foreign enemies and their domestic hirelings – simultaneously challenged Stalinist precepts concerning a divided world and a hostile West that Khrushchev sought to preserve. An implicit debate consequently began among historians, philosophers and writers concerning Russia's place in world civilization. And though 'peaceful coexistence' preserved much of the old Leninist-Stalinist outlook except for the inevitability of an apocalyptic clash with capitalism, it also fostered a modest but extremely significant cultural-academic opening to the outside world.

Together with international film and youth festivals, foreign literature and broadcasts, conferences and other modes of scholarly exchange programs abroad, research institutes devoted to the study of foreign affairs were established or revived. The Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO) and the Institute of USA and Canada (ISKAN) were probably the best known. Other organizations that would become key centers of reformist thought included the Institute of Concrete Social Research and the Central Economic-Mathematical Institute (TsEMI), together with various other initiatives that were located in regional centers in Tbilisi, Tartu and Novosibirsk. In these institutes researchers pored over newly available foreign publications and once secret political, economic and sociologic domestic data. Even greater access to information was enjoyed in several non-academic institutions, such as the Prague-based editorial board of the new journal *Problems of Peace and Socialism* or the new 'consultant groups' that brought in young specialists to advise the Central Committee on foreign policy.⁴

The ranks of prominent *perestroika*-era new thinkers – whether historians, physicists, philosophers or foreign policy experts – read like an alumni association of these Thaw-era exchanges and institutes. While their public positions remained highly circumscribed, the private debates and analyses of these groups in the mid- to late 1960s embraced increasingly reformist and anti-isolationist views on a full range of issues, from economics and the arms race to the environment. By this time many had already begun to subscribe to an essentially social democratic perspective that aspired to integrate their country within the liberal international community. The early new thinkers also shared, despite divergent paths in the humanities or social sciences, in academia or the *apparatus*, a *social* identity as members of a reformist, 'Westernizing' domestic community.⁵ Forged in a shared Thaw-era experience, these ties allowed the liberals to rally in defense of reform, and in defense of each other when reaction surged in the late 1960s. With the help of former classmates, historians and philosophers ousted from university posts for questioning orthodox dogma found refuge in academic institutes. Critics of cultural chauvinism were shielded from the harshest punitive blows by their *apparatchik* allies. International affairs analysts, scientists and even some military officers defended those now under siege by themselves questioning Stalinist foreign or economic policies. And this diverse community openly united in protest against the reactionaries' attempts to rehabilitate Stalin himself.

The mobilization of new thinking

The 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia ushered in a difficult period that has traditionally been viewed as a hiatus in the evolution of new thinking. In fact, however, this period should really be seen as one of consolidation and advance. True, the hard-line turn both at home and abroad pushed many into silence or cynicism. But for others, it was a critical watershed. Indeed, the Prague Spring served as a force that encouraged and united reformist intellectuals like nothing else had done since Khrushchev's 'secret speech' in 1956. The defeat of reform now prompted additional radical rethinking about the Soviet Union's problems and their potential solutions. And so, prior to the brief flowering of *détente*, the late 1960s and early 1970s witnessed the emergence of some of the most important of the new ideas. These included views on security relations and the general quality of contacts with the United States, on policy towards Europe and Asia, on questions concerning the economy, technology and the environment, and on cultural freedom and the concern over rising Russian nationalism. *Détente* was an obvious and powerful boost to such innovative thinking. But the key conceptual breakthroughs often assigned to the period of *détente* were often nearly a decade older. And while reform ideas continued to develop, the most outstanding trend from the mid- to late 1970s was the vigorous effort now being made to put them into practice.

In the sphere of economics some innovations – for instance, that of Abel Aganbegyan and Tatyana Zaslavskaya of the Novosibirsk Institute – have long been known. Recently discovered sources have shed new light on other initiatives, such as that of Stanislav Shatalin and others at TsEMI, which had become a 'breeding ground of marketers and anti-Marxists' by the early 1970s.⁶ Some of the most radical proposals were penned by Nikolai Shmelyev. In several limited-circulation studies dating from the mid-1970s and after, Shmelyev advocated marketizing the Soviet economy by opening it up to the West. Foreign trade, he argued, should not be a centralized monopoly but, rather, the right of every self-managing, self-financing enterprise. Joint ventures and foreign investment should be actively sought. Currency convertibility should be achieved, followed by membership in the World Bank, the IMF and GATT. In addition, Shmelyev lamented the squandering of the opportunities presented by *détente*. Instead of an opening that would spur competition, innovation and exports, foreign exchange during the *détente* era simply became constituted of Soviet sales of oil that were used to finance imports of grain. The result was a growing trade deficit and dependency on oil earnings that were 'not likely to last beyond the 1980s'.⁷

Space limitations do not allow for a similarly detailed summary of the ideas of each and every new thinker, but their challenge to orthodoxy in nearly every area of foreign policy can be demonstrated with several general examples. IMEMO and ISKAN analysts, for instance, criticized the class-based Soviet approach to Third World countries, faulted the development strategies foisted upon those countries by the USSR, and contrasted Soviet military-industrial priorities in the Third World with US support of multilateral aid, private investment and a general

emphasis on 'basic human needs'.⁸ In a modest proposal designed to limit the international arms trade, junior Foreign Ministry analyst Andrei Kozyrev openly revealed the fact that the USSR was the Third World's main arms supplier.⁹

In 1976, ISKAN analyst Vladimir Lukin broke with the official denunciations of Sino-US *rapprochement* by noting its 'objective foundation' in Soviet behavior. The United States, he pointed out, had drastically reduced its military presence in Asia while China threatened no one. Meanwhile, Soviet deployments in the region had only escalated.¹⁰ Similar rethinking was to be discerned in studies of US-Soviet relations. These included a review of US strategic forces that emphasized, not their role as first-strike weapons, but their nature as a response to the huge Soviet missile force.¹¹

Specialist studies of western Europe wistfully viewed the progress of integration there while dismissing the officially trumpeted threat of German 'revanchism'.¹² Analysts also praised eastern Europe's trade ties to the West and hoped that these could help draw the USSR into improved economic and political relations with Europe.¹³ As *détente* waned, they lamented the Soviet hard line and warned that 'ruthless centralization' was leading to 'economic and social degradation and crisis'.¹⁴

The latter document was not just another specialist's study. It was a memo circulated among the country's top leadership. Nor was it the only such initiative. Immediately after the 1979 invasion of Afghanistan, IEMSS director Oleg Bogomolov sent the Central Committee a report blaming Soviet aggression around the globe for the demise of *détente*. In Afghanistan, Bogomolov wrote, Soviet policy 'went beyond permissible bounds'. The USSR was consequently now completely isolated. Dissent and crisis even loomed within the socialist bloc.¹⁵ In mid-1980, in an analysis of the Solidarity stalemate, IEMSS told the Central Committee that Soviet and Soviet-sponsored policies were to be blamed for Poland's woes. These included 'bribe-taking and corruption', a 'swollen party-state apparatus' and the 'hypertrophy of the role of the First Secretary and his entourage'.¹⁶

By this time, the ill effects of the current stagnation had become increasingly palpable as a long-awaited leadership transition loomed. Reactionaries lashed out against advocates of reform, particularly as the Cold War was heated up by the challenge of a newly assertive West. The most outspoken liberals were punished with sanctions that included reprimands by (or expulsion from) the party, public denunciation and the loss of employment. Another popular measure of discipline was slightly more subtle: the offender officially retained his or her post but was barred from publishing, banned from foreign travel and otherwise blocked from pursuing serious work. At the behest of party reactionaries and under the cover of various 'investigatory commissions', similar attacks were launched against entire research centers. Those best known for their Western orientation – including Georgy Arbatov's Institute of the USA and Canada, Nikolai Inozemtsev's Institute of World Economy and International Relations, and Abel Aganbegyan's Novosibirsk Institute of Economic and Industrial Organization – were punished for 'misleading the country's leadership', for 'harboring Zionist elements' and for alleged security breaches.¹⁷

New leadership for new thinking

The influence of the new thinkers, which had never been great, now vanished and their prospects looked even bleaker. This would indeed have been the case had it not been for the rise of a small group of reform-minded party officials under the leadership of Gorbachev. Gorbachev had made the acquaintance of many reformers in the late 1970s and forged close ties with some of the most prominent over the following years: economists Aganbegyan and Vladimir Tikhonov, sociologist Tatyana Zaslavskaya, physicist Yevgeny Velikhov and foreign affairs analysts Inozemtsev and Arbatov. Influential in their own right, these individuals were also the 'ambassadors' to Gorbachev's party group of a larger liberal policy-academic elite. By the early 1980s Gorbachev was also consulting, directly or indirectly, with such experts as foreign policy specialist Yevgeny Primakov, scientist arms-control advocate Roald Sagdeyev and the *apparatchik* scholar-cum-diplomat Alexander Yakovlev.¹⁸

In a number of semi-formal 'seminars', in numerous informal meetings and in an even greater number of memoranda and reports, Gorbachev studied their advice. That practice, sometimes entailing ties to those who had recently come under fire for their 'heresies', was unprecedented for a member of the Politburo and it would later complicate Gorbachev's chances of being appointed General Secretary. Why, then, did he do it? Even a cynical or largely instrumental view of this question – namely, that looming crisis forced leaders to consider new alternatives, which then created opportunities for ambitious 'policy entrepreneurs' – necessarily draws our attention to the origins of reformist ideas.¹⁹ Without their prior development, these ideas would simply not have been available when the need arose. No one else in the Politburo besides Gorbachev apparently saw any reason to consult these entrepreneurs. Close study of how this entrepreneurship actually transpired highlights the *normative* and not just the instrumental role of ideas. Above all, analysis of the difficult but ultimately successful swim of reform ideas against the reactionary tide of the early 1980s (which hardly made their advocacy a rational self-interested choice at the time) directs attention back to the beliefs and values of the person who became their chief sponsor.²⁰

Gorbachev, notwithstanding the still-prevalent image of him as a typical, if particularly cunning and ambitious, party functionary, was anything but that. His intelligence and ambition were clearly unusual, but from the outset of his career Gorbachev also demonstrated a strong innovative and idealistic bent. What's more, he stood apart from other high party officials by virtue of his broad exposure – through a relatively eclectic legal-humanitarian education, through considerable Western travel and also through extensive private study – to unorthodox, social democratic ideas on international relations.²¹

It is difficult to characterize Gorbachev's world view of the early 1980s in general terms, particularly since it was undergoing rapid change. Accounts of close observers from the time emphasize several aspects of Gorbachev's international outlook as the most significant. These were a strong desire to end the arms race and the East–West confrontation, a belief in the possibility of socialism's

liberal-humanistic revival and the prospects for broad cooperation with capitalism (particularly in a social democratic Europe), and scorn for Western policies toward the Third World (as well as for Soviet behavior in eastern Europe). Doubtless, a top priority was to halt the debilitating US–Soviet military rivalry. But Gorbachev's concern about global and humanitarian problems was genuine and deep. And despite various contradictions and dogmas, by early 1985 his ambitions for foreign policy change clearly went far beyond the various hints and suggestions, particularly concerning 'a common European home', that he had publicly voiced until then.

By this time the Soviet Union had already stumbled through the brief reigns of Brezhnev's immediate successors. Yuri Andropov, who took office after Brezhnev's death in November 1982, briefly shook up the leadership before succumbing to terminal illness himself in April 1984. During his approximately nine months of active command Andropov decried corruption, waste and inefficiency while launching a series of 'experiments' in economic decentralization. He also stumbled into a series of foreign policy crises – the downing of a Korean Airlines passenger jet, the breakdown of arms talks, and an escalating confrontation over space-based weapons – that were only partly of his own making.

Arguably the most important step Andropov took in office was the promotion of a group of officials in the senior leadership – Gorbachev, Yegor Ligachev, Nikolai Ryzhkov and several others – whose youth, energy and freedom from the taint of corruption distinguished them from the majority of Brezhnev-era functionaries. But Andropov's death interrupted those plans and his successor, Brezhnev's old crony Konstantin Chernenko, oversaw the country's slide back into the rut characteristic of the rule of his former patron. Hardliners took advantage of the leadership vacuum to advance their agenda, one that ranged from plans for a sharp increase in military spending to a purge of overly outspoken reformist academics and policy advisers.

Andropov's personnel legacy was manifest, however, in the preparation of his protégés for another near-term leadership transition. Ligachev oversaw turnover in the Central Committee while Ryzhkov helped manage the analysis of proposals for economic change. Gorbachev became the Politburo's 'Second Secretary' and unofficial heir apparent though his rise was strongly resisted by several hardliners, particularly Prime Minister Nikolai Tikhonov and Military Industry Secretary Grigory Romanov. Other opposition, though of a less active sort, was manifest in the attitude of such Brezhnevite Politburo members as the republic party bosses Vladimir Shcherbitsky and Dinmukhamad Kunayev. As one long-time *apparatus* staffer observed, Gorbachev was generally 'feared and distrusted by the old guard' who regarded him as 'a mysterious, alien, even hostile figure'.²²

The attitude of Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko and Defense Minister Dmitri Ustinov toward Gorbachev was rather more ambiguous. The former – no new thinker, but distressed at rampant corruption – had been instrumental in Gorbachev's 'temporary' appointment as Second Secretary upon Chernenko's accession.²³ This strengthened Gromyko's hand when Chernenko died just a year later, at which time it was Gromyko who nominated Gorbachev for General

Secretary.²⁴ Ustinov was perhaps more skeptical but ultimately less important owing to his own death in December 1984 (three months prior to Chernenko's demise, meaning that he played no part in the last-minute maneuvering that finally chose Gorbachev).²⁵

The Politburo 'unanimously' recommended Gorbachev to the Central Committee, which elected him General Secretary in March of 1985. But as even this abbreviated summary shows, such unanimity had only a formal, procedural meaning. (For decades *every* Politburo decision was officially unanimous.) As insider accounts reveal, Gorbachev's triumph was a far more touch-and-go affair, resting on a slight majority (thanks also to the absence of Shcherbitsky and Kunayev) that grudgingly decided to take a chance on the young leader for lack of an alternative.²⁶ Why this ambivalence? Why the hesitation to elect the candidate who was by far the most intelligent and energetic, and who in any case had been 'anointed' by Andropov more than a year earlier?

Several factors complicated Gorbachev's rise, including an international mood of heightened confrontation that strengthened the hardliners and made Politburo members loath to gamble on their youngest and least experienced colleague. Fear also existed, provoked as it was by various of his own statements and personal associations, that Gorbachev might move too far, too fast. Such concerns were well founded, of course, and many would later bitterly complain of a 'betrayal'. In the words of one of the Politburo's centrist, 'swing' voters in 1985, 'Nobody thought that he'd be a reformer... He didn't turn out to be the man that we'd voted for.'²⁷ So who was the man they thought they had voted for or, rather, what kind of policies had they anticipated?

Continuation of the Brezhnev-Chernenko status quo was one option, though the gradual decline in which these policies were leading the Soviet Union made the status quo the preferred choice of a dwindling number of the old guard.²⁸ Another group, as noted, sought a hard-line turn. Consisting of members of the military-industrial complex and neo-Stalinist party officials, this group sought increased defense spending (with an emphasis on high-tech weapons), a crack-down on dissent (to include not only open critics but even the reform-minded 'loyal opposition') and a return to pre-*détente* ideological orthodoxy and societal discipline. The political strength of this group could be gauged in various Stalinist pronouncements anticipating apocalyptic confrontation with the West and in even a partial rehabilitation of Stalin himself (in books and movies and, symbolically, in the readmission of Stalin's long-time henchman and Foreign Minister, Vyacheslav Molotov, to the party). Less visible at the time, but perhaps even more ominous, was the assault of the hardliners on liberal academics, their advocacy of a Soviet 'Star Wars' system, and their efforts to humiliate and undermine Gorbachev.

Others favored an intermediate path, one that lay between the neo-Stalinists and the neo-Brezhnevites. This would essentially mean a return to the changes that Andropov had begun. Where might these have led? On the domestic front, streamlining actions and anti-corruption campaigns could have prolonged the life of the old system for decades. Heightened discipline and 'vigilance' would have

meant that mass discontent would not become a major problem. Abroad, the USSR might have quit Afghanistan and ceded other Third World contests, though not so easily as it actually did. The nuclear confrontation would likely have continued.²⁹ One can imagine various possible scenarios. In an 'Ottoman' version of events, a steadily declining USSR might have found itself drawn into a cycle of dissent, repression and eventual rebellion in eastern Europe that could have potentially spread to Ukraine, the Baltics and the Caucasus. In another, 'Romanian' scenario, a more defiant USSR might have determinedly kept its subjects in order, delaying the regime's eventual denouement but in so doing also ensuring that the end, when it came, would be more violent and destabilizing in its effects. (This would have especially been the case if hardliners clung to power by mobilizing against such 'threats' as Afghanistan, Turkey or China.) And Romania, of course, possessed neither a foreign empire nor nuclear weapons.

While much remains unknown or unclear, the alternatives to Gorbachev seem to have ranged from minimal to modest reforms at home, from the status quo to a more hard-line approach abroad.³⁰ Ultimately, an Andropov-style course appears to have won out. That is what the Politburo elected Gorbachev to enact, and that is what he gave them good reason to expect.³¹ But Gorbachev's private ambitions already went considerably further, and the radical changes that ensued, which were not among the options considered by the Politburo in early 1985, but were to begin very soon after Gorbachev's assumption of power, had as much to do with the catalytic effect of ideas as they did with a crisis of power.

The triumph of new thinking

Indications of radical change appeared almost immediately. At the receptions held for foreign dignitaries during Chernenko's funeral – that is, within only a matter of days after assuming office – Gorbachev warmly greeted several social democratic leaders from western Europe (together with the head of the Italian Communist Party, which was considered a 'renegade' organization for its long-time criticism of Soviet foreign policy and its pioneering role in the rise of the Eurocommunist heresy). Meanwhile, he snubbed most of the east European party bosses. When he later met them in private, Gorbachev warned the east Europeans that the days of the 'Brezhnev Doctrine' were over and that they would have to undertake reforms. That is to say, they would henceforth sink or swim on their own.³² Shortly thereafter Gorbachev ordered for preparations to be made for an eventual withdrawal from Afghanistan.³³ Less than a month after that, at the now-famous 'April plenum' of the Central Committee, the General Secretary decried the inefficiency, waste and corruption so typical of the social and economic spheres of Soviet life. In so doing, Gorbachev adopted language considerably bolder than any heard under Andropov.

That summer Gorbachev privately met with the military leadership and warned them of impending cuts in their once-sacred budgets. He also reiterated his call, first made at the April plenum, for a new defense doctrine based on criteria of 'sufficiency'.³⁴ In public, on the anniversary of the US atomic bombing of Japan

in World War II, Gorbachev announced a unilateral moratorium on the testing of nuclear weapons. Since these initiatives had bypassed traditional ministry and Central Committee channels, distressed conservatives wondered: 'Just how is he deciding defense issues?'³⁵

The fact is, Gorbachev was relying on the same informal advisers – the same 'brain trust' – that he had gathered around him in the early 1980s. These reformers were further strengthened with Yakovlev's promotion to a Central Committee secretaryship (for ideology and propaganda) which allowed him to exercise a decisive influence on the emergence of *glasnost* in all areas of government, including foreign policy. Crucial too was the mid-year appointment of Eduard Shevardnadze to replace Gromyko as Foreign Minister. Had Gorbachev merely sought to 'put his personal stamp' on foreign policy, as many believed at the time, then any of several deputies could have been promoted. Instead, by selecting the Georgian party boss (and probably the most innovative of republic leaders), Gorbachev not only chose a long-time confidant of proven reformist credentials, he also chose a man whose apparent weakness – a lack of international experience – was actually a strength for a leader seeking to encourage new ideas and break the grip of a 'Gromykoite' foreign policy *apparatus*.³⁶

Gorbachev's next major step was his November 1985 meeting with US President Reagan in Geneva, the first such summit held between US and Soviet leaders since 1979 and a move opposed by Soviet hardliners. When the meeting failed to produce real progress Gorbachev unveiled a sweeping arms-reduction proposal in January 1986. Although too ambitious to be negotiable in any practical sense, it offered various concessions (deep cuts in strategic weapons, including the once-untouchable Soviet heavy missile force, as well as cuts in shorter-range weapons) that pointed the way toward exactly the agreements that were later reached.³⁷

There is no doubt that Gorbachev's primary concern during his first year in office was with reviving the Soviet economy. As Shevardnadze noted, they were acutely aware that reform at home required tranquility abroad, and in particular a halt to the arms race, which constituted such an economic burden for the Soviet Union. But if that had been the only, or even the primary, factor in the evolution of Gorbachev's foreign policy then a new-thinking breakthrough would have been highly unlikely. Hardliners on both sides now dug in their heels. Although the steps he had initiated up to this time had yet to effect any major policy changes, some Soviet officials now publicly questioned Gorbachev's activities. Nevertheless, a breakthrough was in the making. Close examination of events reveals this breakthrough to have been propelled less by an economic 'push' than by an intellectual 'pull'.

The most critical year in the evolution of Gorbachev's foreign policy was 1986: in spite of still-modest practical policy changes, a critical cognitive-conceptual change occurred in that year which then made the progress that quickly followed possible at all. This intellectual turn – one that had been in the making, as we have seen, since the early 1980s – was accelerated with preparations for the 27th Party Congress scheduled for February–March 1986. Party congresses, usually

convened every five years, were venues at which major policy changes were endorsed by the party's most authoritative conclave. Khrushchev's campaign of de-Stalinization, for instance, was initiated at the 20th Party Congress in 1956. The 27th Congress thus represented a critical opportunity for launching *perestroika*. The moment was particularly favorable because the congress was expected to approve a new party program, designed to replace the utopian program that dated back to the early 1960s. But equal importance was attached to the General Secretary's report, a document that during the Brezhnev era had been regularly prepared by the *apparatus* as a vehicle for ratifying the status quo.

Now, however, the usually closely managed committees and conservative-dominated drafting groups were infused with new blood and fresh ideas. Even more important in this respect were the private gatherings that took place at the congress between Gorbachev and his inner circle – principally Shevardnadze, Yakovlev, Primakov and Raisa Gorbacheva, as well as occasional others such as Anatoly Chernyaev, Gorbachev's new foreign affairs aide – that grappled with the fundamental 'philosophy of foreign policy'.³⁸ Shevardnadze recalled the 'incredible difficulty' with which they embraced the view of an integral world instead of one divided by social systems; in near-daily sessions he 'observed Gorbachev's ideas heading into dangerous, uncharted waters'.³⁹ As Yakovlev noted, they were guided by 'the leading minds of the century – Einstein, Kapitsa, Russell and Sakharov' – in 'discarding the besieged fortress [Stalinist] psychology'.⁴⁰ Gorbachev too recalled the days that he, Shevardnadze and Yakovlev spent arguing over rejection of Lenin's basic precept of a class-divided world:

We were at Zavidovo [a government dacha] working on the report and we really quarreled, for a day and a half we even stopped speaking to each other. What was the argument about? About...the fact that we live in an interdependent, contradictory but ultimately integral world. No, the new thinking wasn't just some policy shift; it required a major conceptual breakthrough.⁴¹

This breakthrough was largely (but not completely) reflected in the documents produced by the congress. The worst contradictions of the Khrushchev-era program – that peaceful coexistence is a form of class struggle, and that nuclear war, while not inevitable, would nevertheless see socialism triumph should it occur – were absent from the new party program. Not surprisingly, Gorbachev's report constituted the far bolder document. It contained a strong emphasis on global problems, interdependence and an integral world, and outlined the political means for ensuring security and 'reasonable sufficiency' in defense.⁴² Still, the changes did not come easily. Gorbachev's report generated fierce opposition. The final version retained criticism of 'US aggression' and 'imperialism'. Elsewhere, a reference to Afghanistan as 'a bleeding wound' was deleted by the conservatives in draft and only restored at the last moment upon the insistence of Gorbachev and Shevardnadze.⁴³

The congress set in motion a process of reflection. Beyond the usual channels of policy input, now invigorated with young new-thinking analysts such as Andrei Grachev and Andrei Kozyrev who had been promoted in the Central Committee

and Foreign Ministry, Gorbachev and his allies tapped other sources. These included studies by the most Western-oriented academic institutes in the Soviet Union, as well as the works of such original thinkers as the philosopher Alexander Tsipko, the economist Stanislav Shatalin and the foreign affairs analyst Vyacheslav Dashichev.⁴⁴ Gorbachev's 'insatiable search' also led to private study that ranged from Western political science to the memoirs of Western leaders such as Churchill, works available to the Soviet elite in classified translations.⁴⁵ On broader philosophical issues, Raisa introduced him to the integrationist, social democratic ideas of 'semi-dissident' Moscow scholars. And on specific foreign policy matters, Arbatov offered the works of the Palme Commission and other European writings regarding new approaches to global security.⁴⁶

Gorbachev also embarked on an intensive series of meetings with foreign statesmen, activists and intellectuals, a process Chernyaev recalled as 'the way he came to know the other world'.⁴⁷ His interlocutors included French President François Mitterrand and former US President Richard Nixon, both of whom encouraged his new thinking and argued that further steps would meet with a positive response, together with writers and cultural figures who fanned his interest in global concerns. These also included members of Western arms-control groups such as the Federation of American Scientists and International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War. Such groups applauded Gorbachev's early steps and encouraged bolder ones, such as discarding his demand that the United States halt its Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI, or 'Star Wars') before moving ahead on other nuclear issues, or easing the USSR's resistance to on-site verification of arms agreements. They also pressed him to bring the exile of Andrei Sakharov, the renowned physicist-dissident who simultaneously embodied two liberalizing currents – that of conciliation and cooperation abroad, and of human rights and democratization at home – to an end.

A different source – Spanish Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez – offered similar advice. Gonzalez was arguably the most influential of Gorbachev's foreign interlocutors as the two established a strong rapport. As his 'comrade in the socialist movement', and as the leader of a country completing a transition away from decades of dictatorship, Gorbachev paid close heed to Gonzalez's arguments. These included the importance of real democracy and the necessity of a free market system (and foreign investment) in achieving socialist goals. Gonzalez also criticized Lenin for his lack of humanism, his suppression of legality, and his responsibility for the world's division into hostile camps.⁴⁸

In viewing all this activity that followed closely on the heels of the 27th Party Congress, conservatives were aghast. It was the beginning of what they would later describe as the hijacking of *perestroika* from its original Andropovian course. Gorbachev now fell into a 'conspiracy of academicians', becoming a prisoner of the incompetent and malevolent advice of several 'highly politicized research organizations of a pro-Western character'.⁴⁹ There is more than a little truth to this characterization, and conservative alarm would grow even greater after the spring of 1986. This was when, notes Chernyaev, Gorbachev resolutely 'set himself the task' of achieving a decisive breakthrough in foreign policy.

Gorbachev's urgency was prompted by the Chernobyl tragedy, the reactor explosion and fire that cost hundreds of lives and billions of rubles. Many view the principal impact of the disaster to have been economic. In fact, its cognitive significance was even greater. Chernobyl consumed the Politburo for three months. A crisis committee, constant meetings and reports, and a mobilization of all available civilian and military resources put the government on a virtual wartime footing. Witnesses recall a frantic effort whose intensity had been 'seen only in the years of the Great Patriotic War'.⁵⁰ The disaster provoked calls for domestic reforms by dramatically exposing the corruption of the Stalinist command-administrative system, its sloppiness and its disregard of the human element. But it also advanced the agenda of the new thinking: 'It was a tremendous shock...that raised our view of security to an entirely new plane of understanding.'⁵¹ Even the Chief of the General Staff, Sergei Akhromeyev, recalled the tragedy as touching 'minds and souls...the nuclear danger was no longer abstract, but something palpable and concrete'.

Many have compared the impact of Chernobyl to that of World War II. But in contrast to 1941, whose lesson had been to build up the armed forces and heighten vigilance, the later events prompted leaders to reach the opposite kinds of conclusions. Traditional military concepts such as surprise or superiority lost their meaning when even a small nuclear accident could wreak such havoc. On a more basic level, appreciation of Europe's 'oneness' was reinforced by the cloud of radiation blowing freely across the Iron Curtain. The concept of an integral, non-class-divided world, already accepted in theory, took on concrete meaning in the outpouring of Western aid and sympathy that briefly reached a level unseen since World War II.

This support, an 'unprecedented campaign of solidarity' despite the ill will caused by initial Soviet secrecy (and some anti-Soviet parading in the West), was a vote of confidence in Gorbachev that reinforced the primacy of global concerns and the cause of openness. As Shevardnadze recalled, 'it tore the blindfold from our eyes' and 'convinced us that morality and politics could not diverge'.⁵² For those fighting to improve ties abroad, the shame of having initially misinformed their foreign colleagues about the disaster (as they themselves were misinformed by their own military-industrial complex) had important ramifications. It was 'outright sabotage of the new thinking [and of] the trust we had worked so hard to build'.⁵³ They had been betrayed, only not by the West but by their own hardliners.

Velikhov noted that Chernobyl pushed Gorbachev toward 'a great, instinctive leap' in trying to break the deadlock in US-Soviet relations, a leap clearly manifest in his address to a Foreign Ministry conference in May (which only appeared in print a year later, and then just in summary form).⁵⁴ Though not uncritical of the West, Gorbachev's address focused on Soviet shortcomings. These included the lack of progress on a withdrawal from Afghanistan as well as continued opposition to settling other Third World conflicts, 'panicked' reporting on SDI and other threat inflation that supported unnecessary military expenditures, a paternal attitude toward eastern Europe as if the USSR were 'running a kindergarten for little children', and an approach to China that still viewed relations 'through the

prism of the 1960s'.⁵⁵ The centerpiece of Gorbachev's broadside was his insistence on a 'radical restructuring' of the underlying approach to foreign policy. The new priorities included facilitating economic integration, expanding cultural ties, cooperating in the fight against terrorism and, above all, raising the profile of 'humanitarian issues'.

The very words 'human rights' are put in quotation marks and we speak of so-called human rights, as if our own revolution had nothing to do with human rights... But would there even have been a revolution if such rights had been observed in the old society? We need to reject decisively this outdated approach to the problem... and view it more broadly, particularly with regard to such specific issues as reunification of families, exit and entry visas ...all this is part of the process of building trust.⁵⁶

Later that month, over fierce military objections, Soviet delegates to the Stockholm conventional force talks received instructions to accept unprecedented on-site verification measures. By July a treaty was completed. At that time Gorbachev also decided to seek an 'interim' summit before the next scheduled US-Soviet gathering (what would become the Reykjavik conclave of October 1986). As he prepared for Reykjavik, Gorbachev's frustration at the still-timid proposals generated by the *apparatus* boiled over. He turned to Chernyaev for advice and the latter assessed the latest proposal harshly:

It proceeds from the old view: 'If there is war, the two sides must have equal abilities to destroy each other.' What's in here is the arithmetic, not the algebra, of contemporary world politics... Instead, it must begin with the need to liquidate all nuclear weapons. [On strategic forces] it should stress our idea of a 50 per cent cut as a first step. In contrast to our earlier positions, such reductions needn't hinge on an agreement over SDI. Otherwise it will be another dead end. [On intermediate forces] we must not begin with an interim but optimal variant: liquidate all medium-range missiles in Europe. The [ministry] proposal again raises a scare over French and British forces. But it's impossible to imagine any circumstances... under which they would push the [nuclear] button against us. Here we are only frightening ourselves and raise anew the obstacle that has blocked European disarmament for a decade.⁵⁷

Gorbachev accepted Chernyaev's recommendations almost in their entirety. Others did not, however, and the Reykjavik proposals generated much high-level opposition. Akhromeyev nearly resigned over the issue while others in the military-industrial complex pushed even harder for a Soviet 'Star Wars' program.⁵⁸ In addition, the promulgation of a new defense doctrine of 'reasonable sufficiency' at this time, one which Gorbachev had said was coming over a year before, provoked a rebellious outcry among senior officers.⁵⁹ The KGB too escalated its earlier warnings about the dangers of *glasnost* to a shrill argument, contending that openness was facilitating the subversive designs of Western spy agencies.⁶⁰

Conservatives (and many moderates as well) grew alarmed. Some felt that they had been duped. They were now faced with radical policy changes that they themselves had earlier endorsed in principle, but with the expectation that the proposals would only serve propaganda purposes and never actually be put into practice.⁶¹ But Gorbachev had different ideas and the Politburo became an open battleground. The hardliners fought fiercely but Gorbachev stood his ground:

He fended off all arguments against [his new proposals] with a critical, rhetorical question: 'What are you doing, still preparing to fight a nuclear war? Well, I'm not, and everything else follows from that... If we still want to conquer the world, then let's decide how to keep arming ourselves and outdo the Americans. But then that'll be it, and everything we've been saying about a new policy has to go on the trash heap.'⁶²

In the final months of 1986 Gorbachev took additional steps that reflected his near-complete conversion to the new thinking.⁶³ Ideologically, he now embraced a position that went far beyond what had seemed so bold at the Party Congress just eight months earlier. In November he argued that 'universal human values take precedence over the interests of any particular class'.⁶⁴ And politically, in a move of enormous symbolic and practical significance, and overruling a skeptical Politburo, he 'rehabilitated' one of the new thinking's pioneers, ordering an end to the exile of Andrei Sakharov.

The Cold War's endgame

Sakharov immediately resumed public advocacy of two issues: human rights and arms control. He called on Gorbachev to free other prisoners of conscience and to free US-Soviet negotiations from the linkage that tied arms cuts to restrictions on SDI. In February of 1987 Gorbachev did just that and the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty followed soon thereafter. Meanwhile, Shevardnadze noted his intention to achieve a near-term settlement in Afghanistan, with or without US help.⁶⁵ Publicly, he and Gorbachev still faulted the United States for the stalemated talks. Privately, they blamed hardliners in Moscow and Kabul for blocking progress. The stubborn Karmal was replaced by Najibullah as Shevardnadze railed against regimes that 'did not stand for anything' and lacked 'any real support among the people'.⁶⁶ This anger was directed at the east European party bosses as well. Having privately reminded them in late 1986 that Moscow would no longer bail them out (and also having ordered the Soviet military to begin planning for an eventual withdrawal from the region), Gorbachev stepped up the public pressure through such steps as his sensational visit to Czechoslovakia in 1987.

Over 1987-88, the pace of the new thinking's implementation accelerated on all fronts. Progress toward an Afghan settlement quickened, as did cooperation on the resolution of other regional conflicts, from Cambodia to Namibia and Nicaragua. Negotiations over strategic and conventional arms advanced rapidly,

as a series of key Soviet concessions – as well as Gorbachev's landmark unilateral initiative announced in his December 1988 United Nations speech – broke long-standing deadlocks. And *glasnost* gained in issues of foreign as well as domestic politics. Conservatives fought back but they could not halt new-thinking ideas from swiftly spreading from private councils to numerous public forums. Nor could they block such steps as the unjamming of foreign radio broadcasts and the release of the country's remaining political prisoners.

In 1987 as well, Gorbachev secured agreement for an extraordinary party conference, held in July 1988, where he won approval for a radical restructuring of the Soviet political system via multi-candidate elections for a new Congress of People's Deputies. Again, this initiative is rarely considered in connection to foreign policy, interpreted instead as a move driven exclusively by economic necessity: namely, the need to shake up the party in order to advance economic reforms.⁶⁷ But, once again, such a view is only partly correct, for it misses altogether the vital link the new thinkers now understood to exist between democratization at home and trust abroad. This link is vividly evidenced in Gorbachev's account of his post-Reykjavik discussions with British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. He recalled Thatcher's argument, which contributed to a 'sharp turn' in his thinking about the domestic nexus of foreign policy:

'You have no democracy, so there's no control over the government. It does what it wants. You stress the will of your people, that they don't want war, but they're denied the means to express this will. Let's say we trust you personally, but if you're gone tomorrow, then what?' ... We had to think long and hard to grasp that human rights are an extraterritorial, universal, all-human value, and to understand that [without democracy] we'd never achieve real trust in foreign relations.⁶⁸

Gorbachev's reflections show a critical step in his embrace of the liberal *Weltanschauung*, a near-Kantian understanding of true democracy as the foundation of international trust.

Skeptics rightly argue that neither in 1987 nor as late as early 1989 did Gorbachev and his allies foresee that democratization would lead to the rapid collapse of east European socialism. Had they understood, it is likely that their subsequent liberalizing steps would have been somewhat more circumspect. Nonetheless, such views, as well as those that interpret Moscow's restraint in eastern Europe as driven principally by fear of endangering hoped-for Western aid, underestimate the extent of the intellectual conversion of new thinkers by early 1987.⁶⁹ Reaching far beyond limits on the arms race or a deeper *détente*, new thinkers now hoped that their country would 'become a normal member of the world community' and merge with 'the common stream of world civilization'.⁷⁰

Even though Gorbachev and his allies did not anticipate the rapidity with which party rule in eastern Europe would collapse, they understood that the region would evolve toward the political-economic orbit of the West.⁷¹ And though they thought it would take decades rather than months, they understood the inevitability of

German reunification as well.⁷² The most critical decisions of 1987–89 were arguably those of Western leaders to withhold large-scale aid to *perestroika*, and those of hard-line east European leaders not to launch *perestroikas* of their own. As for Gorbachev, his decision had already been made. Come what may, there would be no use of force to preserve the socialist bloc or a divided Germany. The top brass did not even dare to raise the question in Gorbachev's presence at the Politburo 'because they knew what the answer would be'.⁷³

Conclusion: new thinking on theory and methods

In so far as analyses of political and historical events reflect the practical availability of evidence, the evolution of interpretations of Soviet 'new thinking' comes as no surprise. Early views emphasizing the importance of leadership, particularly Gorbachev's, have been supplanted in many cases by interpretations that stress the centrality of material pressures and the Soviet economic crises of the 1980s. More recently, a small literature on the role of ideas has emerged, though to date most of these works posit an instrumentality by which ideas facilitate policies still driven primarily by material factors. Ideas are, at best, an intervening variable. Their origins are little explored and when adopted by leaders they are seen to be rationalizations of an inevitable 'strategic retreat' rather than important matters in their own right.

The predominance of such views is partly rooted in the theoretical preferences of contemporary, and particularly US, political science. But it is also linked to the empirical challenge of doing research on the Cold War's end, particularly researching the Soviet side. Put simply, the materialist approach is not only conceptually driven to discount the importance of ideas *qua* ideas, but it also has the advantage of emphasizing the quantifiable, presumably 'hard' economic data. The constructivist, meanwhile, labors with far more diverse, elusive and 'soft' information that ranges from obscure publications and unpublished papers to biographies and interviews with an aging cohort. It is all too often forgotten that 'quantifiable' and 'accessible' are not synonyms for 'more important'.

The puzzles concerning the Cold War's end – Did a US hard line accelerate or retard Soviet reforms? Were the ideas born of peaceful coexistence and *détente* as important in shaping Gorbachev's 'new thinking' as was the logic of power? – are too important to be left to conceptual prejudices or empirical chance. Taking a step back from methodological and theoretical single-mindedness, and recognizing the unique challenges presented by such a complex, current and unprecedented case, will ultimately pay rich dividends.

Notes

- 1 For a similar 'revolutionary-imperial paradigm' see Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996).
- 2 Georgii Shakhnazarov, *Tsena Svobody. Reformatsiia Gorbacheva glazami ego pomoshchnika* (Moscow: Rossika-Zevs, 1993), p. 10. See also Andrei Grachev,

- Kremlevskaia khronika* (Moscow: EKSMO, 1994), and Odd Arne Westad, 'Secrets of the Second World: The Russian Archives and the Reinterpretation of Cold War History', *Diplomatic History*, 21, 2 (1997).
- 3 This is the focus of the early chapters in Robert D. English, *Russia and the Idea of the West: Gorbachev, Intellectuals, and the End of the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).
- 4 Sources here include Fedor Burlatskii, *Vozhdi i sovetniki. O Khrushcheve, Andropove, i ne tol'ko o nikh* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1990); Anatoly Chernyaev, *Moia zhizn' i moe vremia* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye Otnosheniia, 1995); and Georgy Arbatov, *Zatianuvsheesia vyzdorovlenie (1953–1985 gg.) Svidetel'stvo sovremennika* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye Otnosheniia, 1991). The latter is published in a revised English translation as *The System: An Insider's Life in Soviet Politics* (New York: Times Books, 1992).
- 5 They were 'a social group... of great intellectual and practical strength... unorganized but numerous and fairly united in spirit.' Alexander Yakovlev, *The Fate of Marxism in Russia* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), p. 111.
- 6 "'500 dni" i drugie dni moei zhizni', *Nezavisimaia Gazeta*, 31 March 1992.
- 7 Nikolai P. Shmelev, *Problemy i perspektivy ekonomicheskikh sviazei Sovetskogo soiuza so stranami zapada* (Moscow, 1975). See also idem, *Ekonomicheskie sviazi vostok-zapad: Problemy i vozmozhnosti* (Moscow, 1976); idem and V. P. Karavaev, *Osobennosti podkhoda evropeiskikh stran SEV k problemam ekonomicheskikh otnoshenii zapadom* (Moscow, 1975).
- 8 A. Nikoforov, *Sovremennyi podkhod SShA k problemam razvitiia osvobodivshikhsia gosudarstv* (Moscow, 1980). See also V. L. Sheinis, *Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskaia differentsiatsiia razvivaiushikhsia stran: tendentsii i perspektivy* (Moscow, 1981); E. A. Bragina, *Mel'koe promyshlennoe proizvodstvo v strategii osvobodivshikhsia stran* (Moscow, 1982).
- 9 A. V. Kozyrev, 'Limitation of the Arms Trade', in *Problems of Common Security* (Moscow, 1984), pp. 140–56.
- 10 V. P. Lukin, *Evolutsiia politiki SShA v otnoshenii KNR na rubezhe 70kh godov* (Moscow, 1976).
- 11 A. G. Arbatov, *Novye programmy strategicheskikh vooruzhennykh sil SShA* (Moscow, 1977).
- 12 B. S. Orlov, *Sotsial'no-politicheskie korni szapadnogermanskogo neofashizma* (Moscow, 1970); *Osnovnye cherty sapadnoevropeiskoi politicheskoi integratsii na sovremennom etape* (Moscow, 1976).
- 13 V. I. Dashichev (ed.), *Problemy vneshnei politiki sotsialiticheskikh stran* (Moscow, 1980).
- 14 From a memorandum of the Institute of the Economy of the World Socialist System (IEMSS) of April 1979, cited in L. G. Beliaeva *et al.* (eds), *Istorii i stalinizm* (Moscow, 1991), pp. 237–40.
- 15 'Some Considerations of the Foreign Policy Results of the 1970s, 20 January 1980', cited in *Moscow News*, 30 (1989).
- 16 Nikolai I. Bukharin *et al.*, *O prichinakh i sushchnosti krizisa 1980 g. v PNR*, June 1981.
- 17 For further evidence on the personal and professional perils of early new-thinking advocacy see English, *Russia and the Idea of the West*, chap. 5.
- 18 Examples of these ties abound in the above-noted works of Arbatov, Burlatskii, Grachev and others. Additional sources of insight include Evgenii Primakov, *Gody v bol'shoi politike* (Moscow: Sovershenno Sekretno, 1999); Roald Z. Sagdeev, *The Making of a Soviet Scientist: My Adventures in Nuclear Fusion and Space from Stalin to Star Wars* (New York: Wiley, 1994); Aleksandr Iakovlev, *Gor'kaia chasha. Bol'shevizm i reformatsiia Rossii* (Iaroslavl': Verkhne-Volzhscoe, 1994); and Egor Gaidar, *Dni porazhenii i pobed* (Moscow: Vagrius, 1996). Collections include Andrei Karaulov, *Vokrug Kremli. Kniga politicheskikh dialogov*, 2 vols (Moscow: Novosti, 1990, 1992); and William C. Wohlforth (ed.), *Witnesses to the End of the Cold War* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

- 19 For this approach see Jeffrey T. Checkel, *Ideas and International Political Change: Soviet/Russian Behavior and the End of the Cold War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997).
- 20 Most of Gorbachev's 'intellectual preparation', as well as his inner circle's debate over core foreign policy tenets that began soon after he took office, is ignored in materialist accounts of the Cold War's end.
- 21 English, *Russia and the Idea of the West*, pp. 180–96 and *passim*. See also Archie Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).
- 22 Valery Boldin, *Ten Years that Shook the World: The Gorbachev Era as Witnessed by his Chief of Staff* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), p. 53.
- 23 On Gromyko's motives see A. S. Chernyaev, *Shest' let s Gorbachevym: po dnevnikovym zapisiyam* (Moscow: Progress-Kul'tura, 1993), pp. 30–1.
- 24 Vadim Pechenev, *Gorbachev: K vershinam vlasti: Iz teoretiko-memuarnykh razmyshlenii* (Moscow: Gospodin narod, 1991), pp. 109–10.
- 25 Brown, *Gorbachev Factor*, pp. 69–71.
- 26 Other sources here include Nikolai Ryzhkov, *Perestroika: istoriia predatel'stv* (Moscow: Novosti, 1992) and Yegor Ligachev, *Inside Gorbachev's Kremlin: The Memoirs of Yegor Ligachev* (New York: Pantheon, 1993).
- 27 See the interview with Geidar Aliyev in Karaulov, *Vokrug kremlia*, p. 268.
- 28 The Brezhnevites' preferred candidate could have been Prime Minister Nikolai Tikhonov or Moscow party boss Victor Grishin (both over 70 years old at the time) but not far behind might have been Military Industry Secretary Grigory Romanov (still in his 60s, and an outspoken figure of hard-line views).
- 29 On Gromyko's subsequent astonishment at Gorbachev's unwillingness 'to use force and pressure to defend state interests' see Anatoly Gromyko, *Andrei Gromyko v labirintakh Kremlia. Vospominaniia i razmyshleniia sina* (Moscow: IPO Avtor, 1997), p. 184 and *passim*.
- 30 Gen. Makhmut Gareyev recalls the early-1980s proposal of General Staff Chief Nikolai Ogarkov to trim wasteful political and military expenditures while concentrating resources on the most promising weapons systems. 'If the arms race had been conducted in a more sensible manner, we could have sustained it and still maintained strategic parity... But our leadership was feeble; it was not prepared to make tough, willful decisions, to act decisively like Stalin.' Michael Ellman and Vladimir Kantorovich (eds), *The Destruction of the Soviet Economic System: An Insiders' History* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1998), pp. 61–3.
- 31 Ryzhkov, *Perestroika: istoriia predatel'stv*, p. 79; Pechenev, *Gorbachev: k vershinam vlasti*, pp. 90, 92.
- 32 A witness recalls Gorbachev saying, 'We're all equals now. The Brezhnev Doctrine is dead.' Anatoly Chernyaev (Princeton University seminar, 24 February 1993).
- 33 Chernyaev, *Shest' let*, p. 41.
- 34 Dale R. Herspring, 'The Military Factor in East German Soviet Policy', *Slavic Review*, 47, 1 (1988); Garthoff, *The Great Transition*, p. 214. On Gorbachev and his generals see also William Odom, *The Collapse of the Soviet Military* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998).
- 35 S. F. Akhromeev and G. K. Kornienko, *Glazami marshala i diplomata. Kriticheskii vzgliad na vneshniiu politiku SSSR do i posle 1985 goda* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye Othosheniia, 1992), pp. 65–6, 91.
- 36 The two had forged close ties during Gorbachev's tenure as party boss of the Stavropol region bordering Shevardnadze's Georgian republic. Their cooperation ranged from economic innovations to discussion of the Afghan war. The latter weighed more heavily on them than on other republic officials since their districts served as transit points for equipment and troops to – and dead and wounded from – Afghanistan. See Shevardnadze's *Moi vybor: V zashchitu demokratii i svobody* (Moscow: Novosti, 1991).

- 37 For several participants' accounts – including the military's attempts to co-opt the initiative – see 'Peregovorshchik-razoruzhenets', *Nezavisimaia Gazeta*, 19 February 1997.
- 38 Shevardnadze, *Moi vybor*, p. 96.
- 39 Ibid., pp. 94, 96.
- 40 Aleksandr Yakovlev, *Muki prochteniiia bytiia. Perestroika: nadezhdy i real'nosti* (Moscow: Novosti, 1991), pp. 181, 188.
- 41 'Razgovor s Prezidentom SSSR za chashkoi chaia', *Izvestiia*, 20 September 1991.
- 42 Mikhail Gorbachev, *Political Report of the CPSU Central Committee to the 27th Party Congress* (Moscow: Novosti, 1986).
- 43 Shevardnadze, *Moi vybor*, pp. 93–4; Chernyaev, *Shest' let*, p. 60. See also A. G. Kovalev, 'Politik poroi obiazan skhodit' s tribuny pod skrip svoikh botinok', *Novaia Gazeta*, 22 April 1996.
- 44 Boldin, *Ten Years*, p. 73; see also Aleksandr Tsipko, 'Gorbachev postavil na "sotsialisticheskii vybor" i proigral', *Nezavisimaia Gazeta*, 17 October 1996.
- 45 See Mikhail Gorbachev and Zdenek Mlynar, 'Dialog o perestroike, "Prazhske vesne" i o sotsializme' (unpublished), pp. 159–64. Such insiders as Chernyaev, Anatoly Dobrynin and Alexander Bessmertnykh have noted Gorbachev's 'insatiable appetite' for reading, emphasizing topics that ranged from the New Economic Policy of the Soviet 1920s to European ideas for arms control from the mid-1980s.
- 46 Arbatov, *The System*, p. 324. See also Mikhail Gorbachev, *Zhizn' i reformy*, vol. I (Moscow: Novosti, 1995), p. 190; Grachev, *Kremlevskaia khronika*, p. 137; Pechenev, *Gorbachev: k vershinam vlasti*, p. 27.
- 47 Chernyaev, *Shest' let*, p. 75; see also Mikhail Gorbachev, *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), pp. 139, 144.
- 48 M. S. Gorbachev, 'Doveritel'nyi razgovor', in *Gody trudnykh reshenii: Izbrannoe 1985–1992* (Moscow: Fond-Gorbachev, 1993), pp. 235–47.
- 49 Valery Legostayev, 'God 1987-yi – peremena logiki', *Den'*, 14 (1991), p. 2.
- 50 Akhromeev and Kornienko, *Glazami marshala i diplomata*, pp. 99, 105. For further details see Ryzhkov, *Perestroika: istoriia predatel'stv*, pp. 133–52.
- 51 Anatoly Chernyaev (author's interview, Moscow, 16 December 1993).
- 52 Gorbachev, *Zhizn' i reformy*, vol. I, p. 302; Shevardnadze, *Moi vybor*, p. 294.
- 53 Shevardnadze, *Moi vybor*, p. 291; see also Sagdeev, *Making of a Soviet Scientist*, pp. 286–92; Gorbachev, *Perestroika*, p. 221; and 'Chtoby pokoleniia ne zabyli ob etom fakte', *Vestnik*, 5 (1996), pp. 87–103.
- 54 Yevgeny Velikhov (author's interview, Moscow, 30 December 1993).
- 55 'U perelomnoi cherty', in Gorbachev, *Gody trudnykh reshenii*, pp. 46–55.
- 56 Gorbachev, *Gody trudnykh reshenii*, p. 53.
- 57 Chernyaev, *Shest' let*, p. 110.
- 58 Akhromeev and Kornienko, *Glazami marshala i diplomata*, pp. 109, 126; Sagdeev, *Making of a Soviet Scientist*, pp. 272–3.
- 59 When it was presented to the General Staff Academy in late 1986, the new doctrine met with 'incomprehension, confusion, fear...and accusations that it was flawed, unacceptable, and bordered on treasonous'. Akhromeev and Kornienko, *Glazami marshala i diplomata*, p. 126.
- 60 Chernyaev, *Shest' let*, pp. 96–7; Sagdeev, *Making of a Soviet Scientist*, p. 290.
- 61 Aleksandr G. Savel'yev and Nikolai N. Detinov, *The Big Five: Arms Control Decision-Making in the Soviet Union* (New York: Praeger, 1995), p. 93; Georgii Shakhnazarov, *Tsena svobody. Reformatsiia Gorbacheva glazami ogo pomoshchnika* (Moscow: Rossika-Zevs, 1993), pp. 89–91.
- 62 Chernyaev, *Shest' let*, p. 112.
- 63 Now the conservatives' opposition grew as they realized just how far Gorbachev was prepared to go, including unilaterally, to achieve disarmament and improved relations with the West. Their resistance was strong – finding expression in public criticism of

- 'new thinking', in foot dragging on negotiations, the 'sabotage' of agreements, inflation of the purported 'threat' and distortion of intelligence – though this is downplayed in materialist accounts. See Stephen G. Brooks and William C. Wohlforth, 'Power, Globalization, and the End of the Cold War: Reevaluating a Landmark Case for Ideas', *International Security*, 25, 3 (Winter 2000–01), and Robert D. English, 'Power, Ideas, and New Evidence on the Cold War's End: A Reply to Brooks and Wohlforth', *International Security*, 26, 3 (Winter 2001–02).
- 64 *Literaturnaiia Gazeta*, 5 November 1986.
- 65 Don Oberdorfer, *The Turn: From the Cold War to a New Era* (New York: Poseidon Press, 1991), pp. 235–40.
- 66 Pavel Palazchenko, 'Interpreting the Whirlwind' (unpublished), p. 144.
- 67 Regarding materialists' tendency to downplay the opposition to new thinking, the seemingly unrelated issue of Gorbachev's 1987–88 efforts to democratize the Soviet political system offers an important parallel. Those who argue that conservatives must not have strongly opposed Gorbachev's arms cuts because they did not resist them more vigorously and openly would, by this logic, also argue that conservatives did not oppose free elections and the end of the communist party's monopoly on political power. Of course they did, but – as with various foreign policy initiatives – they ultimately acquiesced, not only out of party discipline, but because they never expected such radical proposals to be effectively implemented.
- 68 Mikhail Gorbachev, 'Doverie – vektor sovremennoi szhizni', *Svobodnaia Mysl'*, 3 (1995), p. 6.
- 69 Notwithstanding the evidence summarized above regarding Gorbachev and his inner circle's searching debates over core foreign policy principles that took place almost from the moment he took office, and particularly after the spring of 1986, Brooks and Wohlforth claim that 'Only in [1988–89] did he begin privately to rely on the more radical intellectual proponents of new thinking.' Of course, given the sharp economic downturn after 1988, this two-year lapse is critical for the materialists' 'power drove ideas' argument. See Brooks and Wohlforth, 'Power, Globalization, and the End of the Cold War', p. 31.
- 70 Mikhail Gorbachev, 'The Crimea Article', in *The August Coup: The Truth and the Lessons* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991) p. 119.
- 71 This is the claim of Georgii Shakhnazarov and other Gorbachev advisers. Chernyaev also reports that already by 1986 Gorbachev had ordered the preparation of plans for an eventual Soviet withdrawal from eastern Europe; overriding a skeptical Defense Minister Yazov, Gorbachev barked: 'What are you waiting for? For them to ask you to leave?' Princeton University seminar, 24 February 1993.
- 72 Shevardnadze, *Moi vybor*, p. 223; see also Vyacheslav Dashichev, 'On the Road to German Reunification: The View from Moscow', in Gabriel Gorodetsky (ed.), *Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917–1991: A Retrospective* (London: Frank Cass, 1994), pp. 170–9.
- 73 Chernyaev Princeton conference quote, check p. number in Penn State ms. (p. 6 in original transcript).

9 Unwrapping an enigma: Soviet elites, Gorbachev and the end of the Cold War

Vladislav M. Zubok

The rapid and peaceful dissolution of the structures of the Cold War, soon followed by the collapse of the Soviet Union itself, left scholars and other observers with intriguing questions. Indeed, the term ‘enigma’ was quickly adopted by journalists in order to describe this surprising succession of events. It has since also passed into the scholarly literature. ‘Enigma’ is quite possibly the most suitable rendering for the unique, even strangely peaceful way the bipolar global confrontation ended, strangely peaceful in the context of the dismal, bloody events characteristic of the rest of the twentieth century. In straining to effectively explain the Cold War’s denouement, this author once borrowed an image from the military lexicon: it was as if the Soviet high command became engaged, by their own choice, in a serious offensive; at a certain point, that offensive developed into a defensive action; finally, the military forces surrendered without offering any serious opposition. For the fact is, the leader of the Soviet Union, Gorbachev, preferred to preside over the dissolution of the empire and the state rather than mobilize force in an attempt to preserve it. The key power elites then failed to oppose his choice.¹

Today, several years after first applying this military analogy, we know much more about the circumstances surrounding the ‘enigma’ of the Cold War’s end. Most importantly, historians have begun the painstaking study of relevant archives, which supplement the faulty yet no less irreplaceable ‘oral histories’ produced by witnesses of various ranks and personal knowledge of events. We can refer now to a first generation of writings, embracing empirical studies, theoretical works and dozens of memoirs.² Collections of archival documents have become available to researchers. These include the Reagan–Gorbachev correspondence, together with the records of their summits, memoranda of conversations held by the Soviet leader with statesmen and politicians, select Politburo records and the CIA’s Soviet estimates. Several scholarly conferences have also been convened at which veterans of the events being studied actually participated. This has resulted in valuable additional testimonies.³

In a recent memoir, Gorbachev’s adviser Georgy Shakhnazarov, a perceptive political scientist, mused:

Even today many dramatic episodes in the reformation undertaken by Gorbachev remain a mystery. Loads of documents and thousands of books

are published... Still many episodes of this drama are shrouded in the veils of enigma. How could it happen that *perestroika*, having started in the interest of the reformation of society and improvement of people's lives, having given them democracy and freedom, ended up in the collapse of the Soviet Union, plunging Russia into a profound crisis?⁴

Shakhnazarov did not provide any answers to his question, having died shortly before his memoirs appeared in print.

This chapter does not pretend to pierce the veil of the enigma referred to by Shakhnazarov. Instead, I will focus my remarks on what I perceive to be the two most outstanding problems of interpretation. The first is the character of those key Soviet elites on whom the future of Soviet power depended. The other is the nature of Gorbachev's leadership and the question of his personality.

Grandchildren of the revolution: the decline of Soviet elites

A few general observations should be made about the evolution of Soviet elites in the post-Stalin era.

Social profile. The recruitment of party and state elites in the Soviet Union had its demographic 'waves' and 'troughs'. More specifically, there were distinct age cohorts to be found in the upper echelons of the Soviet government, cohorts distinguished by the varying historical and cultural circumstances of their recruitment into the regime. The officials who filled the dominant ranks in the party and state *nomenklatura* and in the security apparatuses during the 40 years preceding Gorbachev were persons who were in their late 20s and 30s when Stalin's purges raised them to positions of authority. The vast majority had nothing to do with the old Russian middle classes, not to mention with the old communist elites that had been destroyed. In the early 1980s, according to a sociological study, 80.4 per cent of the upper echelon of *nomenklatura* officials had come from family backgrounds in the peasantry or unskilled labor, 3.6 per cent from skilled labor and 5.4 per cent from 'white-collar' society. None were the offspring of professionals.⁵ Peasant boys became urbanites in their early adulthood and, once having made the party and state their career, quickly adopted the lifestyle of the middle classes and *nouveau riche* that was characteristic of these classes in Russian society before the revolution (a dynamic that came to the surface with remarkable clarity after the collapse of communism in 1991).⁶ Leonid Brezhnev, General Secretary of the USSR from 1965 until 1982, was the embodiment of this majority group to be found at the pinnacle of the *nomenklatura*.

Coherence and anti-intellectualism. Such social characteristics gave birth to a peculiar bureaucratic 'culture', one that persisted as the regime recruited younger cadres. The key requirements for *nomenklatura* work were pragmatism and, above all, knowledge of 'inside rules'. Education or even professional credentials were unimportant. The older veterans instinctively distrusted younger outsiders of more sophisticated social and cultural backgrounds. There was also a traditional

unspoken antagonism in this culture toward the party intellectuals, a remnant of the period in the 1930s when Stalin's crude recruits replaced the cosmopolitan, Comintern-based cadres. This anti-intellectualism within the *nomenklatura* only began to ease in the 1960s. Indeed, the later frenzy of intellectual status-seeking even led some members of the ruling elite to covet doctoral degrees and publish books. Still, at its social core, the *nomenklatura* abhorred intellectuals. Those in the leadership who educated themselves and stood well above the rest of their colleagues in sophistication and intellectualism had to be extremely cautious and avoid displaying their superiority. Yuri Andropov's career was a telling example of this phenomenon.

Morale and duplicity. As both archival documents and some memoirs have revealed, cynicism and the lack of any inner sense of legitimacy was a striking characteristic of Stalin's inner circle. 'Revolutionary legitimacy' and socialist romanticism practically vanished during Stalin's rule. As Lavrenti Beria's son recently recalled, 'we complain today about the dual morality of our fellow citizens. At that time [under Stalin] this was the norm in our leading circles.'⁷ The editor of these memoirs observed that 'the Soviet regime emerges as a regime of blackmailers, a supremely hypocritical regime in which vice never stops paying homage to virtue and in which baseness disguises itself as duty, cowardice as altruism, treason as charity, sadism as efficiency, stupidity as patriotism'.⁸ The rulers held on to power (equivalent, in their case, to hanging on to life itself) and despised, feared and manipulated the Soviet people. This rottenness was firmly ensconced within the secret, gossip-proof walls of the *nomenklatura*. From there, though, it gradually spread out and infected elites at the lower echelons of power, as well as society in general.

The impact of de-Stalinization. In pulling Stalin off the pedestal, Khrushchev not only achieved his personal political goals but also sought to treat the system's infection, ameliorate Soviet life and refurbish the regime's legitimacy in the eyes of the Soviet people. However, de-Stalinization instigated from above immediately generated the growth of a movement from below that even frightened the principal architect of the entire process, that is, Khrushchev himself. The 20th Party Congress in which Khrushchev denounced Stalin revived socialist romanticism among young Soviets, and gave birth to new strands of idealism in public life. It also destroyed the totalitarian model of culture created by Stalin. Soviet cultural policies (accompanied by murderous campaigns of terror and purges) had been the essential instrument of rule during Stalin's reign, replacing democratic politics.⁹ The first serious studies of this period have only recently been undertaken.¹⁰ Nevertheless, it is already clear that these years contain important clues to the further development of the Soviet Union, down to its ignominious demise. In 1984 Dmitry Ustinov, speaking at the Politburo, insisted that Khrushchev had caused more damage to the communist party and the Soviet state than had even its most dangerous enemies.¹¹

Militant imperialism. More than anything else, the Khrushchev years witnessed the weakening of militant Soviet imperialism, rooted as it was in great Russian chauvinism. Such militancy had been a mainstay of Stalinist culture

following World War II. Khrushchev integrated many aspects of this view in his own Cold War behavior. But he was also a genuine believer in communist ideology and in the international communist movement, regarding them not only as instruments of Soviet imperial goals but as a goal in their own right. He attacked both Stalin's foreign policy and the imperial mentality that underlay it. At the same time, he preached a return to 'proletarian internationalism' and 'true Leninism' and advocated the large-scale, altruistic support of movements of national liberation all over the world. He also did away with an important aspect of the country's propaganda – namely, the Soviet Union's encirclement by enemies – which had been the cornerstone of imperialist militancy. The result was the creation of a certain dichotomy within the mental universe of the Soviet elite *vis-à-vis* Soviet foreign policy. In reality, Soviet foreign policies remained wedded to a version of imperialism in which the interests of the state took precedence over ideology. But the state's propaganda and cultural policies strove to obscure the machinations of a 'great power', hiding it behind quite distinct values and notions antithetical to power politics. Paradoxically, as the Soviet Union was becoming a real military superpower, its elites were losing their militant imperialist edge. Ideas of convergence and integration with Europe, and with the West as a whole, can be traced to this time.

Khrushchev, for all the damage he caused to the Stalinist imperialist mentality, remained most pragmatic in regards to power and stopped at nothing to halt the erosion of Soviet positions in eastern Europe. Aside from his crude and cruel background – he had participated in the mass purges – he was motivated by memories of World War II and the huge price that the Soviet Union paid for its victory and position in the world.¹² A similar background and set of memories guided Brezhnev as well, together with the others who succeeded Khrushchev in 1964. They ceased to be a factor when the older generation ceded power to Gorbachev in 1985.

The evolution of key elite groups

Having made the above general observations, we should now turn to an examination of three main groups within the elite Soviet power structure, which was located below the top party *nomenklatura*, but which constituted the foundation of the Soviet state.

Party and state managers (khoziaistvenniki)

The first and largest of these groups was primarily devoted to economic management. It included the leaders of dozens of central ministries supervising the giant, ever-growing Soviet economy. It also included numerous regional party secretaries from areas that included dense concentrations of important industrial enterprises, and who were in constant contact with Moscow's central ministries. Yegor Ligachev and Boris Yeltsin were representative of this group. Captains of the military-industrial complex (MIC) constituted the group's elite and its most effective vanguard. (MIC generated over 20 per cent of the Soviet GDP, half of it

intended for civilian use, by the mid-1980s.¹³) The military-industrial bureaucracy was one of the mainstays of the Soviet empire and, more specifically, of the Union structures. Representatives of this group in Gorbachev's entourage were Prime Minister Nikolai Ryzhkov and Politburo member and head of the Russian Federation Vitaly Vorotnikov.

The interests, mutual ties and collective ethos of this group made it a powerful force opposed to the regional separatism encouraged by local and ethnic party elites. All the activities and interests of the *khoziaistvenniki* were oriented toward Moscow and the central ministries. These cadres retained some qualities of the old Stalinist elites: a ruthless pragmatism and the belief that the cudgel and telephone call – the use of force, in general – would bring about the desired effects.

In retrospect, as has been argued in Russian scholarship, this segment of the Soviet *nomenklatura* secretly yearned to transform itself from state managers into capitalist owners and to shake off the shackles of the old centralized economy. The remarkable transformation of party secretaries and communist ministers into bankers and rich oligarchs under Yeltsin prompted one observer to suggest that even under Gorbachev 'the higher echelons of the party' would have been ready 'to send to Hell at any moment the whole of Marxism-Leninism, if such an act would only help them preserve their hierarchical positions and continue their careers'.¹⁴ Unfortunately, no reliable sociological and historical studies exist that can confirm this conclusion. We can only surmise that there was a concentration of pragmatically oriented persons in this group who entertained such ideas in a dormant, passive form. They began to act when the system began to crumble from the top down. Still, the available evidence reveals that, by the mid-1980s, a bulk of the 'managerial' elites were still collectivist-minded and thoroughly 'socialistic'. The majority sincerely believed that the system should and could be reformed. In this respect, they regarded the failure to implement economic reforms in the 1960s as a grave mistake.

This group also lacked the coherence, sophistication and will to act as a political lobby. Being managers *par excellence*, busy with everyday crises and struggling within the dire straits of the 'socialist economy', most members of this group had no time for political intrigues, let alone for developing a political conscience. Paradoxically, even those regional party secretaries who were supposed to be active in regional politics were lacking any political experience or talent (Yegor Ligachev comes to mind again). When political reforms began to be instituted, many of these 'managers' quickly lost power to a new class of 'democratic' politicians who were charismatic and populist, and who neither knew how the Soviet economy worked nor cared to learn.

Power bureaucracies (siliviki)

The second large and important group within the Soviet ruling structure consisted of 'power ministers' (to adopt the vernacular in current use by the Russian newspapers). This included the KGB, the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of External Trade. Since Stalin, these bureaucracies were

the main receptacle and generator of militant imperialism and great power sentiment. After World War II, the victorious Soviet military represented the single most powerful group in the country, a fact that even Stalin had to take into account. The Kremlin rulers had to rely on the military in order to crush the power of Beria's secret police in 1953. Marshal Georgi Zhukov, being the most popular figure within this group, was punished twice for his prominence. First, he was semi-exiled by Stalin. Then, in 1957, he was demoted by Khrushchev. The top party *nomenklatura* feared 'Bonapartism' among the military and kept them at arm's length from politics, while also trying to satisfy all their demands. After 1976 the head of the Ministry of Defense was a non-military personage, an architect of the MIC, Dmitry Ustinov. He succeeded in bringing the army's top brass to stand at attention as the Politburo issued its political orders. This included the invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979, which provoked disagreement within the ranks. In 1987 Gorbachev carried out a large pre-emptive purge designed to intimidate the military, but the military hierarchy had long since consented to serve as an instrument in the hands of the party leadership. Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev was an example of this.

The KGB was, in a sense, the watchdog and the most vital organ of the Soviet state. The *esprit de corps* within KGB ranks was always strong; it was as close to resembling a Teutonic Order as Stalin had once wanted the entire party to be. Yet, the KGB was created in 1954 to replace the secret police that had aided Stalin in keeping everyone in check, including the party, and that then had to be crushed. Khrushchev was determined to bring secret police under the heel of the party *nomenklatura*, introducing into the KGB a new group of Young Communist functionaries, including Alexander Shepilov and Vladimir Semichastny, in order to achieve that goal. This new blood had political experience and strong ideological convictions, and aspired, in its way, to become a Soviet version of the 'Young Turks'. They despised the mass of crude, unsophisticated party *nomenklatura* and believed that they knew better how to rule the Soviet Union.¹⁵ They helped to get rid of Khrushchev, but then the new party leadership, sensing the danger that originated from this group, sent it into retirement. In 1967 Brezhnev appointed his loyalist Yuri Andropov to chair the KGB.

Andropov's chairmanship became, in many ways, the golden era of the KGB. The organization expanded and became involved in virtually all aspects of the economic, social and cultural policies of the USSR. However, this came at the price of political domestication and tight ideological party control. As in the case of the army, the top political leadership succeeded in turning the KGB's Teutonic Order into a pliant instrument. By the end of Brezhnev's rule, the KGB was the least corrupt of the Soviet power elites. There were many Andropov appointees, among them his deputy Vladimir Kryuchkov, who were hardened Cold Warriors and orthodox ideologues. At the same time, even in the KGB the spirit of imperialist militancy was clearly on the wane. The long-time political and moral stigma affixed to the KGB by de-Stalinization had a powerful impact on its cadres. There was a deficit of political experience within its ranks, together with a lack of will for power and the absence of a culture of risk taking. The head of

the department of analysis within the intelligence section later recalled that 'there was a widespread feeling among KGB officers and generals that they belonged to the second class. They were never brought to be policy creators – they just implemented policies.' While the KGB could, in theory, become a vanguard of reformers from the top, in practice the organization remained on the sidelines, becoming increasingly irrelevant.¹⁶

The Foreign Ministry and the Foreign Trade Ministry had no power base comparable to the army and the KGB. These bureaucracies, however, defended Soviet state and economic interests abroad, representing other pillars of Soviet imperialism. The leadership of Molotov and Andrei Gromyko meant that numerous cohorts of Soviet diplomats looked to traditional tsarist imperial history for inspiration. This also meant that the majority of the diplomatic corps operated in an atmosphere of total and unthinking obedience. Soviet diplomats were notorious for their lack of initiative and courage.

At the same time, Khrushchev's experiments and 'the struggle for peace and disarmament' spawned a new and important segment of these bureaucracies: arms-control negotiators. Like most of their colleagues, arms-control negotiators played Cold War games. However, they became increasingly disillusioned with Soviet foreign policy goals and behavior. They developed an affinity to their Western counterparts and developed a distinct mentality – more liberal and compromise-oriented – that set them off in stark contrast to their colleagues at home.¹⁷

The ebb and flow of the Cold War had a powerful effect on Soviet power elites. They were the first to face the Western adversary. But they were also the first to confront the truth about Soviet inferiority and Western superiority in the economic and social spheres. In the early 1960s and even in the 1970s, the anti-US struggle over the Third World generated powerful impulses and contributed to a strengthening of a militantly imperialist ideology in the ranks of the KGB and among other Soviet representatives abroad. In fact, they functioned like a light cavalry unit sent out on a mission against their enemies in the intoxicating atmosphere of a new Great Game.¹⁸ In contrast, the years of *détente* and of expanding Soviet economic contacts abroad resulted in a growing number of comfortable appointments for bureaucrats, stimulated corruption and increased the exposure of representatives of this group to high material living standards. Many continued to pose as staunch defenders of the Soviet empire, but they preferred to do so in the well-appointed circumstances of Geneva, Paris or New York rather than at home. There was a growing number of Western 'agents of influence' at work within the ranks of Soviet power elites during the 1970s, a process directly related to decay at home and a growing disillusionment with the prospects of the Soviet way of life.

Intellectual advisers ('shestidesyatniki')

A third and most volatile group within the Soviet power elites was the small intellectual-professional component of the Soviet power elites. Inherently marginal,

it continued to grow and gain ground during the 1970s and the first half of the 1980s. Of special ideological significance, in historical hindsight, were those who called themselves '*shestidesyatniki*', or the 1960s generation. They responded to Khrushchev's call in 1956 for the renovation of socialism and the dismantling of Stalinist structures. These persons made their career in the analytical divisions (outside of the intelligence community) as well as in the propaganda and cultural structures of the central party *apparatus*. In a certain sense, they could be considered the inheritors of the purged cosmopolitan cadres of the Comintern era. Many came with politically 'acceptable' social backgrounds and experience in World War II, together with university diplomas or with degrees from the Party Academy of Social Sciences. From the late 1950s this group identified socially and culturally with intellectual and artistic circles in Moscow and other large urban centers. They also felt an affinity to the intellectual elite of the MIC and its privileged 'open' branches, think tanks and research centers. In addition to their historical self-definition, the *shestidesyatniki* also defined themselves as a 'Soviet intelligentsia' and imbibed important cultural and spiritual influences from the de-Stalinization era. They worked their way up the power system in the belief that a series of 'thaws', that is, reformist periods, would melt Stalinist totalitarianism and make it possible to give Soviet socialism a 'human face'. One could include among this cadre Georgy Shakhnazarov, Anatoly Chernyaev, Vadim Medvedev, Feodor Burlatsky, Oleg Bogomolov, Len Karpinsky, Alexander Bovin and Georgy Arbatov.¹⁹

The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 was another pivotal movement in the evolution of the *shestidesyatniki*. In the years preceding the invasion many had worked in Prague for the journal of the international communist movement, *Issues of Peace and Socialism*. Foreign and Soviet 'comrades' had freely traded ideas and information and read any book they liked in Prague. Chernyaev recalled the time he spent there as the period in which he managed 'to shed his Soviet skin', a transformation that included not only intellectual but psychological expressions as well.²⁰ Many persons who later achieved prominence as political advisers or journalists were graduates of the Prague 'school'. The Prague Spring and its repression by the Soviets threw this group into an existential crisis.²¹ They lost all their illusions regarding the possible peaceful evolution of the Soviet regime into a modern reformist technocracy. The *shestidesyatniki*, according to one of them, 'did not betray their convictions, but put up with the idea that they would never see political freedom in their land'.²²

Moscow of the late Brezhnev years resembled Rome on the eve of Luther. Any smatterings of naive faith and idealism were quickly drowned in the sewers of cynicism. Fresh, unspoiled persons still arrived from the provinces, but they gradually lost their soul in the Soviet capital. At the same time, the city experienced an intense and diverse cultural ferment. The *shestidesyatniki* were a part of this ideological excitement that ranged from social democracy, to monarchy, to esoteric cults. In the atmosphere of *détente* with the West the ruling party and its watchdog, the KGB, were rather passive and tolerant of these trends, as long as there were no attempts to disseminate and propagate ideas that threatened

stability. High-placed intellectuals benefited dramatically from the rapid expansion of personal ties and relationships. Think tanks specializing in contacts with the outside world flourished, among them the IMEMO, the Institute for US and Canada Studies, the Institute of Africa, the Institute of Latin America, the Institute of Economy of World Socialist Systems, the Institute of World Workers Movement, etc. These organizations became the institutional base for the successful *shestidesyatniki*, a launching pad for their travels 'in and out of power structures'.

The political influence of intellectual advisers should not be exaggerated. They remained on the margins of the Soviet elite structures. What made the *shestidesyatniki* truly significant, however, was the moral and intellectual 'oases' they provided inside the increasingly stagnant regime. In the years when the Soviet Union fell into neglect and mismanagement, they created a much-desired middle ground between open dissent and unprincipled conformism. At the same time, they lacked the will and motivation to become political players. Psychologically, they were closer to Russian Mensheviks than to Bolsheviks. They preferred to travel 'in and out of power' structures, remaining in certain respects romantics of power to the end.

Westernism and 'agents of influence'

After the end of the Cold War, numerous shell-shocked Soviet functionaries were at a loss to explain why so many of their colleagues, including diplomats and even KGB officials, enthusiastically supported reconciliation with the former enemy. They looked upon such a fervent, nearly euphoric, Westernism as a form of treason. Talk about 'hidden enemies' and Western 'agents of influence' began to be heard, both in public discourse and in informal conversations.

It should be noted here that this Westernism so much in evidence in the late 1980s and early 1990s was a mass psychological phenomenon that reflected the revolutionary changes then flooding over the Soviet Union. At the same time, the roots of this phenomenon were to be found in the 1940s, in the long-term trend of a growing philo-Westernism amongst the educated strata of Soviet society, as well as within the key elites. The complex causes of this trend lie beyond the scope of the present chapter.²³ Two specific moments, however, require special mention.

The first was an increase in the economic and psychological dependence of Soviet elites on the West as they strove for greater comfort and status. The material benefits of Western civilization attracted highly placed Soviet visitors to European countries and the United States. Even the most cynical among them were thrilled by what they saw in the West, and came back convinced that the Soviet Union would reach this same high level of material culture. The more corrupt and status-conscious the Soviet *nomenklatura* became, the greater its dependence on Western goods – either imported, purchased during highly valued trips abroad or brought as 'souvenirs' by innumerable tourists and business partners.

The second factor worthy of mention here was the gnawing realization that the race against the West, and in particular against the US economy, had been lost. In

the late 1950s Krushchev had pledged 'to catch up and surpass' the United States economically. By so doing, he actually made comparison between the Soviet Union and the United States compulsory; it became a permanent matrix in the public mind. The dawning understanding in the 1970s that while the Soviet Union could produce more cement and metal than the US economy it would lag behind in the high-tech sector was experienced as a thunderbolt by younger, more romantic Soviet officials. They also saw that the German and Japanese economies, which had been bombed into dust during World War II, were now emerging as economic leaders, far surpassing the Soviet economy in productivity, efficiency and innovation. Finally, these officials were forced to recognize that Asia's 'small dragons' (South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore) evidenced a pace of growth and innovative drive that also left the Soviets behind.

The result was a frustration with the unreconstructed domestic regime and the lack of reform. This situation also revived an atavistic Russian doom-and-gloom mentality, a soul-searching provoked by the purported inherent backwardness of Russian society and the Russian people. The inverse result of this process was a growing emulation, obsession and envy displayed towards the developed Western societies, one verging on *Hassliebe* towards the United States.

In addition, there was a 'benign power' at work within Western culture, and what could be termed 'the glamour of Western civilization', that exercised influence on Soviet elites, particularly on the younger cohorts. This 'benign power' ranged from admiration for technological progress to a love for Western music that reached millions of Soviet households by means of international radio and the spread of tape recorders. In the words of Gorbachev's interpreter, 'I am sure that the impact of the Beatles on the generation of young Soviets in the 1960s will one day be the object of studies. We knew their songs by heart.'²⁴

The intellectual trends affecting the *shestidesyatniki* all pointed toward a reconciliation with Western democracies as the only alternative to the deadlock of the Cold War and the terrible danger of nuclear war. Many *shestidesyatniki* cherished hopes in the mid-1940s that Soviet cooperation with the Western democracies would force Stalin to change his ways and alter the regime. Even 30 or 40 years later they were still hoping to turn back the Iron Curtain and recycle the 'missed opportunities' dating from the years before the Cold War. The result of their convictions, as Robert English has described in his extensive study, was 'the emergence of a global outlook'. Embattling a military xenophobic imperialism and Russian chauvinism that remained at the mental core of other major groups of Soviet elites, *shestidesyatniki* promoted liberal ('universal humanist') values, the gradual amelioration of social norms and their study by the social sciences, cultural and intellectual *rapprochement* and political reconciliation with the West, the impossibility of war in a nuclear age, etc. No wonder, then, that the academic think tanks led by *shestidesyatniki* quickly emerged as the target of fierce attacks by xenophobes and Russian chauvinists who accused them of being hotbeds of Westernism and cosmopolitanism.²⁵

It would be preposterous to depict those affected by Westernization as a 'fifth column' in the last years of the Cold War. The motives and interests of Westernizers were highly varied, ranging from the intellectual and sublime to the mercantile

and venal. Interest in and even sympathy for the West were broad phenomena, as complex and diverse as the broad-based sympathy for Soviet Russia that was common in the West. During the 1930s thousands of intellectuals and highly placed officials in Western democracies supported reconciliation and friendship with the Soviet Union. Half a century later the tide had changed. It was now time for Soviet officials, from the romantics to the pragmatists, to mentally defect to the West. Western intelligence services reaped their harvest of agents in the process, but this was not what helped the West to prevail in the Cold War. The broader process of growing Westernism and dependence on the West, however, was a major factor in the Cold War's denouement.

Gorbachev: the significance of a fateful historical personality

Mikhail Sergeevich Gorbachev, that energetic, handsome man with sparkling eyes and a charming smile, 'did more than anyone else to end the Cold War between East and West', asserts British political scientist Archie Brown in his seminal study, *The Gorbachev Factor*. Yet, surprisingly, in discussing the reasons that informed Gorbachev's policies, Brown does not focus on the character and personal traits of the last Soviet leader: Gorbachev is a 'factor' in his study, not a human being of flesh and spirit.²⁶

Perhaps this reticence to address Gorbachev the person can be excused. It is, indeed, very difficult to write about a living historical personality. Our very proximity warps our vision. But is it possible to evaluate recent history without personally analyzing a person who so dramatically influenced its course? It is worth quoting in this context Anatoly Chernyaev, the most loyal and supportive of Gorbachev's assistants. Gorbachev, he claims, 'was not "a great man" as far as a set of personal qualities was concerned'. But he 'fulfilled a great mission', and that is 'more important for history'.²⁷ A more critical Dmitry Volkogonov provides another but no less remarkable estimate: Gorbachev 'is a person of great mind, but with a weak character. Without this paradox of personality it is hard to understand him as a historical actor.' Volkogonov writes that the 'intellect, feelings and will of Gorbachev' left a unique imprint on the Soviet transition.²⁸

In the years following the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, Gorbachev and his loyalists sought to present their actions as a major effort at 'reformation' of the Soviet Union: an attempt to make Soviet society free and democratic. Gorbachev himself stresses the role of new ideas, of 'new thinking'. He recently presented himself as having been a reformer squeezed between the reactionary *nomenklatura* and the irresponsible, demagogical, radical forces of the nationalist and pseudo-liberal 'right'.²⁹

However, even Gorbachev's friends note that he systematically avoids most of the important issues. Above all, there is the question about his policies, both foreign and domestic, in 1987–88. Initially, Gorbachev's statesmanship was based on a pragmatic *realpolitik* rather than on the abstract principles he would later adopt. When Margaret Thatcher said in 1984 that one could do business with Gorbachev, she was particularly impressed with his citation of Lord Palmerston on the value

of 'permanent interests'.³⁰ In 1985–87 Gorbachev's foreign policy corresponded to such a value. Soviet proposals for arms control, trust and the reduction of strategic arsenals were prudent and were supported at home and abroad. Even severe critics of other aspects of Gorbachev's administration recall with high regard the arms talks he held with the United States, together with their results.³¹

After 1987, however, Gorbachev forgot Palmerston's dictum. His policies were hasty and improvised and he became imbued with a messianic spirit. In mid-1987 Gorbachev wrote a book called *Perestroika for our Country and the Entire World*. It contained a universalistic message, a vision of international relations based on a new, just and democratic world order in which the USSR would play a key role and the United Nations would reign supreme. In a word, Gorbachev replaced one messianic 'revolutionary-imperial' idea of communism with another messianic idea 'that *perestroika* in the USSR was only a part of some kind of global *perestroika*, the birth of a new world order'.³²

This new ideological basis for his foreign policy did not necessarily include an absolute rejection of the use of force and the projection of power in one form or another. Yet, in his shift in 'paradigm', Gorbachev not only rejected communist tenets of 'class struggle' but post-Stalinist imperialist *realpolitik* as well. While the collapse of the Soviets' 'eastern European empire' was inevitable, it is not clear why Gorbachev chose the course of absolute non-intervention in eastern European affairs that he did. It was as if he, like Pilate, wanted to wash his hands of the whole business. After all, Gorbachev could have sought to promote positive change in eastern Europe. Instead, he simply presided as a benign observer over the rapid dissolution of the Soviet 'empire'.

Later, in 1989–90, Gorbachev and Shevardnadze took bold steps towards *rapprochement* with the United States. Again, however, these included some bizarre developments. US officials continued to pursue prudent, 'realist' objectives while their Soviet counterparts talked about friendship and partnership. Meanwhile, the latter lagged behind in formulating positions that would secure the Soviet Union a place in the fast-changing world. Gorbachev and Soviet diplomacy were far behind events – and German–US statecraft – on the most important security issue of the day, namely, the reunification of Germany. They failed to obtain from either the West German or the US leadership any guarantees for Soviet security and the non-expansion of NATO in the new Europe.³³

If one accepts his reasoning, Gorbachev sacrificed the Soviet Union's external empire in the name of reforms and 'new thinking' at home. But his domestic record presents a depressing picture of incoherence, empty declarations and gross economic errors (beginning with the infamous 'anti-alcoholic' campaign). After three years of Gorbachev's leadership, the elites and society at large grew disillusioned and frustrated with the possibility of improving their lot by means of concerted action by the party leadership and the state. The economic, financial and state crisis that already afflicted the Soviet Union acquired catastrophic proportions two or three years *after* Gorbachev came to power.³⁴ Instead of producing an 'acceleration' of the Soviet economy, as he proclaimed he would do in 1986, Gorbachev actually accelerated economic crisis.

He and his advisers later claimed that they tried every possible means to reform the economy in the extant political framework, reaching the conclusion that it could only be changed through political reforms. It seems that by 1987 they had firmly resolved that the old *nomenklatura* was not only incapable of changing, but generally constituted an insurmountable roadblock to reform.³⁵ In an attempt to remove this roadblock, Gorbachev sought to encourage the development of new political forces and movements, while gradually diminishing the power of the party and of centralized state structures. However, he chose a terribly risky and dangerous path for doing this. Though he put political reforms on the fast track, he continued to delay in creating institutions of a market economy. His actions encouraged a very rapid dismantling of the system and of the communist ideology that provided its legitimacy. Political reforms did not pave the way for well-managed and gradual economic transformation. Instead, they put the Soviet Union – as a state and an economy – on the skids. Gorbachev's 'remedies' – his 'new thinking' – were killing the already sick patient.³⁶ By 1989 the Soviet leadership was already engulfed in such a severe domestic crisis that it was no longer capable of carrying out any measured foreign policy. By early 1990 the Soviet Union lost its external empire, together with its ability to negotiate as an equal partner with the United States. By early 1991 the Soviet Union was financially bankrupt, as the entire world knew.³⁷

Ten years after losing power, Gorbachev himself agreed in a candid discussion that there had been 'a lot of naivety and utopianism' in his actions. But he adamantly stuck to his ideals of 'new thinking'. He admitted that he deliberately ran the risk of political destabilization after 1988 but that this was necessary. Radical political reforms were 'deliberately designed' to 'wake up the [Soviet] people'. Otherwise, he said, 'we would have shared the fate of Khrushchev. Even after we introduced new fresh forces into the already liberated structures – the party *nomenklatura* set a goal... through plenums to remove the General Secretary because he intended to bury its privileges.'³⁸

In the end, domestic crisis interfered with Gorbachev's attempts to end the Cold War. Again, it was the reverse of his original intent to use domestic reforms to shore up Soviet negotiating positions in a way that would allow the USSR to exit the Cold War loop with honor. A close aide to Foreign Minister Shevardnadze later asserted that, after mid-1988,

when we encountered domestic difficulties, we began to realize that we would be able to stay afloat for a while and even to preserve the status of a great power only if we could lean on the United States. We felt that if we had stepped away from the US, we would have been pushed aside. We had to be as close as possible to the United States.³⁹

It is hard to escape the conclusion that the developments of 1985–89, which brought an end to the Soviet external empire in eastern Europe and put the Soviet Union itself on the road towards extinction, were not inevitable. In this regard, Archie Brown's remarks about Gorbachev's impact sound almost like an understatement.

It would not be an exaggeration to compare Gorbachev to a David who killed the Goliath of the Cold War, except that his main casualty was another giant, the Soviet Union.

Several features of Gorbachev's statesmanship and personality stand out in hindsight.

Gorbachev and ideas: a belated 'shestidesyatnik'. Gorbachev's election to the post of General Secretary was, to some extent, the result of pressure on the Politburo from the party elites. There was a general consensus that under the young, charming leader things would go better for the country. Initially, Gorbachev acted as a skillful mediator who succeeded in satisfying all the key elites. After 1987, however, he embarked on a radical course that required a sophisticated intellectual and moral foundation, a new frontier. As time passes and our perspective of events broadens, the role of the 'new thinking' *vis-à-vis* the motivations and the self-image of Gorbachev and the reformers surrounding him looms ever larger. For most statesmen ideas are tools. To understand their impact on history one must examine the ways in which ideas are molded and manipulated by the human agents who espouse them. In Gorbachev's case, he clearly overreached himself in attempting to shape Soviet realities on the basis of the ideas contained in the 'new thinking'.

There are few, if any, precedents in history for a leader of a huge ailing state to willingly risk the geopolitical positions of a great power and the very foundations of his political position for the sake of a moral global project. Even Lenin, Gorbachev's hero, compromised away the project of 'world revolution' in 1918 in order to stay in power.

Gorbachev's reliance on the 'intelligentsia' and on his intellectual advisers in desperately searching for ideas and recipes for action was striking. He had no permanent 'team' but, rather, three teams who worked for him. One of these was the Politburo and the leaders of key power structures. The other two consisted of intellectuals. One circle, later transformed into the Presidential Council, included the Soviet intellectual and artistic establishment (the *tvorcheskaia intelligentsiia*). The other, in the words of one of its members, was 'a narrow circle of like-minded associates, sort of a brain trust, where the ideas of reform grew and got polished, where his speeches and documents got written'.⁴⁰ This third team included Alexander Yakovlev, Vadim Medvedev, Anatoly Chernyaev and Georgy Shakhnazarov. A majority of this circle were *shestidesyatniki* themselves or those who belonged to that milieu.

It should be noted that Gorbachev himself was not a *shestidesyatnik* by background. He and several of his biographers later exaggerated the impact of de-Stalinization and the intellectual currents that shaped the *shestidesyatniki* on Gorbachev's life. However, in contrast to them, Gorbachev was a quintessential career politician who worked his way up the party ladder with impressive astuteness, consistently honing his faculties of cynical, calculated manipulation. Indeed, some of those who worked with him before and after he became General Secretary were struck by his cold-hearted use of the art of power intrigue.

Still, Gorbachev always distinguished himself from other party cadres in two ways: by his pretensions at intellectualism and by his valuation of the high moral

ground. Among the increasingly lax and corrupt corps of younger party secretaries, Gorbachev stood out as the one who read serious books, refrained from drinking and maintained strict family values. While this seriousness, together with his manipulative streak, his charm and his other 'visages', makes Gorbachev a complex subject for observers to describe, it also helped to build a bridge between the party politician and those intellectual advisers who survived the Brezhnev era. Seasoned *shestidesyatniki* were struck by Gorbachev's intellectual curiosity and, being themselves no shining example of morality in private or public life, were taken in by his relative moral purity, what almost seemed to some to be his naivety.

The transformation of Gorbachev from the cautious, prudent 'realist' following in the footsteps of his predecessor, Andropov, into the leader of political and ideological 'reformation' made him into a hero of the narrow circle of *shestidesyatniki* who assisted him. At some level, Gorbachev assumed the mantle of a politician who assumed power in order to realize the dreams and ideas of the *shestidesyatniki*. Gorbachev's willingness after his fall from power to continue to associate himself with this segment of the Soviet elites and the historical tradition they represented was not entirely opportunistic. It reflected, rather, an important aspect of Gorbachev's personality. At some point in the late 1980s, it can be said, he became 'a belated *shestidesyatnik*': a party *apparatchik* who rose above the interests of the *nomenklatura* for the sake of the ideas of freedom, democracy and reform. As will be discussed below, Gorbachev sometimes went further than many of the *shestidesyatniki* themselves wanted or recommended, most notably in his rejection of militant imperialism and the use of force in its defense, and in his pursuit of *rapprochement* with the West. Gorbachev's belief in the reformability of Soviet socialism against all odds became legendary. Like most of the early *shestidesyatniki*, Gorbachev looked to Lenin as his role model, doing so as late as 1989. He found in Lenin not only the master of political intrigues, characterized by a ruthless, stop-at-nothing focus on power. Lenin no less represented values of intellectual creativity, optimism and an all-conquering will in the midst of social and political chaos. Gorbachev confessed to Chernyaev as late as early 1989 that he held imaginary conversations with Lenin in which he asked the latter for advice.⁴¹

The Soviet leader was by no means the only one undergoing a transformation from Saul the *apparatchik* into Paul the missionary. (One could also include Alexander Yakovlev and Eduard Shevardnadze in this list.) But his conversion played a most important role in Russian and world history.

Ad hoc-ism and procrastination. Friends and foes alike debate Gorbachev's personal abilities in the arenas of statesmanship and state management. They nearly all emphasize his 'ad hoc-ism', his congenital lack of a long-range strategic plan and his aversion to the practical details of governance. They all recognize that *perestroika* had no blueprint and that 'new thinking' was a vague slogan rather than a practical guide for reforms. Gorbachev's favorite phrases, beside 'unpredictability', were 'let processes develop' and 'processes are on the run' (*protsessi poshli*). In the opinion of one of his supporters, this attitude was a ramification of

his excessively optimistic view of people, particularly of the Soviet people. 'It always seemed to him that people could not help but be glad to organize their own life for themselves.'⁴² He had little doubt but that it would be best just to wait and watch while 'processes' ran their course and provided the most sensible outcome.

Even sympathizers admit that this trait contributed to Gorbachev's chronic inability to chart a practical course for the state *apparatus*, to carry out a sustained and planned-out program of action and to prevent psychological disarray and ideological breakdown in society at large. Political memoirs by his admirers are replete with accounts of Gorbachev's frustration and nagging doubts about it.⁴³ Gorbachev, they admit, failed to bring meaningful economic reforms when it was still possible to undertake such initiatives. He ruined the state finances in 1985–86 by launching a disastrous anti-alcoholism campaign that might have cost up to 100 billion rubles within a few years. He did this at the same time that it was decided to invest approximately 200 billion rubles in retooling the machinery of key industries. But Gorbachev was unable to switch economic priorities from numerical growth to qualitative restructuring. Instead, he proclaimed a course of 'acceleration' and wed it to unrealistic tempos of economic growth.⁴⁴ Even in foreign policy, where he maintained a relatively steady course from 1985 to 1987, there were signs of *ad hoc*-ism and delays in crucial decisions. Gorbachev allowed the Brezhnev–Andropov–Gromyko war in Afghanistan to become 'Gorbachev's war'. And he let Yeltsin assume the political initiative in breaking with the old discredited political order.⁴⁵

His supporters have attempted to put the best possible spin on this feature of Gorbachev's statesmanship. They argue that, since nobody knew how to transform a 'totalitarian' country, it could only be done by trial and error. In the words of one, 'the work that Gorbachev did could only have been done without accurately perceiving all its complexity and danger. If he had started to compute everything, to think through various alternatives in his head, he simply could never have undertaken it.'⁴⁶ Such a retrospective judgment of Gorbachev's abilities is based on the assumption that no one could have reformed the old system, that it had to be destroyed one way or another. Gorbachev, however, presented and continues to present himself as a reformer rather than a destroyer of the Soviet Union. What he and his admirers do not want to admit is that Gorbachev's *ad hoc*-ism and grave errors, whose consequences were anticipated even at the time by the more astute observers, contributed significantly to Soviet collapse.

As a statesman, Gorbachev was the antithesis of Joseph Stalin. According to those who intimately knew the latter's mode of operation, Stalin had an amazing ability to calculate all his words and actions ahead of time. According to the recollections of Beria's son,

Stalin was supremely intelligent. He took all his decisions after carefully weighing them. He never improvised. He always had ready-made plans which he carried out point by point. Every one of his actions formed part of a long-term scheme which was to enable him to attain a particular aim at a particular moment.⁴⁷

While this description might be slightly exaggerated, the historical evidence, and in particular the way Stalin planned and implemented his foreign policy, generally supports it. Gorbachev's intelligence and mode of operation were diametrically opposed. He never thought, either systemically or consistently, about state policies and he never followed up in implementing them as he originally intended. After 1988, in particular, he began to act in haste, without knowing where his initiatives would take him and the country he was leading. By the spring of 1989 it became obvious, even to his closest associates, that Gorbachev was irreversibly losing control of both foreign and domestic events. Anatoly Chernyaev wrote in his diary in May 1989, in anguish and amazement:

Inside me depression and alarm are growing, the sense of crisis of the Gorbachevian Idea. He is prepared to go far. But what does it mean? His favorite catchword is 'unpredictability'. But most likely we will come to a collapse of the state and something like chaos.⁴⁸

Stalin, particularly once the Soviet Union became a world empire, filled two roles: that of the leader of an internationalist revolutionary movement and that of the Russian tsar. The second role was, credibly, a central aspect of his 'self-image'. Gorbachev, wittingly or unwittingly, stepped into the shoes of Russian tsars. On the basis of all his personal inclinations, he intended to be a kind, good tsar. But it is difficult to fit Gorbachev into this category.⁴⁹ His priorities were not based on the power, prestige and stability of the state. His first priority, as already mentioned, was to construct a global world order based on 'new thinking'. This puts Gorbachev, at least on his own terms, in the ranks of such twentieth-century figures as Woodrow Wilson, Mahatma Gandhi and other prophets of universalism. None of them excelled as state-builders and statesmen.

Among numerous examples of Gorbachev's *ad hoc*-ism, one of the most striking was his attitude towards the collapse of the Wall and the status quo in Germany. Hostile to the leader of the GDR, Erich Honecker, whom he considered a retrograde and a fool, Gorbachev typically removed himself from events in that country, which was the key to the Soviet military and political role in Europe. Only the obligation to go to Berlin for celebrations of the 40th anniversary of the GDR forced Gorbachev to involve himself in the unfolding crisis.⁵⁰ Just a few days before the fall of the Wall, Gorbachev's foreign policy assistant enthused in his private diary:

A total dismantling of socialism as a world phenomenon has been taking place. This may be inevitable and good. For this is a reunification of mankind on the basis of common sense. And a common fellow from Stavropol [i.e. Gorbachev] set this process in motion.⁵¹

We may never learn the actual thoughts of Gorbachev at this moment, but his visit to Berlin made it perfectly clear to him that revolution was brewing and that Honecker's days were numbered. And yet he did nothing but offer Delphic and

cryptic exhortations. Soviet representatives in the GDR were paralyzed by lack of instructions. Politburo member Vitaly Vorotnikov recorded the first impressions that Gorbachev shared with the Politburo upon his return from Berlin: 'Honecker does not comprehend the complex situation around him. The mood of the public and [the party] is complicated. Our possible allies – Hans Modrow and Egon Krenz.' At the Politburo session on 12 October Gorbachev repeated the estimate that a storm was brewing in the GDR. Yet, again, he neither proposed specific measures nor discussed the situation's possible implications for the USSR.⁵²

Only on 16 October did Gorbachev begin to formulate a policy, doing so in response to a messenger sent to Moscow by top GDR officials Willi Stoph, Krenz and Erich Milke seeking Gorbachev's support for the removal of Honecker. At the time, Milke already believed it was too late for any transition. Instead of addressing the entire Politburo, Gorbachev convened a conference in his office that included Yakovlev, Medvedev, Kryuchkov, Ryzhkov, Shevardnadze and Vorotnikov. 'The issues are ripe and we must decide', declared Gorbachev.

First, we must warn the FRG against interfering. We must get in touch with the leaders of socialist countries after the [removal of Honecker]. The same [is the case with the west] European countries. We must speak to Bush as well – there could be nuances! Particularly, since the issue of German reunification would be on the agenda. [To clarify] their attitude. Their tactics. Our military should behave calmly, without demonstrating [force].⁵³

This episode underlines the strangely *ad hoc* nature of Soviet decision making regarding the German question. The General Secretary, as Vorotnikov reported, simply informed a small group of Politburo members of the situation. There was no discussion of the issue. Representatives of the military were not present at the meeting. Nor were experts on Germany. What is no less striking is Gorbachev's predisposition toward a reactive rather than a proactive approach to the GDR crisis.

To a significant degree the same predisposition shaped Soviet diplomacy during the following months of crucial bargaining and maneuvering that led to the reunification of Germany. Gorbachev's thinking and acting on this issue were consistently a matter of too little, too late.⁵⁴ Amazingly, at the moment of the collapse of the Berlin Wall, Gorbachev was distracted by other, mainly domestic issues. As a councilor at the embassy recalls, 'the entire leadership was busy and nobody could find time for the GDR'.⁵⁵

According to numerous witnesses, this might have been part of a general pattern for Gorbachev's political behavior. Ligachev believes that:

being too late, reacting too slowly to events, was one of the most characteristic traits of Gorbachev's policies. When some controversial things happened, Gorbachev often reacted with delay. My explanation is that he wanted others to analyze what affected the society, was painful to the society. He wanted a ripe fruit to fall onto his lap, the one he could pick up. But often it

was necessary to row against the tide. There were many instances in history when the leader remained in the minority, but turned out to be right. Gorbachev, unfortunately, lacked this quality.⁵⁶

Georgy Shakhnazarov, who was in charge of eastern European affairs and a member of Gorbachev's entourage in 1988–89, called his boss a modern Fabius Cunctator, a Roman politician notorious for his indecisiveness and procrastination.⁵⁷

Aversion to the use of force. Gorbachev was the antithesis of Stalin, and, in fact, of all his Soviet predecessors, in another way as well. He was organically, as well as morally, uneasy with the use of force as an instrument of policy and statesmanship. The implications, for both the peaceful end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, were incalculable.

Former Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko, for example, privately referred to Gorbachev and his advisers as 'Martians' when talking of their ignorance of the rules of *realpolitik*. 'I wonder how puzzled the US and other NATO countries must be', he confessed to his son. 'It is a mystery for them why Gorbachev and his friends in the Politburo cannot comprehend how to use force and pressure in defending their state interests.'⁵⁸ To be sure, Gorbachev was not a visitor from Mars. He did, however, represent long-term trends within Soviet society and amongst its elites, trends that were particularly pronounced among educated youth and intellectuals. Anatol Lieven, a keen observer of Russia, observed several years later that the social trend against militarism and violence had been developing ever since Stalin's death. This pointed, too, to the weakening of the Soviet state and its controlling ideology. These attitudes, Lieven writes, 'grew slowly through the last four decades of Soviet life'.⁵⁹

It is clear that Gorbachev personified the reluctance to use force. This was for him not so much a reasoned-out position based on experience as it was a fundamental aspect of his character. Non-violence was not only a genuine value embraced by Gorbachev that lay at the foundation of his domestic and foreign policies. It also reflected his personal 'codes'. Gorbachev's collaborators and aides emphasize that 'the avoidance of bloodshed was a constant concern of Gorbachev', that 'for Gorbachev an unwillingness to shed blood was not only a criterion but the condition of his involvement in politics'. Gorbachev, they observe, was a man of indubitable personal courage. Yet, 'by character he was a man incapable not only of using dictatorial measures, but even of resorting to hard-line administrative means'. 'Harsh and dictatorial methods are not in the character of Gorbachev.' The critics claim that Gorbachev 'had no guts for blood', even when such steps were required by *raison d'état*.⁶⁰

It is important to note that Gorbachev's renunciation of force was not an inevitable consequence of new thinking or democratic values. Liberals will use force for liberal ends. A substantial number of liberals and former dissidents believe that Gorbachev's absolute rejection of force was a mistake and perhaps not even moral. The liberal philosopher Grigory Pomerantz, for instance, praised Gorbachev's decision 'to let go' of eastern Europe. At the same time, however, he accused Gorbachev of 'let[ting] go the forces of destruction'— forces of

barbarism, ethnic genocide and chaos – in the south Caucasus, central Asia and other regions of the Soviet Union. ‘The first duty of the state was to contain chaos.’ Gorbachev’s inactivity, however, opened a Pandora’s box. Another critic, Vladimir Lukin, noted: ‘Firmness [*zhestkost*] was necessary in such a country as Russia, not to mention the Soviet Union.’⁶¹

As the Cold War was ending in Europe the first fissures began to appear in the Soviet state. This was not a mere coincidence. Rather, in both cases, Gorbachev’s approach – one that issued from his personality – played an indispensable role. At the ideological level, the Soviet leader represented a clear-cut link between the two goals of ending the Cold War and successfully transforming the Soviet Union. One of the axioms of this link was the notion of non-violence, an expression of Gorbachev’s personal aversion to using force. After the tragedy in Tbilisi in April 1989 (when Russian troops protecting the Georgian communist leadership against a nationalist demonstration killed Georgian civilians), Gorbachev declared a taboo on the use of force even though nationalist forces had begun to break the country apart. He announced to the Politburo that ‘we have accepted that even in foreign policy force is to no avail [*nichego ne daiet*]. So especially internally – we cannot resort and will not resort to force.’⁶² Despite various setbacks, Gorbachev adhered to this tenet with remarkable tenacity until his last day in power.

Western politicians, particularly the US President George Bush and the US Secretary of State James Baker, well understood this non-violent feature of Gorbachev’s statesmanship and they successfully appealed to it. At Malta, for instance, Bush suggested a gentlemen’s agreement to Gorbachev regarding actions in the Baltic region, where popular movements were demanding complete independence from the USSR. Bush’s suggestion violated a long-standing taboo in US–Soviet relations, namely, interference in the ‘internal affairs’ of the other superpower. However, Bush had found the correct approach. ‘I would like to have the fullest understanding of your approach to the Baltics’, he said. ‘There should be no setbacks here. Perhaps it would be better to discuss this issue in a confidential way, since I would very much like to perceive the core of your thinking on this extremely complicated issue.’ Since the internal question regarding the future of the Baltics was raised in the context of Bush’s general interest in Gorbachev’s ‘new thinking’, and as an expression of concern to prevent setbacks in the US–Soviet partnership for creating a new global order, Gorbachev readily agreed to Bush’s approach. As a result, an understanding took shape by which the United States would refrain from any attempts to help the Baltic nationalists while, in return, Gorbachev would refrain from any use of force in dealing with the Baltic problem.⁶³

Gorbachev’s Westernism

In the opinion of his foreign admirers, Gorbachev was the first Soviet statesman who acted almost like a Western politician, a phenomenon that, considering Gorbachev’s background, they fail to comprehend. Indeed, in contrast to his

predecessors, Gorbachev was free of even the slightest tinge of xenophobia and psychological hostility towards the West. In his first years in power, to be sure, he continued to subscribe to standard Soviet political and ideological stereotypes regarding Western countries, particularly those regarding the United States. But even while he continued to treat Reagan, Kohl and their colleagues as 'adversaries', he began to dismantle the Iron Curtain, first allowing free contacts with foreigners for the select group of establishment intellectuals and officials,⁶⁴ and then opening the outside world (information and travel) to the rest of Soviet society.

As Gorbachev's sympathizers argue, this was not just a calculated policy of 'showing Europe to Ivan' and thus breaking the hold of obscurantism and isolationism on the mentality of the Soviet people. Gorbachev's Westernism reflected a broader trend: a growing psychological dependency on the part of increasing numbers within the Russian elites. 'For all Soviet people, including the higher echelons of the party', an observer writes,

the West has always been an object of longing. Trips to the West were a most important status symbol. There is nothing you can do about this; it is 'in the blood', in the culture. It is obvious that such was to some extent the case of the Gorbachevs.⁶⁵

Critics look upon Gorbachev's affinity with the West as an ominous omen. They claim that Gorbachev's stunning personal success among west European and US audiences made his head swell. He began to place friendly relations with foreign leaders ahead of 'state interests'. Psychologically, they argue, Gorbachev turned to the West for recognition and acceptance as his popularity at home began to rapidly sink as a result of the growing social and political chaos. Soviet diplomats Anatoly Dobrynin and Georgy Kornienko are particularly blunt in stating that Gorbachev 'frittered away the negotiating potential of the Soviet state' in exchange for the ephemeral popularity and good will of Western statesmen. They sketch a gloomy picture of how the aim of reaching an understanding with the West degenerated, by means of Gorbachev's behavior, into the General Secretary's psychological and later political dependence on the West. In Dobrynin's opinion, Western statesmen profited from Gorbachev's weaknesses. After 1988 Gorbachev was in a hurry to end the Cold War because he had a personal need to compensate for his declining prospects at home with 'breakthroughs' in foreign policy. As a result, 'Gorbachev's diplomacy often failed to win a better deal from the United States and its allies'.⁶⁶

Kornienko also believes that Gorbachev's excessive sensitivity to Western opinion and advice explained his hasty attempts to establish a new political system. Gorbachev the statesman was eager to replace the dubious 'legitimacy' of being chief of the communist party with the internationally recognized title of President of the republic. Western advice can also be discerned in Gorbachev's political reforms, reforms that amounted to political 'shock therapy' for the communist party and the Soviet people.⁶⁷

It is impossible to either prove or disprove these allegations. Nevertheless, it is obvious that after 1987, in a similar way to the non-use of force, Gorbachev's Westernism became a political factor of utmost importance in ending the Cold War. In analyzing the records of Gorbachev's conversations with foreign leaders that are stored in the Archive at the Gorbachev Foundation it becomes clear beyond any doubt that, after 1988, if not earlier, Westerners – from social democrats to anti-communist conservatives – became arguably the most crucial 'reference group' for Gorbachev. In his meetings with these groups he found the understanding, willingness to listen and, quite importantly, ability to appreciate the grandiose universalist scope of his *perestroika* that he missed among his colleagues in the Politburo and even among his intellectual advisers.

It is difficult to imagine the early stages of the devolution of the Cold War without the influence of the 'Gorby–Ronny' personal relationship. Even more momentous were Gorbachev's personal relations with Helmut Kohl and George Bush after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The Bush administration quickly assumed the initiative from the faltering hands of Gorbachev and played a very active and stabilizing role in ending the Cold War in Europe. For Gorbachev, this was a very important development. He found in Bush what he missed after Reagan left the White House: an understanding and reassuring partner. At the Malta summit, on 2–3 December, Bush and Gorbachev achieved what they had sought to do months beforehand: the cementing of a personal relationship of mutual trust and respect.⁶⁸

It is remarkable, in retrospect, how much Bush, like Reagan before him, came to believe in Gorbachev as a person of 'common sense' who would admit that the West had won the Cold War. In preparations for the summit, Bush told NATO Secretary-General Manfred Woerner on 11 October that their main aim was to persuade the Soviets to allow the continuation of change in eastern Europe and the GDR. When Woerner warned that Gorbachev would not let the GDR leave the Warsaw Pact, Bush wondered if he could persuade Gorbachev to let the Warsaw Pact go in general, that is, to recognize that its military value was no longer essential. 'That may seem naive', Bush said, 'but who predicted the changes we are seeing today?'⁶⁹ One could hardly imagine any US leader trying to persuade Stalin, Khrushchev, Brezhnev or Andropov 'to let go' of the Soviet sphere of influence in Europe. However, there was a rare harmony between Bush and Gorbachev as they talked one on one and almost effortlessly agreed on all the main issues at their first official summit.

Conclusion

Long-term trends that had originated during the Stalinist period and were exacerbated during the post-Stalin decades created a situation whereby a vast majority of the bureaucracies that constituted the economic, political and intellectual pillars of the Soviet empire were not prepared to fight to the death for victory in the Cold War and the preservation of the Soviet empire. Instead, they were surprised and disoriented by the political whirlwind unleashed by Gorbachev's reforms. These elites lacked elemental political experience. Growing

corruption and duplicity eroded the ideological and moral cohesion of Soviet elites. Many of them aspired to a controlled, peaceful change of the system. A growing number looked towards the Western countries, not as enemies, but as objects of emulation and envy.

At the same time, it is clear that the Cold War was not predestined to end in 1989–90 and that the Soviet Union was not doomed to fall into pieces from the weight of internal crisis and the weaknesses of the country's elites. Gorbachev was the Soviets' last hope for peaceful evolution and gradual transformation, the last Soviet leader who enjoyed the complete support of the elite and a general consensus. Ultimately, however, Gorbachev deceived those same elites that he led. In Marxist-Leninist lexicon, he betrayed his own class. After three years he gave up on the status quo and, with the support of a small minority of intellectual advisers, the *shestidesyatniki*, he rushed past the stupefied Soviet majority on to a path of radical political reforms, meanwhile abandoning the Soviet empire and the Soviet regime to the forces of history. Instead of searching for ways to transform the old *nomenklatura* into a new class of owners, he opened the gates of 'democracy' and 'freedom' in expectation that the home-grown intelligentsia and the democratic West would help him to muddle through. This was a most fundamental miscalculation that changed the world's history.

All this may seem to belong to the realm of domestic Soviet history and politics. How relevant was it to the history of the Cold War? How should historians of the Cold War and international relations think about it?

First, the situation as presented above proves that the Cold War, like the world wars of the twentieth century and the American Civil War of the nineteenth century, was a war of societies: in a sense, a total war. This was a war characterized by abstract and absolute goals that touched upon the very legitimacy of its main protagonists.⁷⁰ It is impossible, therefore, to study and understand the Cold War as simply a subject of diplomatic history. Rather, it touched upon the history of society – most importantly, the history of the elites and the leadership within those societies – in all its diverse meanings. Domestic trends, regime changes, and cultural and psychological transformations were to play a crucial role in this war and determine the will of each protagonist to continue in the global competition. The erosion of Soviet militant imperialism had occurred before Gorbachev assumed power. Thus, Gorbachev's misguided reforms and 'new thinking' led to a quick collapse of Soviet imperial will and of the Cold War consensus itself.

Second, the role of ideas and ideological influences, including the impact of the 'benign power' of the West and other regions of the world (like the fast-developing east Asian countries), played an important role in the end of the Cold War. Again, one could point to the similarly important role these same factors played in the origins of the confrontation, when they favored the Soviet Union, the victor against Nazism and the beacon of hope for millions of persons around the world. The account of how the Soviet Union squandered this capital, and how an increasing number of Soviet elites became susceptible to Western allurements and 'benign power', is also a vital aspect of the history of the Cold War. This is the context in which the 'structural factors' of the Soviet crisis of the 1980s should

be understood. The Soviet Union was much weaker in comparison to the United States at the end of the 1940s, when the Cold War began, than it was in the late 1980s, when the Cold War reached its end. It was other processes and factors – principally unfolding within the elites and at the leadership level – that destroyed Soviet will and undermined the rationale to oppose the United States.

Third, the role of the nation's leader is crucial in explaining Soviet behavior during the Cold War, both at the beginning of the conflict, when Stalin made fateful choices that plunged the Soviet Union into a confrontation with the United States, and at its end, when Gorbachev's no less momentous choices made this confrontation irrelevant. While it is impossible to imagine the end of the Cold War without the agency of such Western leaders as Ronald Reagan and George Bush, their contribution was secondary in importance. The contribution of Gorbachev, whatever his motives, was primary and absolutely crucial to events. The permanent presence of nuclear weapons was perhaps a critical factor in preventing the outbreak of 'a hegemonic war' during all stages of the Cold War. At the same time, it was the Gorbachev factor alone that accounted for the absence of violence at the conclusion of this bipolar confrontation, when the Soviet empire disintegrated like a house of cards. Gorbachev's citation of the Russian poet Feodor Tyutchev implied that he wanted to remake the Soviet Union and Europe not 'by iron and blood, but by love'. It may sound a bit presumptuous, but such a maxim reflected changes on the ground, again, not as a result of the logic of *realpolitik*, but as a conscious attempt on the part of the Soviet leader and his advisers to avoid it.

Notes

- 1 Dmitry Furman, 'Nasha strannaia revoliutsiia' (Our Strange Revolution), *Svobodnaya mysl*, 1 (1993); Walter Laqueur, 'Gorbachev and Epimetheus: The Origins of the Russian Crisis,' *Journal of Contemporary History*, 28, 3 (July 1993); Vladislav M. Zubok, 'The Collapse of the Soviet Union: Leadership, Elites, and Legitimacy', in Geir Lundestad (ed.), *The Fall of Great Powers. Peace, Stability, and Legitimacy* (Oslo: Scandinavian University Press/Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 157–8.
- 2 See M. S. Gorbachev, *Godi trudnikh reshenii. Izbrannoie 1985–1992* (Moscow: Alfa-print, 1993); *The Union Could Be Preserved: The White Book: Documents and Facts about Policy of M. S. Gorbachev to Reform and Preserve the Multi-National State* (Moscow: April Publishers, 1995); Vadim Medvedev, *Raspad: Kak on nazreval v 'mirovoi sisteme sotsializma* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnie otnosheniia, 1994); Georgii Shakhnazarov, *Tsena svobodi: Reformatsiia Gorbacheva glazami iego pomoshnika* (Moscow: Rossika-Zevs, 1993); Anatoly S. Chernyaev, *Shest Let s Gorbachevim. Po Dnevnikovim Zapisiam* (Moscow: Progress-Kultura, 1993), now published in the United States, trans. Robert English and Liza Tucker A.S. Chernyaev, *My six years with Gorbachev*, ed. Robert English, trans. by Elizabeth Tucker, with a forward of Jack Matlock, (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000); Valerii Boldin, *Krusheniie pedestala: Shtrikhi k portretu M. S. Gorbacheva* (Moscow: Respublika, 1995); Yegor Ligachev, *Zagadka Gorbacheva* (Novosibirsk: Interbuk, 1992); Vitalii Vorotnikov, *A bylo eto tak: Iz dnevnikha chlena Politbiuro TsK KPSS* (Moscow: Sovet Veteranov Knigoizdaniya SI-MAR, 1995); Nikolai Ryzhkov, *Desyat let velikikh potraysenii* (Moscow: Kniga, Prosvescheniie, Miloserdie, 1996); Nilokai Ryzhkov,

- Perestroika: Istoriya predatelstv* (Moscow: Novosti, 1992); Vladimir Kryuchkov, *Lichnoie delo*, 2 vols (Moscow: Olimp, 1996); Nikolai S. Leonov, *Likholetie* (Moscow: Terra, 1997); Oleg Shenin, *Rodinu ne prodaval* (Moscow: Paleyia, 1994); Sergei Akhromeyev and Georgii Kornienko, *Glazami marshala i diplomata; Kriticheskii vzglyad na vneshnyuyu politiku SSSR do i posle 1985 goda* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodniye otnosheniia, 1992); Georgii Kornienko, *Kholodnaia voina: Svidetelstvo ee uchastnika* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1994); Vadim Pechenev, *Gorbachev: K vershinam vlasti: Iz teoretiko-memuarnykh razmyshlenii* (Moscow, 1991); Vadim Pechenev, *Vzlet i padeniie Gorbacheva; Glazami ochevidtisa* (Moscow: Respublika, 1996); Anatoly Gromyko, *Andrei Gromyko v labirintakh Kremliia* (Moscow, 1997); Boris Yeltsin, *Ispoved na zadannuiu temu* (Moscow: PIK, 1990); Anatoly Dobrynin, *In Confidence: Moscow's Ambassador to America's Six Cold War Presidents (1962–1986)* (New York: Random House/Times Books, 1995) and the Russian edition of the same: Anatoly Dobrynin, *Sugubo doveitno: posol v Vashingtone pri shesti prezidentakh SShA*.
- 3 'The End of the Cold War in Europe, 1989', 'New Thinking and New Evidence', conference organized by the National Security Archive, Musgrove Plantation, St Simon Island, Georgia, 1–3 May 1998; 'Political Transition in Hungary', 1989–90, organized by the National Security Archive, Cold War International History Project, the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Hungarian 1956 Institute and Cold War History Research Center in Budapest, 12 June 1999, Budapest, Hungary (transcripts are available at the National Security Archive, Gelman Library, George Washington University); 'The Crash of the Bipolar World: Soviet Factor, 1988–1991', a conference organized by the Merschon Center of Ohio State University and the Institute of General History of the Russian Academy of Science (transcript is by courtesy of Oleg Skvortsov, coordinator of the conference). I also used transcripts of the interviews with Soviet officials produced by the Oral History Project on the End of the Cold War under the leadership of Dr Oleg Skvortsov under the auspices of the Institute of General History, the Academy of Science, and under the sponsorship of the National Security Archive, George Washington University.
 - 4 Georgii Shakhnazarov, *S'vozhdiami i bez nikh* (Moscow: Vagrius, 2001), pp. 287–8.
 - 5 T. P. Korzhikhina and Yu. Figatner, 'Sovetskaia nomenklatura: stanovleniie, mekhanizmi deistviia', *Voprosy istorii*, 7 (1993), p. 32.
 - 6 Literature, as the mirror of Soviet cultural norms, best reflects this phenomenon. See Vera Sandomirsky Dunham, *In Stalin's Time: Middleclass Values in Soviet Fiction* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975); Vassily Aksyonov, *The Winter's Hero* (New York: Random House, 1996).
 - 7 Sergo Beria, *Beria, My Father: Inside Stalin's Kremlin*, ed. Francoise Thom, English translation by Brian Pearce (London: Gerald Duckworth, 2001), p. 164.
 - 8 Francoise Thom in *ibid.*, p. x.
 - 9 See Geoffrey Brooks, *Thank you Comrade Stalin: Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000); Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Lewis Siegelbaum and Andrei Sokolov (eds), *Stalinism as a Way of Life: Narrative in Documents* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000); Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995); Yuri N. Afanasyev (ed.), *Sovetskoie obschestvo: Vozniknoveniie, razvitiie, istoricheskii final*, vol. I (Moscow: RGGU, 1997); Natalia Kozlova, 'On the Cognitive-Normative Mapping of Soviet Civilization: The Space Beneath' and other essays, in Mette Bryld and Erik Kulavig (eds), *Soviet Civilization between Past and Present* (Viborg, Denmark: Odense University Press, 1998).
 - 10 See Josephine Woll, *Real Images: Soviet Cinema and the Thaw* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2000); Yuri Afanasyev (ed.), *Sovetskoie obschestvo: Vozniknoveniie, razvitiie, istoricheskii final*, vol. II (Moscow: RGGU, 1997); Rudolf Pikhoia, *Sovetskii Soiuz. Istoriia*

- vlasti, 1945–1991 (Moscow: Izdadelstvo RAGS, 1989); Helena Zubkova, *Obschestvo i reformy 1945–1964* (Moscow: Rossiia molodaya, 1993); Alexandr Pyzhikov, *Opit modernizatsii Sovetskogo obschestva v 1953–1964: obschestvenno-politicheskii aspekt* (Moscow: Gamma, 1998); Yuri Aksyutin and Alexander Pyzhikov, *Poslestantsinskoe obschestvo: problema liderstva i transformatsiia vlasti* (Moscow: Nauchnaia kniga, 1999); Alexander Danilov and Alexander Pyzhikov, *Rozhdeniie sverkhderzhavi. SSSR v pervyie poslevoyennye godi* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2001); Maria Zezina, *Sovetskaia khudozhestvennaia intelligentsiia i vlast v 1950-e–1960-e godi* (Moscow: Dialog-MGU, 1999).
- 11 Record of the Politburo, 12 July 1984, published in the *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, 2 (1993).
 - 12 See Sergei N. Khrushchev, *Nikita Khrushchev and the Creation of a Superpower* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000); William Taubman, Sergei Khrushchev and Abbot Gleason (eds), *Nikita Khrushchev* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000).
 - 13 See Oleg Skvortsov, 'Economic Policy of Gorbachev as a Factor in the Crumbling of the Bipolar World', paper presented at the workshop in Saratov, 4 July 2001.
 - 14 Furman, 'Fenomen Gorbacheva', *Svobodnaia Misl* [Free Thought], Moscow, 11 (1995), pp. 70–1.
 - 15 Leonid Mlechin, *Predsedatli KGB: Rasselrecheniie sudbi* (Moscow: Tsentrpoligraf, 1999), pp. 431, 443.
 - 16 Ibid.
 - 17 See Oleg Grinevsky, *Tysiacha i odin den Niti Sergeevicha* (Moscow: Vagrius, 1998).
 - 18 On historical and psychological analogies between the competition in High Asia in the nineteenth century and the Third World in the twentieth century see Peter Hopkirk, *The Great Game: The Struggle for Empire in Central Asia* (New York: Kodansha International, 1994).
 - 19 Robert English, Russia and the West. Gorbachev, *Intellectuals and the End of the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).
 - 20 Anatoly S. Chernyaev, *Moia Zhizn I Moie Vremia* [My Life and My Time] (Moscow: Mezhdunarodniie Otnosheniia, 1995).
 - 21 Anatoly Chernyaev, *Moia Zhizn I Moie Vremia*, pp. 265–6.
 - 22 Shakhnazarov, *Tsena svobody*, p. 276.
 - 23 See Eric Shiraev and Vladislav Zubok, *Russia's Anti-Americanism: From Stalin to Putin* (New York: Palgrave, 2000).
 - 24 Pavel Palazhchenko, *Gorbachev and Shevardnadze: The Memoir of a Soviet Interpreter* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), p. 3.
 - 25 Robert English, Russia and the West. Gorbachev, *Intellectuals and the End of the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).
 - 26 Archie Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor* (London: Oxford University Press, 1996), citation on p. 317. An exception to the rule of downplaying the personality factor – focusing on an earlier phase of the end of the Cold War – is to be found in Fred I. Greenstein, 'Reagan and Gorbachev: What Difference Did They Make?', in William Wohlforth (ed.), *Retrospective on the End of the Cold War* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Univerty Press, 1996).
 - 27 Anatoly Chernyaev, 'Fenomen Gorbacheva v Kontekste Liderstva', *Mezhdunarodnaia Zhizn*, 7 (1993); also see Anatoly Chernyaev, *Shest Let s Gorbachevim* (forthcoming in translation by Elizabeth Tucker from the Pennsylvania State University Press); also Anatoly Chernyaev, *1991 god: Dnevnik pomoshnika prezidenta SSSR* (Moscow: Terra, Respublika, 1997).
 - 28 Dmitry Volkogonov, *Sem Vozhdei: Galereia liderov SSSR* [Seven Rulers: A Gallery of the Leaders of the USSR] (Moscow: Novostki, 1995), vol. II, pp. 322–3.
 - 29 M. S. Gorbachev, *Razmishleniia o proshlom i buduschem* (Moscow: Terra, 1998).
 - 30 Geoffrey Howe, in Deborah Hart Strober and Gerald S. Strober, *Reagan: The Man and his Presidency: An Oral History* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1998), p. 327.

- 31 Nikolai Chervov, *Yadernii Krugovorot* (Moscow: Olma-Press, 2001); Sergei Akhromeyev and Georgy Kornienko, *Glazami marshala i diplomata* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodniie Otnosheniia, 1992).
- 32 Furman, 'Fenomen Gorbacheva', p. 71.
- 33 See more on this in Vladislav Zubok, 'Gorbachev Crises and the Reunification of Germany', paper presented at the international conference on the erection and collapse of the Berlin Wall, 14–16 June 2001, Berlin.
- 34 See statistics in Rudolf Pikhoia, *Sovetskii Soiuz. Istoriia vlasti*, pp. 508–10.
- 35 Shakhnazarov, *Tsena svobodi*, pp. 297–8.
- 36 On this, see Michael Ellman and Vladimir Kantorovich, *The Destruction of the Soviet Economic System: An Insiders' History* (New York: M. E. Sharp, 1998), pp. 22–3, 165–9. The authors convincingly conclude that 'the USSR was killed, against the wishes of its ruler, by politics, not economics. The immediate cause of death, the dissolution of the Union, was the result of the chain of events set in motion by Gorbachev starting in 1985... Unlike much of the Soviet elite, he was ambitious and optimistic about the system's capabilities' (p. 26). Also see Michael Ellman and Vladimir Kantorovich, 'The Collapse of the Soviet System and the Memoir Literature', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 49, 2 (March 1997). A similar argument can be found in David M. Kotz and Weir, *Revolution from Above. The Demise of the Soviet System* (Routledge, 1997).
- 37 Rudolf Pikhoia, 'What Killed the Soviet Union?', paper presented at the workshop on the end of the Cold War, Saratov, 1 July 2001.
- 38 *Perestroika desiat let spustia (aprel 1985 – april 1995)* (Moscow: April-85 Publishing House, 1995), pp. 102–3. Gorbachev's last words give credibility to the version presented by Ligachev and Bolding regarding the post-1986 political confrontation between Gorbachev and the party cadres as being the first result of political liberalization and the 'democratization' of the Soviet regime.
- 39 Interview with Sergei Tarasenko, 19 March 1999, Moscow, courtesy of Oleg Skvortsov, head of the Oral History Project on the End of the Cold War, the Institute for General History, Russian Academy of Science.
- 40 Shakhnazarov, *Tsena svobodi*, p. 285.
- 41 Chernyaev, *Shest Let s Gorbachevim*, pp. 278, 280.
- 42 Furman, 'Fenomen Gorbacheva'.
- 43 See for example Chernyaev, *Shest Let s Gorbachevim*, p. 343.
- 44 Oleg Skvortsov, 'The Economic Policy of Gorbachev as a Factor in the Destruction of the Bipolar World', paper presented at the workshop on the end of the Cold War, Saratov, 1 July 2001.
- 45 Chernyaev, 'Fenomen Gorbacheva', p. 56; Chernyaev, *Shest Let s Gorbachevim*, p. 241.
- 46 Furman, 'Fenomen Gorbacheva', p. 67.
- 47 Beria, *Beria, My Father*, p. 148.
- 48 Chernyaev, 1991, pp. 15–16.
- 49 For this I am thankful to the criticism of Jack Matlock.
- 50 Chernyaev's diary, 5 October 1989, Archive of the Gorbachev Foundation, fond 2, opis 2.
- 51 Chernyaev's diary, 5 October 1989.
- 52 Vorotnikov, *A bylo eto tak*, pp. 301, 304–5.
- 53 Vorotnikov, *A bylo eto tak*, p. 308.
- 54 See Hans-Hermann Hertle, *Chronik des Mauerfalls: Die dramatischen Ereignisse um den 9. November 1989* (Berlin, Ch. Links Verlag, 1996); Jacques Levesque, *The Enigma of 1989: The USSR and the Liberation of Eastern Europe* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997); Philip Zelickow and Condoleezza Rice, *Germany Reunited and Europe Transformed: A Study in Statecraft* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995); Angela E. Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn: Unification, the Soviet Collapse, and the New Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999); Ekkehard Kuhn, *Gorbatschow und die deutsche Einheit* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1993);

- Konrad H. Jarausch, *Die unverhoffte Einheit 1989/1990* (Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1995); Richard Kiessler and Frank Elbe, *Der diplomatische Weg zur deutschen Einheit* (Baden Baden: Nomos Verlag, 1993), etc. A more detailed exposition of my views on this subject can be found in a paper entitled 'Gorbachev Crisis and German Reunification'.
- 55 See the most comprehensive account in Hertle, *Chronik des Mauerfalls*, pp. 233–7; also Igor Maksimych, 'Berlinskaiia stena. Eio padeniiae glazami ochevitsa', *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 10 November 1993; Wassily Kochemassow, *Meine letzte Mission* (Berlin: Deitz, 1994), p. 185; Ivan N. Kuzmin, *Kruscheniie GDR: Istoria. Posledstviia* (Moscow: Nauchnaia Kniga, 1996), p. 60.
 - 56 Yegor Ligachev, *Inside Gorbachev's Kremlin* (New York: Summit Book, 1990), p. 128. From the interview of Ligachev with Oleg Skvortsov, Moscow, 17 December 1998.
 - 57 Vladimir Kryuchkov in his interview with Oleg Skvortsov, Moscow, 13 October and 7 December 1998; Shakhnazarov, *Tsena svobodi*, p. 353.
 - 58 Anatoly Gromyko, *Andrei Gromyko v labirintakh Kremliia. Vospominania i razmishleniia sina* (Moscow: IPO Avtor, 1997), pp. 182, 184.
 - 59 Anatol Lieven, *Chechnya: Tombstone of Russian Power* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), p. 204.
 - 60 Interviews with Alexander Yakovlev and Andrei Grachev, cited by Archie Brown in *Gorbachev Factor*, pp. 383–4; Vladimir Yegorov, *Out of a Dead End into the Unknown: Notes on Gorbachev's Perestroika* (Chicago, IL, 1993); Shakhnazarov, *Tsena svobodi*, p. 147.
 - 61 *Perestroika desiat let spustia (aprel 1995–aprel 1995)* (Moscow: April-85 Publishing House, 1995), pp. 29–30, 60.
 - 62 Chernyayev's and Medvedev's notes at the Politburo, 11 May 1989. Discussion of the Memorandum of six Politburo members on the situation in the Baltic republics, Archive of the Gorbachev Foundation, fond 4, opis 1 and fond 2, opis 3, published in *The Union Could Be Preserved*, pp. 52, 55.
 - 63 Soviet record at Malta; Zelikow and Rice, *Germany Reunified and Europe Transformed*, p. 129.
 - 64 Roald Z. Sagdeev, *The making of a Soviet Scientist. My Adventures with Nuclear Fusion and Space from Stalin to Star Wars* (John Wiley and Sons, 1994), pp. 268–9.
 - 65 Furman, 'Fenomen Gorbacheva', pp. 70–1.
 - 66 Dobrynin, *In Confidence*, p. 627.
 - 67 Kornienko's personal communication to the author, Moscow, October 1996.
 - 68 James A. Baker III with Thomas M. DeFrank, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War, and Peace, 1989–1992* (New York: Putnam's, 1995), pp. 144–52; George Bush and Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), p. 173.
 - 69 The record of the meeting is cited in Zelikow and Rice, *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed*, pp. 398–9.
 - 70 See reflections on this subject in William L. Barney, *Flawed Victory: A New Perspective on the Civil War* (New York: Putnam's, 1975); and Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914–1991* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996).

10 1989: history is rewritten

Jonathan Haslam

The Red Army's ruthless and hasty construction of that concrete and barbed wire monument, the Berlin Wall, in August 1961 was intended to prop up the tottering economic system of communist East Germany. It effectively plugged up the only gaping hole left in the Eastern bloc. And so, the collapse of the Wall in 1989 marked the final episode in the destruction of the Soviet imperial system. But more than that was actually at stake. Because the forward deployment of Soviet forces in Germany was what originally threw Europe out of balance after 1945, the demolition of the Wall brought the Cold War to an end as well, at least as far as Europe was concerned. The second cause of the East–West confrontation that emanated from the communist side – namely, the Leninist doctrine of world revolution – had been summarily dropped in 1987. All that remained in order to bring down the final curtain, therefore, was the collapse of the Soviet Union itself.

The Wall's collapse can ultimately be attributed to the irresistible seepage of Soviet democratization both down into society and out on to the flood plains of the Warsaw Pact, where it passed back to the surface through foundations even less secure than those under the pavement of the Kremlin. From the first hesitant steps of *glasnost* in 1985 to the more mature extension of parliamentary representation in 1988, these subversive reforms were bound to spread far beyond Moscow. To the extent that Mikhail Gorbachev and that *éminence grise*, Alexandr Yakovlev, intended to transform the Soviet Union into a fledgling democracy, they might have well foreseen the implications of reform for continued Soviet hegemony over eastern Europe. But to suggest that this was their initial intent – in terms of both the subsequent drama's reach and its pace – is to underestimate the degree of self-deception that prevailed in Moscow *vis-à-vis* the repression and dissent that existed within the Warsaw Pact.

In power for little more than a year, and with little to show for it, Gorbachev announced to the Politburo on 28 June 1986 that he intended to extend *perestroika* to include relations with the nations of the Warsaw Pact. In the past, he noted, 'the Soviet Union...all but led fraternal countries by the hand, and they considered it obligatory to follow our example, recommendations and advice on everything to the letter'. Moscow was now seen to be:

some kind of conservative force that hinders transformations whose time has come...Instead of together discussing the real problems of socialist

development, we frequently took upon ourselves the function of unique guardians and defenders of Marxist-Leninist learning... All these shortcomings, accumulated over the years, have caused serious damage.

Gorbachev called, instead, for the exertion of 'ideological influence, constructive initiatives for deepening cooperation, the power of example, and creative and effective solutions to the problems of social change'.¹

The main criteria for action were now to be pragmatic rather than dogmatic. Gorbachev's program was not without its contradictions, however. The justification for changing old practices rested on the assumption that the allies of the Soviet Union were now 'mostly' secure in their socialist foundations. This, in turn, implied that reform would not risk the destabilization of those societies. Nothing was said of those who might not yet be 'mostly' secure. In addition, while arguing for change, Gorbachev railed against 'centrifugal tendencies' and emphasized the importance of economic integration within the bloc and of close coordination on foreign policy (the East Germans and Hungarians were here cited as miscreants). Most delicately, in light of the new line, Gorbachev obliquely referred to the fact that 'in most of the countries the time has come, for *objective reasons*, for a change in leadership'.² In sum, Moscow's allies were supposed to become more independent but, at the same time, were directed to change their leadership at Russian behest.

Not surprisingly, given the *ad hoc* nature of these proposals that were apparently delivered off the cuff, Gorbachev had retreated into his cave by the fall of 1986. 'Our common standpoint is: the independence of each party, the sovereign right to decide on the resolution of national problems of development, and each party's responsibility *vis-à-vis* its own people'.³ That is what Gorbachev announced to the Comecon summit in November. But since the regimes then in power had been imposed by the Russians on the countries in question in the first place, and subsequently reimposed, Gorbachev's pronouncement meant that the Kremlin would tolerate continued repression throughout the bloc. This was, in effect, a permissive rather than a liberal policy *vis-à-vis* eastern Europe, and it raised several awkward questions about the sincerity of 'new thinking' at home and abroad. At the same time, such talk created certain precedents that became crucially important when unrest began to rise within the bloc. In this instance, as elsewhere in respect to reform and innovation, Gorbachev had not yet thought through the logic of his well-meaning but mutually conflicting haze of haphazard ideas. The temptation was to believe that *détente* – deemed essential to economic reconstruction – was all about arms control and little else. Knowledge of the real reasons for the Cold War had been meticulously 'lost' in the *kartoteka* of the Foreign Ministry.

The state of affairs in eastern Europe was going from bad to worse. The problem faced by the Soviet leadership was in actually acquiring reliable knowledge about what was going on in these countries. Khrushchev had banned the KGB from operating in the region. A KGB 'ambassador' acted as a liaison to the local party, but he generally reported to Moscow what the latter wanted to hear (as did the

official Soviet ambassador to the same country). Only the 'closed' Institute for the Economics of the World Socialist System, which maintained an agent in the Soviet embassy of each country, consistently told the truth. But for that reason the Institute's reports were heavily discounted. Czechoslovakia, meanwhile, had not yet recovered from the invasion of 1968. Gustav Husak was in power. He was a weak individual who had betrayed Dubcek and the reformists in exchange for leadership of the party. The only figure in the Czechoslovakian leadership who was remotely akin to the Gorbachev camp was Lubomir Strougal, the Prime Minister, who pressed for economic reform. However, Strougal was effectively neutralized by the hardliners in the Politburo. Romania was a despotism of the most primitive kind. That 'typhoid Mary' of eastern Europe, Poland, infected as it was by the bacillus of a genuine workers' movement, had been effectively consigned to quarantine. East Germany's leadership was living in a dream world resting on their supposed technological supremacy. Meanwhile, Erich Honecker intended to turn himself into a world statesman by nurturing East Berlin's relations with Bonn and Beijing independently of Moscow. Even greater heresy was to be found elsewhere. A massive foreign debt contracted in the 1970s, when loans were cheap and oil prices low (for Comecon), effectively ate into Hungary's economic potential. Budapest had long understood that its future lay to the West. Detecting the emergence of a new spirit in eastern Europe, the Hungarians boldly approached the Russians in March 1987 with a request that the latter withdraw its Red Army divisions, not just from Magyar territory but from the entire bloc. If that did not happen, the Hungarians warned, such a demand might begin to gather momentum from below, with serious consequences to follow.⁴ Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze's Jesuitical reply was that the Red Army was there to deter internecine conflict.

Europe's future hinged on Germany, as it had since 1871. Gorbachev's views on the German question were entirely conventional at the outset of his rule. Like other children of the Great Patriotic War, he was hostile to Germans. The official line contended that the results of Soviet occupation could not be changed. Nevertheless, Gorbachev was sufficiently open-minded to ask whether this was a just result, and whether division was really for all time. Sparks first flew when he visited West Germany for the first time in 1975 and was pleasantly surprised. Having seen the grim, ravaged and antiseptic visage of the East a decade earlier, 'everything I discovered in the FRG did not fit with previous impressions'.⁵ But when he came to power in 1985, Bonn was the least responsive of all Western capitals to his flirtations. The contrast with Thatcher's Britain was striking and depressing. This mattered because West Germany was the heavyweight in western Europe, and Gorbachev sought an 'understanding on the part of Western Europe'.⁶ 'West Germany', Gorbachev noted, '...like it or not – and whether its allies in NATO like it or not – is a massive weight in the balance of world power, and its role in international affairs will grow.'⁷ More than once Gorbachev pointed out to his inner circle and the Politburo that 'without Germany we can have no real European policy'.⁸

Not until after the Russians agreed to dismantle the SS-20 missiles in December 1987 was an opening possible. But during this period, from 1986 to

1987, various options were discussed. Valentin Falin, the irritatingly brilliant but vain and arrogant Germanist who long influenced Kremlin policy until his overbearing personality undermined his own utility, had been venting concern about the fragility of the GDR since 1986, when he forwarded a memorandum from Rem Belousov predicting the economic collapse of Comecon by the end of the decade. In 1987 he sent a memorandum reporting on his conversations with the new dissident Marcus Wolf, who had recently resigned as chief of foreign intelligence, in which he predicted the collapse of the GDR.⁹ Relations between East Berlin and Moscow were by then frigid. The German leadership was both defensive towards Gorbachev and contemptuous of him. The response of GDR Politburo ideologist Hager on 9 April 1987 was typical when he was asked whether East Germany would adopt *perestroika*. 'Would you, when your neighbor puts up new wallpaper, feel obliged similarly to put up new wallpaper?'¹⁰ That *perestroika* should be identified as a kind of wallpaper – that is, purely a matter of decoration – was not exactly complimentary. It is consequently not surprising to learn that Shevardnadze was already toying with options that included, his adviser Stepanov reports, the ultimate prospect of reunification.¹¹ In March 1988 Falin sent Gorbachev another up-to-date analysis arguing that the GDR was on the verge of destabilization.¹² Shevardnadze then appointed the heretic Vyacheslav Dashichev, who was head of the international relations department of the Institute of the Economics of the World Socialist System, to be a consultant to the Foreign Ministry on eastern Europe. Dashichev argued, in private, in favor of the reunification (and simultaneous neutralization) of Germany.¹³

Georgii Shakhnazarov, a former protégé of Andropov's from the early 1960s, had always been something of a free spirit, though he was usually so buried in books that his monasticism did not easily find a place in Kremlin intrigues. He had risen with Gorbachev – who was also an Andropov protégé – from a role of consultant to the Central Committee to become deputy head of its department responsible for socialist countries, before his elevation to the Politburo with responsibility for eastern Europe. On 6 October 1988 Shakhnazarov wrote to Gorbachev recommending a strategic gathering of specialists and advisers on eastern Europe, together with the Politburo, to consider what action should be taken. 'The evident signs of crisis demand radical reform throughout the socialist world', he stressed. Pre-emption was essential. As had been the case with Poland in the early 1980s, the idea of external suppression 'through military means' had to be 'completely excluded'.

What will we do if the social instability which is now assuming a more threatening character in Hungary coincides with the regular round of unrest in Poland, demonstrations by Charter 77 in Czechoslovakia, etc? In other words, do we have a conception in the event of a crisis that may simultaneously overcome the entire socialist world or a significant part of it?

Shakhnazarov also raised the delicate issue of Germany. 'To what extent does the future maintenance of Soviet forces in the territory of a range of allied countries (including the GDR) meet our interests?'¹⁴ He was to repeat his request for

a special gathering of experts a number of times as crisis followed crisis during the following year. However, Gorbachev instinctively clutched these critical issues close to his breast. It was impossible to know what the Sphinx was thinking.

The tense relations between Moscow and Bonn – exacerbated by crudely insensitive references by Chancellor Kohl to Gorbachev as a propagandist worthy of Goebbels (and from a German of his generation!) – were eased by the visit of President von Weizsacker and Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher to Moscow in the fall of 1987. Feathers were, indeed, ruffled by Weizsacker's seemingly interminable speech at dinner about reunification (which the Politburo, after vigorous debate, including Gromyko's vigorous recommendation, censored from the mainstream press). Nonetheless, Kohl was persuaded to visit during the following October. His impending arrival raised Gorbachev's hopes that the missing piece in his European *détente* could finally be put into place. The General Secretary adopted the view that 'the situation is such that the country [FRG] is ready to go a long way with us, but the Chancellor is not ready; and with us the opposite is the case – the leadership is ready but the country is still not quite [ready]'.¹⁵ Kohl took full advantage of Gorbachev's concern, presenting himself as the primary path to relations with the United States under the incoming Bush administration, and this because of Bonn's centrality to NATO and the economy of western Europe.¹⁶ It was at this summit that Kohl also raised the question of reunification.

We Germans say the division is not history's final word. We as realists consider that war is not an instrument of politics. The changes about which we speak are possible only by peaceful means and [by acting] together with our neighbors. We might have to wait a very long time. However, it must be accepted that this is not a relapse into revanchism. When we say that the nation will unite, we envision a chance that might open up in several generations... Naturally, this is not a task for our generation. But we must head for a *rapprochement* in Europe. And, perhaps, our grandchildren will be given the chance of which I speak.¹⁷

Gorbachev, however, insisted that 'you cannot rewrite history'.¹⁸ He brusquely chided Kohl:

When it is said that the question of unification is open, when the wish is to resolve it at the level of the political thinking of the 1940s and 1950s, this will prompt a reaction not only among us, but also among your neighbors to the West.¹⁹

Gorbachev thus counted as much on the United States, France and Britain to block German ambitions as he did on Russian power and persuasion alone. This was not an unimportant assumption, as events took their course at breathtaking speed in the following months. In order to accelerate the process of *détente*, Gorbachev announced at the United Nations in December 1988 the withdrawal of

six tank divisions from the GDR, Czechoslovakia and Hungary (some 5,000 tanks in all) and a reduction of 50,000 in the number of troops (a part of his overall cut of 500,000 in the armed forces by the end of 1991). The Russians needed to sustain the impetus of disarmament by advancing at the conventional level, which meant cutting back forces in central Europe. At a meeting immediately following the speech, Henry Kissinger, never one to wait on ceremony, impishly suggested an ordered Soviet departure from eastern Europe. Much to Kissinger's dismay, Gorbachev had no time to react since he had to rush back to the Soviet Union on being informed of the dramatic news of the earthquake at Spitak.²⁰ The Russian military had not been consulted about the troop reductions. In retrospect, the former chief of staff, military adviser Marshal Akhromeyev – who committed suicide after the collapse of the Soviet Union – came to believe that 'towards the beginning of 1989 M. S. Gorbachev began to view the possibility of major changes in the alignment of forces and, perhaps, also more fundamental upheavals in the countries of central Europe'.²¹

If this were so, then firm bridges had to be built with the incoming Bush administration. After the New Year, therefore, Soviet anxieties – when not distracted by East Berlin – were focused on Washington rather than Bonn. The US National Security Council recommended in March 1989 that 'top priority' be given in Europe to the 'fate of the Federal German Republic'.²² Indeed, because the Russians were already on good terms with Foreign Minister Genscher, the United States was seriously concerned lest Gorbachev seduce Kohl as he had apparently seduced German public opinion. Bonn was, thus, as much valued for its privileged access to Washington as it was on its own merits.²³ For this reason, Thatcher, hitherto a key link with Reagan, was no longer of any use as the White House reoriented policy away from Britain and towards West Germany.

Gorbachev arrived in West Germany for a return summit on 12 June with an extravagant delegation of 67, replete with massive Zil limousines for all, requiring at least seven Ilyushin-76 transports to ferry them in. This generous display of Russian power was illusory. The unraveling of the Soviet position in eastern Europe had already begun. When Polish Marshal Jaruzelski had come calling for financial assistance the previous fall, Gorbachev suggested that he come to terms with Solidarity instead. Once that nettle was grasped, negotiations were begun and agreement reached between the parties in Poland on a bicameral assembly: the new chamber would be elected by free election while two-thirds of the seats in the first chamber were reserved for the communists and their allies. This was an apparently secure one-way bet. The elections were set for 4 and 18 June. In the meantime, the communists' original coalition partners – pressed into a shotgun marriage after the world war – split away, while several candidates on the communist list turned out to be closer to Solidarity, depriving the party of its majority in the Sejm. Solidarity then won all the seats but one in the Senate.²⁴ What was intended as a gentle and controlled evolution to democracy thus degenerated into a rout of the communists, who arrogantly attempted to cling to power. Barely a month later, Lech Wałęsa succeeded in forcing Jaruzelski to accept Tadeusz Mazowiecki, the Solidarity candidate, as Prime Minister.

Gorbachev's arrival in Bonn coincided with the disturbing news that the Polish situation was coming apart. Without Poland it was hard to see how Soviet forces could hold East Germany. Indeed, Honecker treated former history teacher Shevardnadze to a lesson in elementary geography on 9 June: Poland, he patiently intoned, lay between the USSR and the GDR. Thus, Poland 'must not be lost to socialism'.²⁵ Similarly, the Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Group of Forces in Germany, Boris Snetkov, expressed anxiety lest his troops stationed in the 'hinterland' of the GDR were to be cut off as a result of Poland's desertion of socialism and the Baltic republics' imminent rebellion.²⁶ And yet, somewhat enigmatically, Gorbachev appeared content to let these stormy waters find their own level. In fact, he had higher priorities. He arrived in Bonn not least in order to clarify the puzzling attitude of the Bush administration. The slowness with which Bush geared up to act 'gave rise to suspicions that the new President might be about to consign to the archives everything achieved under Reagan'.²⁷ Kohl was suitably reassuring. For Gorbachev, the visit facilitated a closer acquaintance with Kohl and a flattering opportunity to exercise his charm among the German public.²⁸ Yet, however reassuring Gorbachev tried to be, Kohl confided to Bush by telephone, the former's 'mistrust of the USA' was 'still unmistakable'.²⁹ And his own experience with Gorbachev taught Kohl (as it had Thatcher before him) that 'a personal bond of trust' was 'very important' for the General Secretary, for whom 'the "chemistry" must be right'.³⁰ Gorbachev was, indeed, as Gromyko once noted, above all a '*kontaktny*' politician; he operated primarily by instinct. He had to know first-hand with whom he was dealing. His intuition then took over.

Although Russian eyes were focused on Washington rather than Bonn, and although Bonn was on the road to Washington, Gorbachev also needed direct reassurance that Kohl would not take advantage of the reforms in eastern Europe that had now begun and were taking an uncertain course. The East Germans were actually most worried about the Russians. An embarrassing moment came at a press conference in Bonn when the obvious question was raised: how could Gorbachev reconcile the policy of an 'all-European home' (Brezhnev's tired cliché) with the existence of the Berlin Wall? The reply indicated just how far Gorbachev had traveled since the Moscow summit with Kohl the previous fall. After a meaningless preamble, the significant phrases that followed were: 'Nothing is eternal under the sun' and 'The Wall can be removed when the pre-conditions that gave rise to it disappear. I do not see a big problem here'.³¹ In East Germany such statements were treachery.³² But the East Germans had no idea how far the Russians had come in thinking the unthinkable. When Marcus Wolf arrived in Moscow on 17 July he got a sense of the new Russian positions after spending an evening with two officials from the international department of the Central Committee, Portugalov and Koptel'tsev. Their conversation was completely unguarded, except when potential replacements for Honecker were discussed, at which point Wolf maintained a discreet silence.³³ Both Russians, however, freely acknowledged that the GDR was 'the weakest link in the socialist camp'.³⁴ The theme was continued two days later in meetings with Falin. The constant harping back to the issue of German unity in both sets of discussions

seemed to Wolf at the time to be a mere 'theoretical nuance'.³⁵ In retrospect, this was certainly not the case.

Gorbachev did not accept Dashichev's proposals that the Soviet Union vacate the GDR on condition that a reunited Germany be neutralized in the manner of Austria. These were proposals made public following conversations with Christian Democrats in West Berlin and condemned by Honecker. Nevertheless, the underlying sentiments informing such ideas were gaining increased support and sympathy. Dashichev exerted influence indirectly – via Shevardnadze and Gorbachev's aide, Anatoly Chernyaev – but this was not insignificant given the amorphous nature of Gorbachev's mind. Dashichev had been appointed in 1972 to head the then newly created international relations department of the Institute of the Economics of the World Socialist System. A closed institute that was not a part of the Academy of Sciences, set up by Andropov and headed by Hungarian specialist Oleg Bogomolov, the Institute had become a haven for thinking the unthinkable. It received classified information from its agents in embassies throughout the socialist camp and issued reports (always unpublished) for exclusive study by the Central Committee. Working in this system, Dashichev had predicted the rise of Solidarity, opposed the invasion of Afghanistan and argued for Reagan's zero-option. In 1987, with Gorbachev tacitly dropping support for movements of national liberation in the Third World (much to Ligachev's open distress), Dashichev published the first attack on the conduct of Soviet foreign policy in the Moscow press since 1917. His subsequent proposals on Germany were filtered through to Chernyaev, who was an old acquaintance, and to a supportive Shevardnadze. The latter was pondering the fate of Germany. 'From the beginning', his aide Stepanov says, 'the idea was inserted into this scheme of a step by step movement' towards reunification.³⁶ Signs of such movement were picked up in the Pentagon's 'traffic' and duly reached the US Secretary of Defense. However, they got no further. Political appointees sat uneasily, awaiting word from the White House as to whether they would be continued *en poste*. Why stick one's neck out? It was not least for such reasons that Washington was as unprepared as anyone else for what subsequently occurred. The array of official excuses since proffered to explain the US surprise at Russian actions are subsequently not convincing.

Moreover, as we have seen, but which he did not himself know at the time, Dashichev's was only one voice in a veritable chorus. However, this was a motley collection of vocalists singing variations on a theme without a proper conductor or even the same musical score. In addition to the warnings regularly sounded by Falin (who, at the same time, was continuing to undermine Dashichev), the first deputy of the KGB, Sherbashin, returned from the GDR in April 1989 with dire predictions of imminent collapse.³⁷ By then, as KGB chief Kryuchkov himself wearily reminds us, 'not only in 1989 but even earlier there were many alarming reports about the situation in the GDR'.³⁸ There can be no doubt but that these analyses reached Gorbachev. But he seems to have preferred to keep them to himself.³⁹ By 1989, with Article 6 of the Constitution in place, KGB reports were delivered solely to the President. Other members of the leadership were left entirely in the dark, unless Gorbachev decided otherwise.

Information is power, as Lenin used to insist, and with wide-ranging change on the immediate horizon Gorbachev held the most valuable cards ever closer to his chest. The ground began to move beneath the Russians' feet when the Hungarian Foreign Minister met his Austrian counterpart on 27 June 1989 and, in the face of entreaties from Moscow,⁴⁰ opened the border between the two states. By the time the political consultative committee of the Warsaw Pact met on 7 July, Honecker's most horrible suspicions had peaked. Honecker assailed a startled Gorbachev: 'When are you going to dismiss your collaborator Dashichev?'⁴¹ Gorbachev was emollient, denying all knowledge of Dashichev and referring in his address to the fact that 'we have no illusions. Many in the FRG are as enthusiastic as ever for German reunification.' But, he added, 'we are not aiming at later playing the "German card"'.⁴² 'Serious politicians', he remarked, with obvious reference to Kohl in Bonn, 'are above all clear that the destabilization of eastern Europe carries with it unimaginably serious consequences for the entire continent.'⁴³ Before long, the unyielding tension carried Honecker off to the hospital.

Gorbachev's own ability to counter the mounting frustrations was also fast reaching its limits. He loathed most of his allied counterparts, with the notable exception of Jaruzelski. During the month of August, more than 3,000 persons had fled into Austria from East Germany via Hungary. The Hungarian government had in effect unilaterally abandoned its agreement with other Warsaw Pact countries, effective since 1969, to prevent the Pact's citizens from reaching the West. The Hungarians were trying to hold back a burgeoning tide in order to avoid a direct clash with East Berlin, but their economy was in a parlous condition as a result of the country's indebtedness. The United States was holding out for a coalition government in Budapest before it would accede to granting aid. Thus, Prime Minister Nemeth and Foreign Minister Horn visited Bonn on 25 August, where they continued to discuss subjects that had been broached in Budapest on 9 June in meetings with Genscher. In June, Genscher had told the Hungarians that they needed to present deeds and not just words. Kohl was understanding and promised to intercede to obtain more flexibility from Washington and the IMF. He also promised to talk to the French concerning European Community assistance. These were the events that culminated on 11 September,⁴⁴ when the Hungarians opened the border with Austria, thus allowing East Germans who had obtained travel documents from the West German embassy in Budapest to escape oppression. The river now burst the dam.

In East Germany the people took to the streets. More than 17,000 had now reached West Germany. Those who remained joined the largest spontaneous demonstration ever witnessed in the country on 25 September, as thousands marched on Leipzig calling for change. On 2 October, 15,000 demonstrated again in Leipzig. Obligated to visit the GDR for the 40th anniversary of its founding, Gorbachev had difficulty concealing his personal distaste for Honecker. Meanwhile, police broke up mass calls for reform, not just in the streets of Leipzig but in East Berlin, Potsdam and Dresden as well. Gorbachev's comments at a meeting of the German Politburo on 7 October left no doubt where he stood on what he thought would be the GDR's fate if his hosts did not act in time.

'Poland and Hungary have shown us: when the party fails to respond to life it is doomed.'⁴⁵ The following day witnessed more brutal assaults on demonstrators. This culminated on 9 October in a demonstration that numbered 100,000 in Leipzig. Honecker instinctively responded with plans for repression. But the Politburo was divided. The night beforehand, on 8 October, Egon Krenz, the 'crown prince', phoned Soviet ambassador Kotchemasow to say that Honecker had instructed him to fly out to Leipzig with the heads of the Interior Ministry and the army to investigate the situation and then take the necessary measures.

Krenz was worried. It was most important, Kotchemasow instructed him, that 'no blood be shed. That is my categorical advice: on no account take any repressive measures and least of all by the army.'⁴⁶ Kotchemasow then asked Snetkov, commander of the Soviet Group of Forces in Germany, 'to issue the instructions ordering our troops to stay in their barracks'. On no account, he continued, should they get involved in events or respond to provocations. No sooner was this said than it was done. Snetkov must have assumed that Kotchemasow's advice came on express instruction from Moscow. But it appears that Kotchemasow was acting on his own authority, having 'received no advice from anybody'.⁴⁷ Moscow confirmed the instructions only on the following day.

There was a danger that matters could completely spin out of control, that the Red Army would shoot protestors and that Gorbachev's foreign policy would be irrevocably tainted in the eyes of the West, not to mention the possibility that West Germany would be drawn into the conflict and Europe would be brought to the brink of war. First Deputy Foreign Minister Anatoly Kovalev, a Germanist favored by Gorbachev, was not alone in his anxiety: 'All the time', he recalls,

we wrote instructions to ambassadors, prepared messages to heads of government, all in order to expedite the main aim – not to allow the situation to get out of control, not to allow any destabilization of the situation, not to allow our forces to be provoked. They could come out of the barracks, some commander or other could give an order, and the troops could appear on the streets.⁴⁸

At a routine meeting of the Politburo on 10 October Honecker insisted that the 'majority of the party and the working class stands behind our policy; it was correct and is correct'.⁴⁹ The placards carried by German demonstrators that greeted Gorbachev, on the other hand, presented him with a different message: 'Do you understand what is happening? It is the end, Mikhail Sergeevich!'⁵⁰ It was not least for these reasons that Gorbachev remembered the collapse of the Wall as an event that entailed no great shock: 'We were prepared for such an outcome.'⁵¹ Indeed, Defense Minister Dmitrii Yazov, who was no friend of Gorbachev's, recalls that 'for us these events were not unexpected. We knew what the situation was day by day.'⁵² That may have been so. But Gorbachev did his best to forestall the outcome, short of employing force, which would have destroyed his entire global policy. Moscow not only attempted to dissuade Budapest and Prague from opening their borders. On 11 October Gorbachev

spoke to Kohl by telephone. The Chancellor was reassuring: 'The FRG is in no way interested in the destabilization of the GDR.' It was important that 'the evolution of events does not get out of control'. All Bonn wanted was that the GDR move towards the Russian path of reform. Kohl insisted that he and Gorbachev continue to keep in frequent contact by phone.⁵³ Precisely one week later Honecker was forced to resign, anticipated two days earlier by Krenz's resignation.⁵⁴ Kotchemasow immediately called Gorbachev to convey the good news. 'I beg you, call me and report to me as events unfold. At any time of day and to me personally', the General Secretary said.⁵⁵

Krenz was a grim figure. Long associated with the forces of repression, he was scarcely Moscow's cup of tea. The Russians preferred Hans Modrow. But Krenz was ambitious and sufficiently agile and unscrupulous to adjust to the changing situation. On 18 October the Central Committee ratified the decision. 'Now, what they do is their choice, and one must take it into account', Gorbachev said when Kotchemasow phoned with the news.⁵⁶ Krenz was duly congratulated by Gorbachev in a telephone conversation three days later. It was not exactly a rapid, ringing endorsement. But he did seek to be reassuring. Do not react to Kohl, he advised. 'He has mounted the horse of nationalism. That is dangerous. He wants reforms in Bonn's image. This is unacceptable to us.' Krenz was consequently told 'not to give in'.⁵⁷ It was a short honeymoon. Two days later, on 23 October, Leipzig – together with Magdeburg, Halle, Dresden and Schwerin – witnessed a massive demonstration of 300,000 persons marching under slogans opposing Krenz.⁵⁸ In anticipation of disturbances, Snetkov telephoned the night before to request a meeting with Krenz the following morning. Kotchemasow then telephoned Krenz to say that such a meeting might send 'a false political signal'.⁵⁹ Moscow was not only divided over what to do, but for the first time these divisions were visible from the outside. Krenz noted that the distrust that existed between Russian diplomats and the armed forces 'would have been unthinkable as recently as a month earlier'.⁶⁰ Krenz, clearly hoping to exploit these differences, went ahead with the meeting. Snetkov made the brief but gratifying statement: 'Comrade Krenz, we stand ever ready to give the GDR every assistance. Notify me whenever you wish.'⁶¹

The gap between Snetkov and Kotchemasow was represented by the fact that, while the commander-in-chief – doubtless on instructions from his minister – was offering military aid, Kochemasov was in touch with church leaders Eppelmann and Ebeling, the leaders of the New Forum (Boley, Hendrich and Reich), and Democracy Now.⁶² The arrival of Krenz in Moscow on 1 November took place against the background of additional demonstrations expected to be of even greater magnitude, together with information reaching the KGB concerning extremists who were looking to 'storm the Brandenburg Gate'.⁶³ In conversations that lasted five hours, which Gorbachev did not even consider worth recalling a decade later, Krenz was duly lectured on the need to keep Moscow fully informed of what he was up to. Krenz gave an honest account of the situation, but he had no conception of how to deal with it. For that matter, neither had Moscow.⁶⁴ Acting as though he were a disinterested spectator, Gorbachev readily acknowledged 'wild'

speculation among members of the Bonn coalition that Kohl should dispose of. But instead of condemning it, Gorbachev pleaded mitigation:

Kohl is no intellectual beacon [*keine intellektuelle Leuchte*], but a *petit bourgeois* [*ein Kleinburger*]. These are the strata he knows best. He is thus a skillful and persistent politician. In every event he is as popular as Reagan once was and it has paid off for quite some time.⁶⁵

As to the domestic solution, Gorbachev merely said:

Egon, a piece of advice. It is important for the SED not to lose the initiative. When spontaneity takes the upper hand and political orientation is lost, that is a major disaster. Then it is possible that false solutions prove decisive and the situation works to the advantage of other forces.⁶⁶

Even if Krenz had his own ideas, which he did not, he was forced to drag his more reluctant colleagues along with him. Only with the support of the veteran Willi Stoph did Krenz succeed in appointing the reformist, Hans Modrow, head of the state apparatus. On 3 November Kotchemasow informed Krenz of Stoph's support for Modrow.⁶⁷ However, it was far too little, far too late. On 4 November approximately 1 million persons demonstrated in East Berlin, calling for free speech and elections. The much-feared assault on the Wall did not materialize but pressure for fundamental change was irresistible. At the Soviet embassy celebrations two days later, Snetkov, as if on cue, grandly announced that the 'Western group of Soviet forces will fulfill its international duty in the GDR under any circumstances'.⁶⁸ On the following day the entire Politburo resigned, allowing Krenz to bring Modrow and others into the party leadership. But, again, it was all too late. Even the Czechs – in the face of Russian entreaties – were now allowing East Germans to pass through to the West. Within three days (from 3 November) 15,000 had crossed the Czech frontier to the FRG.

As the East German state hemorrhaged its life blood, Gorbachev refused Shakhnazarov's repeated request for a summit of experts. Finally, he took a belated holiday in the south, just as everything promptly fell apart. Kohl arrived in Warsaw on 9 November for a five-day official visit. More than 20,000 refugees had fled across the GDR border since the beginning of the year. He was visibly uneasy, but no more so than Krenz. The news arrived that GDR Politburo member Gunter Schabowski had declared at a press conference that anyone could travel to wherever they pleased.⁶⁹ When tens of thousands surged towards the Wall, border guards ceased checking visas and allowed anyone with personal identification to pass through. Krenz and his colleagues were by then desperate to avoid bloodshed. Krenz contacted Kotchemasow, and the latter phoned Shevardnadze but failed to get through. He did, however, contact Kovalev who, true to Foreign Ministry protocol, requested a telegram. Not waiting for a reply, Kotchemasow concluded that no objection in principle to opening the border would be forthcoming.⁷⁰ Krenz, mindful of Gorbachev's warning not to meet

Kohl without the Russians present, rejected the possibility of settling the situation together with Kohl and instructed that the barriers be lowered.⁷¹ This effectively meant that Bonn would also react unilaterally. A precedent was set. Gorbachev's assumption that the United States would restrain Bonn was ill founded. At 12.30 a.m. on 10 November Krenz was informed that all checkpoints on the border with West Berlin were open.⁷² He did not ring Gorbachev but, instead, dispatched a telegram later that morning.⁷³ In any event, the news came through to Gorbachev from Kochemasov within a matter of hours. His response to this *fait accompli* was typically positive.⁷⁴ The Wall had finally come down. As Kohl told adviser Horst Teltschik, 'the wheel of history' was 'turning faster'.⁷⁵ Reunification was now a matter of months. Contrary to what Gorbachev had cautioned Kohl in 1988, history could be, and was being, 'rewritten'.

Notes

- 1 'V Politburo TsK KPSS: O nekotorykh aktual'nykh voprosakh sotrudnichestva s sotsstranami', 28 June 1986, Volkogonov Archives, Library of Congress.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 At the Comecon summit, 10 November 1986, as quoted from SAPMO, the East German Party Archive, now part of the Bundesarchiv in Berlin; B.-E. Siebs, *Die Aussenpolitik der DDR 1976–1989: Strategien und Grenzen* (Paderborn, 1999) pp. 326–7.
- 4 Diary entry, 27 March 1987, cited by Teimuraz Stepanov, Gorbachev's foreign policy aide, Hoover–Gorbachev Foundation Oral History Project, Hoover Institution, Stanford, CA, Box 5.
- 5 M. Gorbachev, *Kak eto bylo* (Moscow, 1999), p. 75.
- 6 Ibid., p. 55.
- 7 Ibid., p. 59.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Falin testimony, Hoover–Gorbachev Foundation Oral History Project, Box 4.
- 10 Quoted in the memoirs of Hans Modrow, *Die Perestroika: Wie ich sie sehe* (Berlin, 1998), p. 55.
- 11 Stepanov testimony.
- 12 V. Falin, *Konflikty v Kremle: Sumerki bogov po-russki* (Moscow, 1999), p. 148.
- 13 Personal information.
- 14 Memorandum published in Shakhnazarov, *Tsena Svobody*, pp. 367–9.
- 15 Gorbachev, *Kak eto bylo*, p. 61.
- 16 Ibid., pp. 63–4.
- 17 Ibid., p. 68.
- 18 Ibid., p. 69. See also K. Diekmann and R. Reuth, *Helmut Kohl: 'Ich Wollte Deutschlands Einheit'* (Berlin, 1996), p. 39.
- 19 Gorbachev, *Kak eto bylo*, p. 69.
- 20 Falin testimony.
- 21 S. Akhromeev and G. Kornienko, *Glazami marshala i diplomata* (Moscow, 1992), pp. 226–7.
- 22 Quoted, in severely abridged form, in R. Hutchings, *American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War* (Washington, DC, 1997), p. 31. Hutchings served as Director for European Affairs on the National Security Council.
- 23 This is apparent from Gorbachev's reflections. Gorbachev, *Kak eto bylo*, p. 76.
- 24 L. Wałęsa, *The Struggle and the Triumph: An Autobiography* (New York, 1992), p. 214.
- 25 Quoted in Siebs, *Aussenpolitik der DDR 1976–1989*, pp. 403–4.

- 26 E. Krenz, *Herbst*, p. 38.
- 27 Gorbachev, *Kak eto bylo*, p. 76.
- 28 Diekmann and Reuth, *Helmut Kohl*, p. 47.
- 29 Ibid., p. 49.
- 30 Ibid., p. 50.
- 31 Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 79.
- 32 Krenz, *Herbst*, p. 16.
- 33 M. Wolf, *Po sobstvennom zadaniyu* (Moscow, 1992), p. 117. The book is based on diaries.
- 34 Ibid., p. 117.
- 35 Ibid., p. 118.
- 36 Stepanov testimony.
- 37 Cited in the interview with Yakovlev, Hoover–Gorbachev Foundation Oral History Project, Box 4.
- 38 Kryuchkov testimony, Hoover–Gorbachev Foundation Oral History Project, Box 4.
- 39 Ibid.
- 40 Falin testimony.
- 41 Krenz, *Herbst*, pp. 16–17.
- 42 Ibid.
- 43 Ibid.
- 44 Falin testimony.
- 45 Krenz, *Herbst*, p. 71.
- 46 W. Kotschewasow, *Meine letzte Mission: Fakten, Erinnerungen, Überlegungen* (Berlin, c. 1994), pp. 168–9.
- 47 Ibid., p. 169.
- 48 Kovalev testimony, Hoover–Gorbachev Foundation Oral History Project, Box 4.
- 49 Krenz, *Herbst*, p. 96.
- 50 Gorbachev, *Kak eto bylo*, p. 84. Polish Prime Minister Rakowski translated this for Gorbachev.
- 51 Ibid., p. 84.
- 52 Yazov testimony, Hoover–Gorbachev Foundation Oral History Project, Box 3.
- 53 Gorbachev, *Kak eto bylo*, p. 85.
- 54 Krenz, *Herbst*, pp. 109–10.
- 55 Kotschewasow, *Meine letzte Mission*, p. 177.
- 56 Ibid., p. 179.
- 57 Krenz, *Herbst*, p. 145.
- 58 Kotschewasow, *Meine letzte Mission*, p. 179.
- 59 Krenz, *Herbst*, p. 149.
- 60 Ibid., p. 150.
- 61 Ibid., pp. 149–50.
- 62 Kotschewasow, *Meine letzte Mission*, p. 172.
- 63 Krenz, *Herbst*, pp. 199, 206.
- 64 Kotschewasow, *Meine letzte Mission*, p. 180.
- 65 Krenz, *Herbst*, p. 198.
- 66 Ibid., p. 200.
- 67 Ibid., p. 210.
- 68 Ibid., p. 225.
- 69 H. Teltschik, *329 Tage: Innenansichten der Einigung* (Berlin, 1991), pp. 11–12.
- 70 Kotschewasow, *Meine letzte Mission*, p. 186.
- 71 Krenz, *Herbst*, p. 247.
- 72 Ibid., p. 249.
- 73 G.-R. Stephan and D. Kuchenmeister, ‘Vorwärts immer, rückwärts nimmer!’: *Interne Dokumente zum Zerfall von SED und DDR 1988/89* (Berlin, 1994), doc. 48.
- 74 Gorbachev, *Kak eto bylo*, p. 86.
- 75 Teltschik, 329, p. 15.

11 Gorbachev and the demise of east European communism

Mark Kramer

This chapter discusses the connection between the Soviet Union and the upheavals of 1989 in eastern Europe. The sweeping political reforms launched by Mikhail Gorbachev within the Soviet Union, and the bold changes he carried out in Soviet foreign policy, helped generate unrest and instability in eastern Europe. The Soviet Union could have acted at any number of points in 1988 and 1989 to reassert control in eastern Europe and to prop up the orthodox communist regimes, but Gorbachev, far from hindering radical change in the region, actively facilitated it. This chapter will show how the drastic changes in Soviet policy under Gorbachev led to the collapse of communism in eastern Europe. It will also weigh the costs and benefits of the new Soviet policy.

The context of Gorbachev's new policy

From the mid-1940s through the mid-1980s, Soviet leaders regarded eastern Europe as an extension of their own country's frontiers. Threats to the security of an east European regime, whether external or internal, were deemed threats to Soviet security as well. This sentiment took its most explicit form in the so-called Brezhnev Doctrine, which laid down stringent 'rules of the game' for the communist bloc in the wake of the Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968:

Without question, the peoples of the socialist countries and the communist parties must have the freedom to determine their own path of development. Any decision they make, however, must not be inimical either to socialism in their own country or to the fundamental interests of the other socialist countries....A socialist state that is in a system of other states composing the socialist commonwealth cannot be free of the common interests of that commonwealth. The sovereignty of individual socialist countries cannot be set against the interests of world socialism and the world revolutionary movement...Each communist party is free to apply the principles of Marxism-Leninism and socialism in its own country, but it is not free to deviate from these principles if it is to remain a communist party.¹

By linking the fate of every socialist country with the fate of all others, by requiring socialist countries to abide by the norms of Marxism-Leninism as interpreted in Moscow, and by subordinating the 'abstract sovereignty' of states to the 'laws of class struggle', the Brezhnev Doctrine aptly codified the basic strands of Soviet policy toward eastern Europe from 1945 on.

After Gorbachev came to power in March 1985, the Soviet-east European relationship initially underwent little change.² During his first few years in office, the new Soviet leader sought to promote greater economic integration within the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) and an expansion of political and military cooperation among the members of the Warsaw Pact. In both respects, his early policies displayed a strong continuity with those of his predecessors. Discussions about eastern Europe at Soviet Politburo meetings in 1985 and 1986 revealed little inclination to tamper with the 'underlying path of development of our cooperation with other socialist countries'.³ Rather than proposing reforms, Gorbachev advocated 'greater party control' over Soviet-east European economic relations and emphasized the need to 'consolidate the unity of the socialist countries and to counter any centrifugal tendencies' within the Soviet bloc. He assured his colleagues that the Soviet Union would remain 'the leader of the socialist world and the guarantor of the security and socialist gains of the fraternal countries'.⁴ In public as well, Gorbachev's initial statements about eastern Europe seemed to be in full accord with the basic policies devised under Josif Stalin, Nikita Khrushchev and Leonid Brezhnev. The new Soviet leader's manner of presentation may have been more dynamic, but at no time during the first few years of his tenure did he disavow the Brezhnev Doctrine or even condemn the way his predecessors had handled Soviet-east European relations.

By the spring of 1988, however, Soviet policy toward eastern Europe started to loosen, adumbrating a fundamental shift in Gorbachev's approach. This reconfiguration can be attributed to several key internal and external factors, of which five in particular deserve mention.⁵

First, Gorbachev's consolidation of power by 1988 enabled him to undertake bolder steps both at home and in eastern Europe than he could have earlier. The drastic reorientation of Soviet policy toward eastern Europe in 1988 and 1989 would simply have been infeasible in the domestic environment of 1985 and 1986. Second, Gorbachev evidently had come to believe by 1988-89 that economic revitalization, for both the Soviet Union and eastern Europe, would be impossible in the absence of sweeping political reform. As the Soviet leader's domestic priorities became more radical, it was only natural – indeed essential – that he should be willing to tolerate fundamental changes in other socialist countries. Third, by 1988 Gorbachev had embarked on a campaign to transfer power from the communist party to state and legislative bodies, which would be more amenable to far-reaching reform. These institutional changes at home, which did away with the party bodies that had supervised intra-bloc relations, could not help but reduce the Soviet Union's capacity to interfere in the domestic affairs of east European states. Fourth, growing instances of violent unrest by 1988-89 underscored the necessity of major reform throughout the 'socialist commonwealth'.

Although calm had prevailed in eastern Europe during Gorbachev's first few years in office, outbreaks of turmoil in Poland, Hungary and Romania in 1988 and the burgeoning ethnic unrest in the Soviet Union itself revealed the dangers that might arise from a failure to implement reforms. Fifth, significant improvements in East–West relations in 1987 and 1988 provided the Soviet Union with a further incentive to relax its control over eastern Europe. At a time of waning international tensions, Gorbachev had less reason to fear that Western countries would exploit changes in eastern Europe to Moscow's disadvantage, and more reason to hope that a looser Soviet policy in the region would spur increased East–West trade. The convergence of these different factors by 1988–89 established a climate conducive to far-reaching change.

Signs of change

The first indicator of a shift in Gorbachev's policy came during his visit to Yugoslavia in March 1988, when a joint communiqué pledged 'unconditional' respect for 'the principles of equality and non-interference' and for 'the independence of parties and socialist countries to define, for themselves, the path of their own development'.⁶ In subsequent months, the Soviet Union made good on these pledges by providing the east European countries with much greater latitude for internal political and economic change – latitude that Hungary and Poland (though not the four other countries) were quick to exploit. Moreover, for the first time, Soviet analysts began to re-evaluate and criticize the whole post-war history of Soviet–east European relations. As early as May 1988 a lengthy article in the weekly *Literaturnaya gazeta* stressed that the Soviet Union's 'hegemonism and great-power mentality' in eastern Europe after 1945, as reflected in 'the spread of Stalinist socialism wherever possible and its standardization in all countries regardless of their national features', had been directly responsible for the cycle of 'sharp confrontations and armed clashes between socialist countries'.⁷ Before long, similar criticisms were appearing regularly in the Soviet press.

The reorientation of Gorbachev's policy toward the Warsaw Pact countries was further signaled in December 1988 by his announcement, in a speech before the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, that the Soviet Union would unilaterally reduce its military forces in eastern Europe by 50,000 troops, 5,300 tanks and 24 tactical nuclear weapons.⁸ In purely military terms, these reductions were of little significance, but symbolically their importance was enormous. They were designed both as a means of improving East–West relations (of 'showing that our new political thinking is more than just words', as Gorbachev exclaimed during a Politburo meeting shortly after his speech) and as tangible confirmation of the new Soviet approach to intra-bloc relations. Some members of the CPSU Politburo warned that the reductions, by strengthening the impression that the Soviet Union would no longer provide 'fraternal assistance' to the east European regimes, might have 'undesirable consequences for the entire socialist commonwealth'.⁹ But Gorbachev himself was willing to accept those risks as he pressed

ahead with his efforts to restructure the domestic system in the USSR and to recast Soviet foreign policy, above all policy toward eastern Europe.

The radical shift: perils and goals

These two strands of Gorbachev's reform programme increasingly reinforced one another – whether intentionally or not – through a spill-over from the USSR into the other socialist countries. As the pace of *perestroika* and *glasnost* accelerated in the Soviet Union, the 'winds of change' gradually filtered throughout the Eastern bloc, bringing long-submerged grievances and social discontent to the surface. Under growing popular pressure, the authorities in Hungary and Poland embarked on much more ambitious paths of reform in 1988–89 than Gorbachev himself had yet adopted. As ferment in those two countries and elsewhere in the region continued to increase, Gorbachev's public comments about eastern Europe grew bolder. Earlier on, his statements had amounted to little more than standard pledges not to interfere in the domestic affairs of the east European states, but by 1989 his pronouncements had come to reflect the full importance of the ongoing changes. In a speech before the European Parliament in July 1989, Gorbachev expressed support for the maintenance of socialism in Europe, but then indicated a willingness to accept whatever result might come:

The social and political orders of certain countries [in Europe] changed in the past, and may change again in the future. However, this is exclusively a matter for the peoples themselves to decide; it is their choice. Any interference in internal affairs, or any attempts to limit the sovereignty of states – including friends and allies, or anyone else – are impermissible.¹⁰

Against the backdrop of the remarkable changes under way in Poland and Hungary, including the imminent formation of a Polish government led by Solidarity (the independent mass movement that was banned in Poland from December 1981 until early 1989), this declaration took on even greater importance. Although the four other Warsaw Pact countries – Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Bulgaria and Romania – staunchly eschewed any hint of liberalization and clung firmly to orthodox communist policies, there was no doubt by early to mid-1989 that Gorbachev was willing to permit far-reaching internal changes in eastern Europe that previously would have been ruled out and forcibly suppressed under the Brezhnev Doctrine.

Thus, from that point on, the real issue for Gorbachev was no longer whether he should uphold the Brezhnev Doctrine, but whether he could avoid the 'Khrushchev Dilemma'. That is, the problem was not whether to accept peaceful domestic change, as in Czechoslovakia in 1968, but how to prevent widespread anti-Soviet violence from breaking out, as in Hungary in 1956. Gorbachev would have found himself in an intractable situation if he had been confronted by a large-scale, violent uprising in Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia or Hungary. On the two previous occasions when violent rebellions threatened

Soviet control over those four countries – in East Germany in 1953 and Hungary in 1956 – Gorbachev's predecessors responded with military force. If a comparable crisis had erupted in 1989, the pressure for Soviet military intervention would have been enormous, just as it was on Khrushchev in 1956. No matter how Gorbachev might have responded, he would have suffered grave damage. On the one hand, if he had declined to reassert military control in the face of widespread anti-Soviet violence, he would have given his domestic opponents a perfect opportunity to accuse him of betrayal and to move against him. On the other hand, if he had proceeded with a full-fledged invasion, the adverse effects on Soviet domestic reform and on East–West relations would have been incalculable.¹¹

Hence, Gorbachev's overriding objective was to avoid the Khrushchev Dilemma altogether. He could not afford to be confronted by a violent uprising in one of the key east European countries. Only by forestalling such a disastrous turn of events would he have any hope of moving ahead with his reform program. The problem, however, was that his very policies, by unleashing centrifugal forces within the Eastern bloc, had already made it more likely that a violent rebellion would occur. One of the main deterrents to popular anti-communist uprisings in eastern Europe after 1956 was the local populations' awareness that, if necessary, Soviet troops would intervene to restore control. Because this perceived constraint had been steadily diminishing under Gorbachev, the risk of a violent upheaval had increased commensurately.

The possibility of a violent explosion in eastern Europe had long been apparent to prominent Soviet specialists on the region, such as Oleg Bogomolov and Vyacheslav Dashichev. In the pre-Gorbachev era, these analysts played no role in the policymaking process. After Gorbachev came to power, however, senior officials proved far more willing to consider (and indeed began actively soliciting) advice from the expert community. As a result, the views of specialists like Bogomolov and Dashichev were gradually able to filter upward and help shape the perceptions of Gorbachev's key advisers, especially Georgii Shakhnazarov (Gorbachev's chief aide on eastern Europe), Aleksandr Yakovlev and Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze. These senior officials – and eventually Gorbachev himself – came to realize that the longer the existing structures in eastern Europe remained in place, the greater the danger would be for the Soviet Union. A secret memorandum prepared by Shakhnazarov for Gorbachev and the Soviet Politburo in October 1988 warned that 'social instability and crisis might engulf the whole socialist world simultaneously'.¹² The memorandum described the situation in stark terms:

There are countless signs that all the fraternal countries are plagued by basically the same problems, which are rapidly growing and intensifying. The fact that the symptoms are alike in all these countries shows that the disease is caused not by some sort of noxious virus...but by concrete factors rooted in the underlying economic and political model of socialism that was first developed in our country and that was then transferred, with essentially no modifications, to the countries that embarked on the socialist path in the post-war period.¹³

Another of Gorbachev's key advisers on European affairs, Vitalii Zhurkin, later recalled that the Soviet authorities had finally 'faced up to the fact...that the authoritarian and totalitarian systems in the countries of eastern Europe were artificial and would not last for ever'.¹⁴ If those systems had been 'prolonged for another five or ten years', Zhurkin argued, the resulting 'explosions' would have been far more 'destructive' and would have caused greater 'destabilization' and 'problems for everyone, not least for us'.¹⁵

Thus, both the record of previous crises in eastern Europe and the prospect that new crises would emerge in the near future had convinced Gorbachev's advisers (and eventually Gorbachev himself) that, as Shevardnadze put it, 'if positive changes [in eastern Europe] were suppressed or delayed, the whole situation would end in tragedy'.¹⁶ Gorbachev also was aware, however, that unless these 'positive changes' in eastern Europe occurred peacefully, his domestic reform program – and his own political fate – would be in jeopardy.

Mindful of that dilemma, Gorbachev and his aides by late 1988 had established two basic goals for Soviet policy in eastern Europe. First, they wanted to avoid direct Soviet military intervention at all costs. Shakhnazarov had emphasized in his memorandum to Gorbachev that 'in the future, the prospect of "extinguishing" crisis situations [in eastern Europe] through military means must be completely ruled out'.¹⁷ Second, they sought to achieve a peaceful but rapid transition to a new political order in eastern Europe. By drastically modifying the region's political complexion, they could defuse the pressures that had given rise to violent internal crises in the past. But to ensure that the early stages of the process remained peaceful and that 'positive changes' would indeed occur, the Soviet Union itself had to play an active, initiating role. The need for an active policy had been stressed in Shakhnazarov's memorandum:

Some countries have followed our example or have even gone beyond us in undertaking profound reforms, but others, like the GDR, Romania and [Czechoslovakia], have still not acknowledged the need for reforms, primarily for political reasons and the current leaders' aversion to making changes in anything. In reality, all of these countries need fundamental changes, although we cannot speak about this publicly, lest they accuse us of trying to impose *perestroika* on our friends. But a fact remains a fact. The obvious signs of an impending crisis demand radical reforms everywhere in the socialist world...Those who stubbornly refuse to heed the pressures for change are just intensifying the ills they face and are greatly complicating matters for the future. This affects us in the most direct way. Even if we are not authorized to be an 'elder brother' in the socialist world, we cannot reject the role of a leader, a role that objectively belongs to the Soviet Union as the most powerful socialist country. If the situation were to reach a crisis point in one or more socialist countries, we would have to come to their rescue at the cost of enormous material, political and even human losses.¹⁸

The basic problem, as Shakhnazarov indicated, was that if most of the East European communist parties had been left to their own devices, they would have

sought to avoid reforms indefinitely. The hard-line regimes in Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Bulgaria and Romania had become increasingly repressive and intransigent as the internal and external pressures for reform grew. These regimes were heartened in June 1989 when the leaders of the Chinese Communist Party launched an all-out assault against unarmed student protesters near Tiananmen Square. The crackdown in Beijing came less than three weeks after Gorbachev had made a landmark visit to China, the first such visit by a Soviet leader in 30 years. (The Chinese authorities had hoped that the protests, which began in April 1989, would soon peter out and that the students would be gone from Tiananmen Square by the time Gorbachev arrived in mid-May.¹⁹ Far from diminishing, however, the protests – and foreign press coverage of them – increased sharply in the lead-up to Gorbachev's visit.) Televised images of the bloodshed in China in early June reinforced the widespread belief in Moscow that urgent steps were needed to forestall destabilizing unrest in eastern Europe.²⁰ But the 'lesson' drawn by the leaders of East Germany, Czechoslovakia and Romania was just the opposite – namely, that liberalization would be dangerous and that large-scale violent repression would enable them to crush all opposition. When Soviet officials realized that the hard-line east European regimes were willing to emulate the Tiananmen Square massacre, they concluded that the Soviet Union must actively promote fundamental change in eastern Europe, rather than simply waiting and hoping that all would work out for the best.

The decision to assume an active role is what was so striking about the reorientation of Soviet policy toward eastern Europe under Gorbachev. It was not just a question of Gorbachev's willingness to accept and tolerate drastic changes in the Warsaw Pact countries; rather, he and his aides did their best to ensure that these changes occurred and that they occurred peacefully. As Valentin Falin, the head of the CPSU International Department, which oversaw Soviet relations with eastern Europe from mid-1988 on, later acknowledged:

The CPSU Central Committee was aware of the unsavory processes under way in the [east European] countries and therefore – to the extent permitted by the principle of non-interference in internal affairs and respect of the right of peoples to choose – we tried to influence the situation.²¹

Gorbachev had pledged in mid-1988 that the Soviet Union 'would not impose [its] methods of development', including *perestroika* and *glasnost*, 'on anyone else', but the situation in eastern Europe was changing so rapidly by early to mid-1989 that it necessitated greater Soviet involvement than he initially anticipated.²² Unlike in the past, when Gorbachev's predecessors relied on military force to 'defend socialism' in eastern Europe, the Soviet Union in 1989 had to play a direct part in countering the 'unsavory processes' that might eventually have led to widespread violent unrest in one or more east European countries.

Far-reaching consequences

The radical implications of Gorbachev's approach were evident in early and mid-1989 when drastic reforms were adopted by Hungary and Poland, culminating

in the formation of a Solidarity-led government in Poland. But the full magnitude of the forces unleashed by Gorbachev's policies did not become apparent until the last few months of 1989. Events that would have been unthinkable even a year or two earlier suddenly happened: peaceful revolutions from below in East Germany and Czechoslovakia, the dismantling of the Berlin Wall, popular ferment and the downfall of Todor Zhivkov in Bulgaria, and violent upheaval and the execution of Nicolae and Elena Ceaușescu in Romania. As one orthodox communist regime after another collapsed, the Soviet Union expressed approval and lent strong support to the reformist, non-communist governments that emerged. Soviet leaders also joined their east European counterparts in condemning previous instances of Soviet interference in eastern Europe, particularly the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia.²³ In the past, the Soviet Union had done all it could to stifle and deter political liberalization in eastern Europe; but by late 1989 there was no doubt that the east European countries would enjoy full leeway to pursue drastic economic, political and social reforms, including the option of abandoning communism altogether.

Although Gorbachev had not intended to undermine the socialist bloc and did not foresee that the changes he initiated would lead to the rapid demise of communism in eastern Europe, he consistently stuck to his policies of promoting fundamental change and avoiding the use of force at all costs. He originally had hoped to preserve the integrity of the Warsaw Pact and to create favorable conditions in eastern Europe for a liberalized form of communism ('socialism with a human face') that would enable the socialist commonwealth to overcome the political instability that had plagued it so often in the past.²⁴ Gorbachev knew it would be risky to pursue a new social and political order in eastern Europe, but he believed there would be even greater risks if he failed to act. When the process of change in eastern Europe took on a revolutionary momentum of its own, he declined to interrupt it or even to try to slow it down. As a result, the upheavals of 1989 transformed the region so comprehensively that they undermined Soviet influence.

Nonetheless, even though Gorbachev did not anticipate how promptly the bloc would disintegrate or how quickly the reunification of Germany would proceed,²⁵ his basic approach to Soviet–east European relations proved remarkably successful in averting the Khrushchev Dilemma. The swift transition to a new and more stable political order in eastern Europe was almost entirely peaceful, other than in the special case of Romania. Never before has rapid social and political change of this magnitude occurred with so little violence. The peaceful collapse of communism in eastern Europe seemed implausible until it actually happened.

Some element of good fortune may have been involved, but Gorbachev's success in avoiding the Khrushchev Dilemma was not just a matter of luck. Nor was the lack of any major violence (except in Romania) during the revolutions of 1989 attributable to the east European communist regimes themselves. Had it been left to the East German, Bulgarian or Czechoslovak authorities, violent repression would have resulted. Instead, the lack of violence was attributable in part to the restraint and courage of the east European peoples, and in part to the

deliberate policies adopted by Moscow. Throughout the latter half of 1989 (and even earlier in Hungary and Poland), the Soviet Union took timely and effective action to forestall violence and promote far-reaching liberalization in the Warsaw Pact countries. At each of the many points when the Soviet Union could have stepped in to halt or reverse the process of fundamental change, Gorbachev instead chose to expedite it.

Moscow's active role

The first and, in many ways, most important test of Gorbachev's efforts to promote sweeping change in eastern Europe came in Poland, a country that had experienced severe internal crises many times in the recent past (in 1956, 1968, 1970, 1976 and 1980–81). By the late 1980s Poland once again seemed highly susceptible to violent unrest.²⁶ The potential for renewed instability became evident in early March 1988 when thousands of students in Warsaw, Kraków, Wrocław and Lublin held large protest rallies to mark the twentieth anniversary of student demonstrations in 1968 that were harshly suppressed by the communist regime. The Polish authorities responded to the March 1988 protests by sending in special anti-riot police, who clashed violently with the students and arrested hundreds.²⁷ The police eventually quelled the disturbances, but the uneasy calm that followed lasted barely a month. In April 1988 crippling strikes broke out at major industrial plants and shipyards around the country led by workers demanding the legalization of Solidarity. (Solidarity had been formally banned in December 1981 and was not permitted to regroup even after martial law was lifted in July 1983.) The authorities again responded with force, but the crackdown did not prevent some of the strikes from dragging on until mid-May.²⁸ These outbreaks of violent turmoil, coming in such rapid succession, underscored the potential for much wider unrest. To avert a chaotic upheaval in Poland, Gorbachev acted at crucial moments in 1988 and 1989 to ensure that the country would undergo a peaceful but drastic transformation. The approach that Gorbachev adopted in Poland is worth briefly examining here in so far as it illustrates the type of policy he pursued throughout the region. The Polish case also highlights the radical difference between Gorbachev's policies and those of earlier Soviet leaders.

Soviet efforts to promote political liberalization in Poland began during Gorbachev's visit to Warsaw in July 1988, when he offered to resolve controversial 'blank spots' in Soviet–Polish relations and privately urged senior officials in the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR) to press ahead with political and economic reforms.²⁹ The need for far-reaching change in Poland became all the more evident the following month when a new wave of strikes in support of Solidarity erupted at Polish factories and coal mines. From that point on, Soviet leaders began strongly encouraging the PZPR to seek an accord with the still-banned trade union.

Initially, Gorbachev's prodding encountered resistance in Warsaw, where many officials were loath to contemplate a meaningful role for Solidarity. The Polish leader, Wojciech Jaruzelski, claimed in mid-1988 that Solidarity's legal existence

in 1980–81 had spawned ‘chaos and anarchy’, and he vowed not to permit a ‘return to those times’. Jaruzelski and other high-ranking Polish officials spoke of the need to adopt ‘emergency powers’, including a ban on further strikes.³⁰ Although the Polish government established preliminary contacts with Lech Wałęsa and other key Solidarity representatives in late August and early September 1988, the prospect of a genuine bargain (not to mention full-fledged power-sharing) still seemed remote.³¹ Faced with this impasse, Gorbachev authorized a high-level Soviet official, Nikolai Shishlin, to declare that ‘we [in Moscow] would not be frightened if Solidarity re-emerged’ or if there were a ‘return to trade union pluralism’ in Poland, a statement that undercut PZPR hardliners who opposed any sort of deal with Solidarity.³² Shishlin’s comments, published on 7 September, were reflected in documents prepared over the next few days by the Polish authorities regarding new overtures to the opposition.³³ Soviet leaders then met in Moscow with top-ranking Polish officials and recommended that the PZPR move rapidly ahead in forging an agreement.³⁴

With continued strong encouragement from Moscow, the Polish government soon agreed to open full-fledged ‘round-table’ talks with Solidarity in early February 1989 and to restore the union’s legal status. When the round-table talks culminated in a ‘grand deal’ in early April 1989, Soviet leaders promptly and unequivocally expressed support.³⁵ The ensuing parliamentary elections in Poland in early June 1989 were only partly free, but they resulted in a crushing victory for Solidarity over the PZPR. Polish communist leaders had consistently overestimated their chances of success in the elections, and they were stunned by the results.³⁶ Although some observers speculated that the Soviet Union might try to undo the PZPR’s humiliating defeat, nothing of the sort actually happened. Instead, Soviet officials immediately endorsed the strong showing by Solidarity and made clear to the Polish authorities that they must abide by the outcome. When the PZPR Politburo and Secretariat convened in a joint session on 5 June (the day after the elections) to ponder their next steps, the hard-line members who had been counting on Moscow to intervene against Solidarity were left in a state of shock. They conceded that, under the circumstances, ‘the elections cannot be annulled’.³⁷

Even at this stage, however, several key figures in the Polish leadership were still hopeful that Soviet policy would revert to a more traditional orientation. Declassified materials reveal that, as early as August 1988, Poland’s Homeland Defense Committee (the highest political-military body in the country) secretly authorized the Polish Ministry of Internal Affairs (MSW) to begin planning for the imposition of martial law.³⁸ Although the full extent of the planning is not yet known, newly released documents indicate that MSW commanders mobilized forces from the Security Service (SB) for a full-scale crackdown. The MSW also launched a covert domestic operation (codenamed *Urna ‘89*) in the spring of 1989 to discredit Solidarity and sway the results of the parliamentary elections in favor of the PZPR – an effort that proved singularly unsuccessful.³⁹ In the wake of that debacle, the MSW and SB resumed their preparations for the introduction of martial law. The apparent success of China’s violent campaign against protesters

near Tiananmen Square – an event that took place on the same day as the Polish elections – lent greater weight to the arguments of those in the PZPR who believed that a similar approach would work in Poland. The MSW's preparations in June 1989, including the drafting of timetables for a forceful crackdown and the compilation of detailed lists of people to be arrested, went well beyond the preliminary steps taken in the latter half of 1988.⁴⁰ On 26 June the MSW chief of staff, General Henryk Dankowski, ordered the ministry's regional bureaus to prepare evaluations of the newly elected members of parliament and to send him the files of all 'secret collaborators' (*tajne współpracownicy*) of the SB.⁴¹ Dankowski also ordered the regional commanders and SB to maintain 'full operational contact' with the informants, presumably to elicit their support for 'extreme measures'. If the Polish authorities had received a go-ahead from Moscow in mid-1989 (as they did eight years earlier), the martial law operation of December 1981 might well have been repeated.

Far from encouraging a crackdown, however, Gorbachev did just the opposite. In the aftermath of the Polish elections, he not only continued to express his support for the results, but also provided a great boost to Solidarity by declaring, in his speech before the European Parliament, that the Soviet Union would 'respect the absolute right of every nation to choose its own social system as it sees fit'. To dispel any ambiguity about this phrasing, Gorbachev instructed one of his top aides, Vadim Zagladin, to make clear that Poland, like every other nation, had the 'absolute right to choose its own social system', including the option of a non-communist government. When Zagladin was asked, on the eve of Gorbachev's visit to Strasbourg, whether the Soviet Union would be willing to tolerate a Solidarity-led government in Warsaw, he replied: 'We will maintain ties with any Polish government that emerges after the recent elections. This is purely a Polish internal affair. Any solution adopted by our Polish friends will be acceptable to us.'⁴²

Coming in the wake of the Polish elections and the remarkable changes under way in Hungary, the statements by Gorbachev and Zagladin sent a powerful message to the Polish authorities (and, indirectly, to all the other leaders in eastern Europe). Certainly no one in the PZPR could any longer have much hope that the Soviet Union would come to the rescue – militarily or otherwise – of the decaying communist regime in Warsaw.

Gorbachev's role remained vital in late July 1989, when pressure mounted in Poland for the establishment of a non-communist government headed by Solidarity. Jaruzelski tried to stave off this development by publicly warning that 'adjoining states', especially the Soviet Union, would 'look at this askance'.⁴³ The Polish leader was hoping that the Soviet Union would back him up, but his hopes proved unfounded. One of Gorbachev's top aides, Aleksandr Yakovlev, sought assurance from Solidarity that it would uphold Poland's military obligations to the Warsaw Pact; and then, with that assurance in hand, he declared that 'political arrangements in Poland are solely for the Poles themselves to decide, without interference from any quarter'.⁴⁴ The Soviet Union, Yakovlev added, would accept any type of government that emerged.

With that, the PZPR's last hope of preserving its 'leading role' in Polish society disappeared. By the third week in August the Polish communist authorities were forced to give Solidarity an opportunity to form its own government under Tadeusz Mazowiecki. Before Mazowiecki's government could actually take office, however, Soviet intervention was required again. The PZPR General Secretary, Mieczysław Rakowski, made a last-ditch effort to undercut the new government by declaring that he would not accept Mazowiecki's appointment unless the PZPR was given additional ministerial slots (beyond the two already promised). Wałęsa and Mazowiecki warned Rakowski to 'stop rocking the boat' with 'threats and blackmail', and a deadlock ensued.⁴⁵ For a brief while the whole arrangement in Poland seemed on the verge of collapse, but Gorbachev stepped in to salvage it. In a 40-minute telephone call to Rakowski, he persuaded the Polish leader to adopt a more conciliatory line.⁴⁶ Rakowski promptly announced that he would seek 'partnerlike cooperation' with Solidarity and would drop his demand for extra portfolios. Shortly thereafter, a PZPR press official hailed Solidarity for its 'realistic approach', and the outgoing communist Prime Minister, Czesław Kiszczak, lauded Mazowiecki as 'an outstanding personality' and 'a wise man'.⁴⁷

The prospect of a non-communist government in Poland aroused consternation among the anti-reformist east European states, especially Romania, which claimed that the development would benefit 'imperialist, reactionary forces' and 'jeopardize the interests of socialism, including the Warsaw Pact'.⁴⁸ In an ironic reversal of its position in 1968, the Romanian government secretly urged the other Warsaw Pact states to join it in sending troops to Poland to prevent Solidarity from coming to power:

As a communist party and socialist country, [we] cannot consider this to be solely a Polish internal affair. [We] believe it concerns all socialist countries... The Communist and workers' parties of the socialist countries, representing the members of the Warsaw Pact, should adopt a stance and demand that Solidarity not be entrusted with the mission of forming a government. [We] have decided to appeal to...the leaders of the parties in the Warsaw Pact countries and other socialist countries to express serious concern and to ask for joint [military] action to avert the grave situation in Poland and to defend socialism and the Polish people.⁴⁹

Soviet leaders immediately dismissed any such notion and lodged a stern protest with the Romanian authorities.⁵⁰ The Soviet press went out of its way to commend Mazowiecki for being a 'calm, equable politician' who during 'his many years of experience' had 'never sought to promote himself'.⁵¹ High-ranking Soviet officials stressed that 'the Poles have chosen their own path of development' and 'are able to decide their fate for themselves'.⁵² Mazowiecki's government was able to take office without further ado, and the Soviet Union transmitted a message of congratulations pledging continued 'friendship and cooperation' with Poland.⁵³

Gorbachev reaffirmed his willingness to accept and even welcome the new Polish government when he sent one of his top advisers, Vladimir Kryuchkov, to Warsaw shortly after Mazowiecki took office. Kryuchkov conveyed Gorbachev's 'wishes of great success' and praised Mazowiecki as 'a solid man' who 'knows what his country needs'.⁵⁴ In a separate meeting with senior PZPR officials, Kryuchkov warned that the party must help, rather than hinder, the new Prime Minister. Rakowski heeded this message by promptly ordering all PZPR members in the state administrative apparatus to work loyally for Mazowiecki's government.⁵⁵ In subsequent weeks, Soviet leaders repeatedly voiced strong support for the new Polish government. Although Gorbachev and his colleagues were well aware that Poland 'might eventually leave the Warsaw Pact', they wanted to 'establish friendly and amicable ties' and to 'cooperate [with the Solidarity-led government] to the maximum extent'. The Soviet Politburo promised Mazowiecki that the USSR would 'de-Stalinize Soviet-Polish relations' and would 'fulfill all obligations [regarding energy supplies] to Poland scrupulously and without exception'.⁵⁶ The Politburo directed all the relevant Soviet agencies and ministries to make good on these pledges. When Mazowiecki visited Moscow in late November 1989, Gorbachev again 'wished [him] every success' and declared that 'relations between our two countries have become better, cleaner and healthier than ever before'.⁵⁷

In short, rather than trying to save the PZPR's 'leading role' in Polish society, the Soviet Union actively facilitated the demise of communist rule in Poland. Even if Gorbachev initially may have preferred to see the Polish government remain under the control of reform-minded communists, he soon came to recognize that no communist leader in Poland could win sufficient popular support to guarantee political stability. Only a government led by Solidarity could take the steps needed to forestall another violent crisis in Poland, a crisis that would generate pressure for a Soviet military response. When it came to a choice of either promoting the formation of a stable, non-communist government in Poland or upholding orthodox communist rule by any means necessary, Gorbachev – unlike his predecessors – chose the former.

The experience with Poland was typical of Gorbachev's policy toward eastern Europe as a whole. In each case, the Soviet Union helped to bring about sweeping political change while effectively depriving hard-line communist leaders of the option of violent repression. The notable exception of Romania, with its bloody and chaotic revolution, merely proves the rule. Since the mid-1960s, Soviet influence had always been much weaker in Romania than in the other Warsaw Pact countries. If the Soviet Union had been able to maintain the same degree of influence in Romania that it enjoyed elsewhere in eastern Europe, the violent rebellion of December 1989 might not have been necessary. The Romanian crisis was illuminating in its own right, however, in so far as it showed the lengths to which Gorbachev was willing to go to avoid direct Soviet military intervention in eastern Europe. Despite serious provocations by the forces loyal to Nicolae Ceauşescu, including the firing of shots at the Soviet embassy in Bucharest and threats by the Romanian state security agency (Securitate) to blow

up nuclear power stations near the Soviet border, and despite explicit statements by the major Western governments that they would welcome Soviet intervention in Romania, Soviet leaders refrained from sending in any troops.⁵⁸ Indeed, newly declassified materials confirm that Gorbachev was so disinclined to use military force in eastern Europe that he did not even seriously broach the matter when the Soviet Politburo gathered at the height of the Romanian crisis to discuss possible responses.⁵⁹

In every respect, then, Gorbachev's approach to Soviet-east European relations, from mid-1988 on, was radically different from that of his predecessors. Previous Soviet leaders had sought to maintain orthodox communist regimes in eastern Europe, if necessary through the use of armed force. Gorbachev, by contrast, wanted to avoid military intervention in eastern Europe at all costs. Hence, his paramount objective was to defuse the pressures in the region that might eventually have led to violent, anti-Soviet uprisings. This objective, in turn, required him to go much further than he initially anticipated. In effect, Gorbachev actively promoted fundamental political change in eastern Europe while there was still some chance of benefiting from it, rather than risk being confronted later on by widespread violence that would practically compel him to send in troops. The hope was that, by supporting the sweeping but peaceful transformation of the region over the near term, the Soviet Union would never again have to contend with large-scale outbreaks of anti-Soviet violence, as Khrushchev had to do in 1956. This basic strategy, of encouraging and managing internal upheavals in order to prevent much more severe crises in the future, achieved its immediate aim, but in the process it both necessitated and ensured the demise of east European communism.

Benefits and costs

By effectively doing away with the communist bloc, Gorbachev vastly improved the climate for East-West relations (including East-West trade) and eliminated the perceived burden that eastern Europe had long imposed on Soviet economic and military resources.⁶⁰ He also removed a major impediment to his programme of domestic reform. Whereas previous Soviet leaders were wont to invoke the concepts of 'socialist internationalism' and a 'socialist commonwealth' to confer 'legitimacy' on the traditional Marxist-Leninist model, Gorbachev and his aides could point to the developments in eastern Europe as evidence of the model's bankruptcy. Yakovlev, for example, argued in November 1989 that the upheavals in Hungary, Poland, East Germany and Bulgaria 'pose a threat to no one, except, perhaps, to the countries that have not yet gone through the process of democratization'.⁶¹ Another of Gorbachev's aides, Sergei Karaganov, stressed in early 1990 that:

the changes in the German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia, and Romania have provided a potent push for perestroika... They have strengthened its irreversibility, and showed that there is no reasonable alternative to the democratization of the political system and the marketization of the economy.⁶²

The turmoil that Gorbachev allowed and encouraged in the East bloc countries thereby negated a key external prop on which his opponents in Moscow might have relied. In all these respects, the dissolution of Soviet hegemony over eastern Europe was highly beneficial for the Soviet leader.

At the same time, Gorbachev's policy, for all its positive aspects, was fraught with serious costs. The historian Vyacheslav Dashichev has rightly observed that 'no one in the Soviet Union – neither Gorbachev nor the ruling political elite nor the wider Soviet society – was ready, either psychologically or conceptually, for the fundamental turnaround that occurred'.⁶³ By late 1990, the Soviet Union was unable to salvage what little remained of its leverage in eastern Europe. Even before the Warsaw Pact was formally abolished in July 1991, the limited effectiveness of the alliance had disappeared. The fundamental political changes that occurred in eastern Europe in 1989 and 1990 – changes that the Warsaw Pact in earlier decades was supposed to prevent, especially in the GDR – deprived the alliance of its main *raison d'être*. Soviet officials themselves privately acknowledged in early 1990 that the upheavals in eastern Europe had 'shifted the military balance on the European continent in favor of the West'.⁶⁴ Some officials concluded at an early stage that the shift in the military balance was 'fundamental' and 'decisive', especially with the prospect of a unified Germany in NATO. Other officials initially hoped that the Soviet Union could 'limit [its] "losses"' by 'promoting the formation of an all-European security system' that would supplant both NATO and the Warsaw Pact.⁶⁵ It soon became clear, however, that no such system would actually materialize.

Instead, the Warsaw Pact rapidly disintegrated, leaving NATO as the only security organization in Europe. The elaborate command-and-control infrastructure that Soviet leaders had worked so long to develop for the Pact became defunct, and pressures quickly mounted for the withdrawal of all Soviet troops and weapons from the region.⁶⁶ In February 1990 the Soviet Union agreed to remove its entire Central and Southern Groups of Forces from Czechoslovakia and Hungary by July 1991, a schedule that many Soviet military officers believed was too compressed.⁶⁷ Marshal Viktor Kulikov, the Commander-in-Chief of the Warsaw Pact until April 1989, later recalled the bitterness that he and other military commanders had felt about the pace of the withdrawals:

To call it a give-away is putting it far too mildly. I would say it bordered on criminality. The decision to pull troops so quickly out of Hungary, Czechoslovakia and especially Germany was rash and ill conceived. The officer corps was left in a disastrous state, bereft of housing, material support and the right to a new job. Everything was done in a slapdash manner... I have to acknowledge that [we in] the military leadership were too docile; we were not perseverant enough and failed to insist that our troops should be pulled out in an orderly manner, with adequate support for our armed forces, the officer corps and their families.⁶⁸

Despite these sentiments (which some officers voiced in public), the withdrawals from Hungary and Czechoslovakia proceeded with great celerity over the next

16 months, finishing slightly ahead of schedule. A provisional agreement regarding the Soviet Union's Northern Group of Forces was concluded with the Polish government in October 1991, and it was then reaffirmed in a formal Russian–Polish treaty in May 1992. Under that treaty, all combat soldiers from the ex-Soviet Army were taken out of Poland by the end of October 1992, and the small number of remaining logistical troops departed by September 1993.⁶⁹ The withdrawal of several hundred thousand Soviet/Russian troops and support personnel from eastern Germany was completed in September 1994, four months ahead of the timetable laid out in treaties signed shortly before and shortly after German reunification in the fall of 1990.⁷⁰ The final pullout of forces from Germany put an end to the presence of the former Soviet Army in eastern Europe, thus completing the demise of the Warsaw Pact.

The fate of CMEA was no better. Although most of the east European states after 1989 still relied heavily on the Soviet Union for trade and energy supplies (both natural gas and oil), the inexorable trend in the region was toward much greater economic contact with the West. The new east European governments looked upon CMEA as a cumbersome, antiquated organization that should be abolished, and they drafted formal proposals to that effect. Soviet leaders, too, soon acknowledged that the organization had never come close to living up to its stated aims, and that its functions had been overtaken by events.⁷¹ Even if the Soviet government had tried – very belatedly – to implement drastic reforms in CMEA, the organization was doomed by the upheavals of 1989–90. Hence, like the Warsaw Pact, it was formally disbanded in mid-1991.

In all these ways, events in eastern Europe moved so far and so fast, and the Soviet Union's influence in the region declined so precipitously, that the fate of the whole continent eluded Soviet control. The very notion of a 'socialist commonwealth' lost its meaning once Gorbachev not only permitted, but actually facilitated, the collapse of communist rule in eastern Europe.⁷² Hopes of 'reforming' or 'adapting' the structures that had undergirded Soviet hegemony, or of replacing them with an 'all-European security system', proved illusory. Despite the benefits Gorbachev gained from the disintegration of the bloc, his political fortunes suffered once the lingering remnants of the socialist commonwealth were formally dissolved.

Notes

- 1 Sergei Kovalev, 'Suverenitet i internatsional'nye obyazannosti sotsialisticheskikh stran', *Pravda* (Moscow), 26 September 1968, p. 4. The term 'Brezhnev Doctrine' was coined in the West in 1968 after the publication of this authoritative article by Kovalev. Leonid Brezhnev himself subsequently reaffirmed the eponymous doctrine in his speech at the 9th Congress of the Polish United Workers' Party, 'Rech' tovarishcha L. I. Brezhneva', *Pravda* (Moscow), 13 November 1968, p. 2. On the genesis of the Brezhnev Doctrine, see Mark Kramer, 'The Czechoslovak Crisis and the Brezhnev Doctrine', in Carole Fink, Philipp Gassert and Detlef Junker (eds), *1968: The World Transformed* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 150–60; and Karen Dawisha, 'The 1968 Invasion of Czechoslovakia: Causes, Consequences, and Lessons

- for the Future', in Karen Dawisha and Philip Hanson (eds), *Soviet–East European Dilemmas: Coercion, Competition, and Consent* (London: Heinemann, 1981), pp. 9–25.
- 2 For a much fuller discussion of Soviet policy toward eastern Europe during the first four and a half years of the Gorbachev era, see Mark Kramer, 'Beyond the Brezhnev Doctrine: A New Era in Soviet–East European Relations', *International Security*, 14, 3 (Winter 1989), pp. 25–67. See also Jacques Lévesque, *The Enigma of 1989: The USSR and the Liberation of Eastern Europe*, trans. Keith Martin (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997).
 - 3 'Zasedanie Politbyuro TsK KPSS 26 iyunya 1986 goda: Zapiska tov. Gorbacheva M. S. o nekotorykh aktual'nykh voprosakh sotrudnichestva s sotsialisticheskimi stranami', Politburo Protocol No. 18 (Top Secret), 26 June 1986, in Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Noveishei Istorii (RGANI), Fond (F.) 89, Opis' (Op.) 36, Delo (D.) 19, List (L.) 1.
 - 4 'V Politbyuro TsK KPSS: O nekotorykh aktual'nykh voprosakh sotrudnichestva s sotsstranami', Memorandum from M. S. Gorbachev to the CPSU Politburo, 25 June 1986 (Secret), supplement to Point 1 of Politburo Protocol No. 18, in Arkhiv Prezidenta Rossiiskoi Federatsii (APRF), F. 3, Op. 102, D. 218, Ll. 4, 5.
 - 5 For elaboration on each of these points, see Kramer, 'Beyond the Brezhnev Doctrine', pp. 36–8.
 - 6 'Sovetsko-yugoslavskaya deklaratsiya', *Pravda* (Moscow), 19 March 1988, p. 1.
 - 7 Vyacheslav Dashichev, 'Vostok-zapad: poisk novykh otnoshenii – O prioritetskakh vneshnei politiki Sovetskogo gosudarstva', *Literaturnaya gazeta* (Moscow), 20 (18 May 1988), p. 14. In December 1988, Dashichev's article was voted one of the best to have appeared in *Literaturnaya gazeta* in 1988.
 - 8 'Vystuplenie M. S. Gorbacheva v Organizatsii Ob'edinennykh Natsii', *Pravda* (Moscow), 8 December 1988, p. 2. The US intelligence community prepared a classified assessment of the impact of these cuts in early 1989. The document – US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), 'Trends and Development in Warsaw Pact Theater Forces and Doctrine Through the 1990s', National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) 11-14-89, February 1989 (Top Secret) – was recently declassified and is available in CIA, Center for the Study of Intelligence, *At Cold War's End: U.S. Intelligence on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, 1989–1991* (Washington, DC: CIA, 1999), Document 16. See also William E. Odum, *The Collapse of the Soviet Military* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), pp. 146–7.
 - 9 'Zasedanie Politbyuro TsK KPSS 27–28 dekabrya 1988 goda: O prakticheskoi realizatsii i prakticheskom obespechenii itogov vizita t. Gorbacheva M. S. v OON', 27–28 December 1988 (Top Secret), in RGANI, F. 89, Op. 42, D. 24, Ll. 1–34. The quoted passage is from L. 31.
 - 10 'Rech' M. S. Gorbacheva', *Izvestiya* (Moscow), 7 July 1989, p. 2.
 - 11 The adverse domestic repercussions of Soviet military intervention in eastern Europe were candidly assessed by Yuri Levada in 'Reaktivnaya otdacha', *Moskovskie novosti* (Moscow), 34 (20 August 1989), p. 7.
 - 12 'K zasedaniyu Politbyuro 6/X-88 g.', 6 October 1988 (Secret), reproduced in G. Kh. Shakhnazarov, *Tsena svobody: Reformatsiya Gorbacheva glazami ego pomoshchnika* (Moscow: Rossika-Zevs, 1993), pp. 367–9, quote p. 367. This document and a large number of others are now available at Arkhiv Gorbachev-Fonda (AGF), Moscow.
 - 13 Ibid., p. 368.
 - 14 Interview with Vitalii Zhurkin, adviser to Gorbachev on European affairs, in 'Evropa v menyayushchikhsya koordinatakh', *Izvestiya* (Moscow), 26 May 1990, p. 5.
 - 15 Ibid.
 - 16 E. Shevardnadze, 'O vneshnei politike', *Pravda* (Moscow), 26 June 1990, p. 3.
 - 17 'K zasedaniyu Politbyuro 6/X-88 g.', p. 368.
 - 18 Ibid., pp. 367–8.

- 19 For presumed transcripts of deliberations involving Deng Xiaoping and other Chinese communist leaders in April–June 1989, see Andrew Nathan and Perry Link (eds), *The Tiananmen Papers: The Chinese Leadership's Decision to Use Force against their Own People* (New York: Public Affairs, 2001). Although the provenance and authenticity of these documents are still uncertain, the transcripts seem to convey an accurate sense of the Chinese leadership's reaction to Gorbachev's visit. See especially the comments at meetings of the Chinese Politburo on 16 and 17 May 1989, pp. 180–98.
- 20 The jarring effect that the Tiananmen crackdown had in Moscow in 1989 was emphasized by both Georgii Shakhnazarov and Anatolii Chernyaev in several interviews with the author in Moscow and Providence, Rhode Island, 14 March and 7 May 1998 respectively.
- 21 'XXVIII S'ezd Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soyuz', *Pravda* (Moscow), 9 July 1990, p. 5.
- 22 'Otveti M. S. Gorbacheva na voprosy gazety "Vashington post" i zhurnala "N'yusuik"', *Pravda* (Moscow), 23 May 1988, p. 2.
- 23 'Zayavlenie rukovoditelei Bolgarii, Vengrii, GDR, Pol'shi, i Sovetskogo Soyuz' and 'Zayavlenie Sovetskogo pravitel'stva', *Izvestiya* (Moscow), 5 December 1989, p. 2.
- 24 This seems to be what Shakhnazarov had in mind in his October 1988 memorandum; see 'K zasedaniyu Politbyuro 6/X-88 g.', pp. 367–9. See also 'Vypiska iz protokola No. 166 zasedaniya Politbyuro TsK KPSS ot 28 sentyabrya 1989 goda: Ob obstanovke v Pol'she, vozmozhnykh variantakh ee razvitiya, perspektivakh sovetsko-pol'skikh otnoshenii', P166/23 (Top Secret), 28 September 1989, in RGANI, F. 89, Op. 14, D. 24, esp. Ll. 6–15. For further comments as the situation unfolded, see 'Vypiska iz protokola No. 175 zasedaniya Politbyuro TsK KPSS ot 2 yanvarya 1990 goda: O sobytiyakh v Vostochnoi Evrope i pozitsii SSSR', P175/V (Top Secret), 2 January 1990, in RGANI, F. 89, Op. 13, D. 39; and 'Vypiska iz protokola No. 184 zasedaniya Politbyuro TsK KPSS ot 5 aprelya 1990 goda: O linii KPSS i merakh v podderzhku kommunisticheskikh i rabochikh partii v vostochnoevropeiskikh stranakh', P184/38 (Top Secret), 5 April 1990, in RGANI, F. 89, Op. 9, D. 109.
- 25 Ample evidence of this can be seen in 'Vypiska iz protokola No. 165 zasedaniya Politbyuro TsK KPSS ot 11 sentyabrya 1989 goda: O zayavlenii TASS v podderzhku Germanskoi Demokraticeskoi Respubliki', P165/6 (Top Secret), 11 September 1989, in RGANI, F. 89, Per. 9, Dok. 30. See also the account by one of Gorbachev's top foreign policy aides at the time, Anatolii Chernyaev, *Shest' let s Gorbachevym: Po dnevnikovym zapis'yam* (Moscow: Kultura, 1993), p. 306.
- 26 A large body of literature – collections of documents, first-hand accounts and secondary analyses – is available on various aspects of the demise of communism in Poland. For a valuable list of more than 300 relevant items published through 1999 (mostly in Polish), see Wojciech Frazik, 'Bibliografia ważniejszych publikacji polskich dotyczących upadku komunizmu i transformacji ustrojowej w Polsce w latach 1986–1989', in Instytut Studiów Politycznych Polskiej Akademii Nauk, *Polska 1986–1989: Koniec systemu – Materiały międzynarodowej konferencji*, 3 vols (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Trio, 2002), vol. I, *Referaty*, ed. Paweł Machcewicz, pp. 235–156. Frazik cites, among other publications, some extremely useful compendia of declassified documents from the Polish archives. Among the accounts published outside Poland, see Bartłomiej Kamiński, *The Collapse of State Socialism: The Case of Poland* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991); Claudia Kundigraber, *Polens Weg in die Demokratie: Der Runde Tisch und der unerwartete Machtwechsel* (Göttingen: Cuvilier, 1997); and Marjorie Castle, *Triggering Communism's Collapse: Perceptions and Power in Poland's Transition*, Harvard Cold War Studies Book Series vol. III (Boulder, CO: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003).
- 27 'Police Fight Students as 4 Polish Cities Mark 1968 Unrest', *Toronto Star*, 8 March 1988, p. A4; and 'Clashes as Poles Remember 1968', *The Times* (London), 9 March 1988, p. 3.

- 28 For a thorough account of the strikes, see Tomasz Tabako, *Strajk 88* (Warsaw: Niezależna Oficyna Wydawnicza Nowa, 1992), as well as the detailed coverage of the Gdańsk strikes in Paweł Smoleński and Wojciech Giełżyński (eds), *Robotnicy 88* (London: Aneks, 1989). The impact of the strikes on the Polish regime's calculations can be traced in 'Notatka w sprawie wniosków i zadań wpływających z oceny bieżącej sytuacji społeczno-politycznej w kraju', from W. Grzelec of the PZPR Public Law Department, 15 May 1988 (Secret), in Archiwum Akt Nowych (AAN), Archiwum Komitetu Centralnego Polskiej Zjednoczonej Partii Robotniczej (Arch. KC PZPR), XI A/1435; and 'Uwagi ekspertów o sytuacji w kraju i wynikających z niej wniosków', KS/0103/698/88 (Secret), 5 May 1988, prepared for the PZPR Politburo and Secretariat, in AAN, Arch. KC PZPR, V/409.
- 29 'Wstępna informacja o wizycie Sekretarza Generalnego KC KPZR M. S. Gorbaczowa w Polsce 11-16 lipca 1988 r.', KS/0178/1144/88 (Secret), 11-14 July 1988, in Stanisław Perzkowski (pseud.) (ed.), *Tajne dokumenty Biura Politycznego i Sekretariatu KC: Ostatni rok władzy 1988-1989* (London: Aneks, 1994), pp. 5-9. See also 'Informacja o stanie realizacji postanowień wynikających z wizyty Sekretarza Generalnego KC PZPR M. Gorbaczowa w Polsce', KS/0210/1403/88 (Secret), 23 August 1988, in Perzkowski (pseud.) (ed.), *Tajne dokumenty Biura Politycznego i Sekretariatu KC*, pp. 32-3.
- 30 'Protokół Nr. 43 z posiedzenia Sekretariatu KC PZPR w dniu 1988.06.20', 20 June 1988 (Secret), in AAN, Arch. KC PZPR, VII/90. See also 'Zapis stenograficzny rozmowy między Sekretarzem Generalnym Komitetu Centralnego Niemieckiej Partii Jedności i Przewodniczącym Rady Państwa Niemieckiej Republiki Demokratycznej Erichem Honeckerem i Pierwszym Sekretarzem Komitetu Centralnego Polskiej Zjednoczonej Partii Robotniczej i Przewodniczącym Rady Państwa Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej Wojciechem Jaruzelskim, 16 września 1987 w zamku myśliwskim Hubertusstock', 16 September 1987 (Top Secret), in Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv (SAPMO-BA), Zentrales Parteiarchiv (ZPA) der SED, DY 30, J IV/893.
- 31 On these initial contacts, see 'Protokół Nr. 85 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR w dniu 28 sierpnia 1988 r.', 28 August 1988 (Top Secret), 'Protokół Nr. 46 z roboczego posiedzenia Sekretariatu KC PZPR w dniu 1 września 1988 r.', 1 September 1988 (Top Secret), and 'Dalekopis: Kwestia rozmów zopozycja', Memorandum No. KS/1334/88 (Top Secret), 2 September 1988, prepared by the PZPR Organizational-Party Work Department for the PZPR Politburo, all reproduced in Perzkowski (pseud.) (ed.), *Tajne dokumenty Biura Politycznego i Sekretariatu KC*, pp. 34-48.
- 32 Interview with Shishlin in Bernard Guetta, 'Le pluralisme syndical n'est pas une hérésie', *Le Monde* (Paris), 7 September 1988, p. 4.
- 33 'O stosunku niektórych środowisk opozycyjnych wobec propozycji utworzenia "paktu antykrzysowego"', No. KS/1350/88 (Secret), 8 September 1988, in Perzkowski (pseud.) (ed.), *Tajne dokumenty Biura Politycznego i Sekretariatu KC*, pp. 9-15; 'Kwestia rozmów z opozycją', KS/1334/88 (Strictly Confidential), 7 September 1988, in Perzkowski (pseud.) (ed.), *Tajne dokumenty Biura Politycznego i Sekretariatu KC*, pp. 44-8; and 'Decyzje Biura Politycznego KC PZPR: Poziedzenie w dniu 13 września 1988 r.', KS/0228/1499/88 (Secret), 13 September 1988, in Perzkowski (pseud.) (ed.), *Tajne dokumenty Biura Politycznego i Sekretariatu KC*, pp. 51-2.
- 34 V. A. Medvedev, *Raspad: Kak on nazreval v 'mirovoi sisteme sotsializma'* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya, 1994), pp. 89-91. Medvedev was in charge of the CPSU Central Committee department overseeing intra-bloc relations until 1988, when he became a full member of the CPSU Politburo.
- 35 Witold Szalmonowicz (ed.), *Porozumienia Okrągłego Stołu: Warszawa 6 luty - 5 kwietnia 1989 r.* (Olsztyn: NSZZ 'Solidarność', 1989). See also Jan Skórzyński, *Ugoda i rewolucja: Władza i opozycja, 1985-1989* (Warszawa: Presspublica, 1995), pp. 182-254.

- 36 This is abundantly evident in the transcript of the joint session of the PZPR Politburo and Secretariat the day after the elections, 'Protokół Nr. 64 z rozszerzonego posiedzenia Sekretariatu KC PZPR 2 dniu 5.06.1989 r.', 5 June 1989 (Secret), reproduced in *Kultura* (Paris), 6 (June 1993), pp. 40–52. For an interesting (if somewhat quirky) assessment of how the electoral arrangements approved by the two sides during the round-table talks reflected the PZPR's overconfidence and contributed to the magnitude of the party's defeat, see Marek M. Kamiński, 'How Communism Could Have Been Saved: Formal Analysis of Electoral Bargaining in Poland in 1989', *Public Choice*, 98, 1–2 (January 1989), pp. 83–109.
- 37 Comments of Andrzej Gdula, in 'Protokół Nr. 64 z rozszerzonego posiedzenia Sekretariatu KC PZPR 2 dniu 5.06.1989 r.', p. 46.
- 38 'Protokół Nr. 01/88 z posiedzenia Komitetu Obrony Kraju w dniu 1988.08.20: O rozpoczęciu przygotowań do wprowadzenia stanu wyjątkowego', 20 August 1988 (Top Secret), in Centralne Archiwum Wojskowe (CAW), Materiały z posiedzeń Komitetu Obrony Kraju, Sekretariat KOK/BBNpKP, Teczka Nr. 36/0020/91. See the detailed commentary and passages from relevant documentation in Lech Kowalski, 'Stan wyjątkowy – okrągły stół', *Arka* (Kraków), 44–45 (November 1993), pp. 13–28; and Lech Kowalski, 'KOK wobec opozycji politycznej i Kościoła w latach 80-tych', *Zeszyty Historyczne* (Paris), 113 (1995), pp. 125–47.
- 39 Extensive documentation on the Urna '89 campaign is stored in Archiwum Urzędu Ochrony Państwa (Arch. OUP), Sygnatura (Sygn.) IV/696, Cześć (Cz.) I and II, Kartki (Kk.) 1–257. See the commentary and documentation in Jan Draus and Zbigniew Nawrocki, 'Siła i rozum: Od stanu wojennego do rządu Mazowieckiego', *Studia Rzeszowskie* (Rzeszów), 6, 1 (1999), pp. 11–41.
- 40 'Instrukcje w sprawie postępowania wobec osób zagrażających bezpieczeństwu i obronności państwa w okresie stanu wojennego', Nr. 803-A (Top Secret), compiled by the Rzeszów branch of the Security Service, 13 June 1989, in Arch. OUP, Sygn. 22300, Tom (T.) 12. See also 'Wykaz osób przewidzianych do przeprowadzenia rozmów ostrzegawczych na wypadek wprowadzenia stanu wyjątkowego', Memorandum No. OA-S-003/89 (Secrecy of Special Importance), 13 June 1989, from Lieutenant-Colonel Józef Gaj, deputy head of the MSW regional branch in Rzeszów, in Archiwum Delegatury Urzędu Ochrony Państwa w Rzeszowie (ADUOPR), Sygn. 617/44/90, Wydział V WUSW w Rzeszowie; and 'Wykaz osób przewidzianych do internowania na wypadek stanu wyjątkowego', Memorandum No. OA-S-002/89 (Secrecy of Special Importance), 13 June 1989, from Major Andrzej Czerwiński, deputy head of 5th Department of the MSW regional branch in Rzeszów, in ADUOPR, Sygn. 617/44/90, Wydział V WUSW w Rzeszowie. Other valuable documents are reproduced in Jan Draus and Zbigniew Nawrocki (eds), *Przeciw Solidarności 1980–1989: Rzeszowska opozycja w tajnych archiwach Ministerstwa Spraw Wewnętrznych* (Rzeszów: Zarząd regionu NSZZ 'Solidarność' w Rzeszowie, 2000).
- 41 'Szyfrogram: Szef Wojewódzkiego Urzędu Spraw Wewnętrznych', No. SVD-001427/89 (Secrecy of Special Importance), 26 June 1989, from Dankowski to regional MSW commanders, in Arch. OUP, Sygn. 22300, T. 4.
- 42 Cited in 'Każydy rząd będzie dla nas partnerem', *Gazeta wyborcza* (Warsaw), 4 July 1989, p. 1. See also the commentary by Adam Michnik, 'Pożegnanie doktryny Breżniewa', *Gazeta wyborcza* (Warsaw), 4 July 1989, p. 5.
- 43 Cited in 'Przed utworzeniem rządu – mówią uczestnicy konsultacji', *Trybuna Ludu* (Warsaw), 27 July 1989, p. 2.
- 44 Quoted by TASS, 29 July 1989.
- 45 'Więcej rozumu, mniej serca', *Gazeta wyborcza* (Warsaw), 23 August 1989, p. 1; and 'Nowy premier, nowy rząd: Czego się po nich spodziewać', *Gazeta wyborcza* (Warsaw), 24 August 1989, p. 1.
- 46 'Konferencja prasowa rzecznika KC: Wtorek wydarzeń i rozmów', *Trybuna Ludu* (Warsaw), 23 August 1989, pp. 1–2.

- 47 Cited in 'Rząd – kiddy, jaki, czyj?', *Gazeta wyborcza* (Warsaw), 23 August 1989, p. 3; and 'Murem za sprawami wsi', *Gazeta wyborcza* (Warsaw), 24 August 1989, p. 1.
- 48 'De la Varşovia', *Scînteia* (Bucharest), 20 August 1989, p. 1.
- 49 The full text of Romania's appeal, dated 19 August 1989 (the same day that Mazowiecki was officially invited to form a government), is reproduced in 'Dokumenty: Polska-Rumunia', *Gazeta Wyborcza* (Warsaw), 29 September–1 October 1989, p. 6. This bizarre episode was reported at length in the same issue of *Gazeta Wyborcza*. Romanian communist officials sought, among other things, to gain the PZPR's cooperation in joint action against Solidarity, but Polish communist leaders swiftly rejected the 'invitation'.
- 50 According to Rafail Fyodorov, who was first deputy chief of the CPSU International Department in 1989–90, the whole episode 'was a dangerous thing in a volatile situation, and it deserved a harsh response'. Interview with Fyodorov by the author, in Moscow, 13 June 1990.
- 51 L. Toporkov, 'Trudnyi vybor: V Pol'she skladyvaetsya novaya rasstanovka politicheskikh sil', *Izvestiya* (Moscow), 23 August 1989, p. 4; and A. Starukhin, 'Reshenie seima PNR', *Pravda* (Moscow), 25 August 1989, p. 7.
- 52 Comments of Evgenii Primakov, chairman of the Council of the Union of the USSR Supreme Soviet, transcribed in 'Press-konferentsiya v Londone Predsedatelya Soveta soyuza Verkhovnogo soveta SSSR E. M. Primakova', TASS, 5 September 1989, item 3. (Two weeks later, Primakov was elevated to candidate membership on the CPSU Politburo.) See also the interview with Nikolai Shishlin, in *Libération* (Paris), 22 September 1989, p. 4.
- 53 'Predsedatelyu Soveta Ministrov Pol'skoi Narodnoi Respubliki Tadeushu Mazovetskomu', *Izvestiya* (Moscow), 25 August 1989, p. 4.
- 54 'Vstrechi v Varshave', *Izvestiya* (Moscow), 27 August 1989, p. 3.
- 55 Information about Kryuchkov's visit was supplied by Georgii Shakhnazarov during an interview in Providence, Rhode Island, 7 May 1998. Kryuchkov himself offered essentially the same account when I interviewed him in Moscow in July 1999. See also Antoni Dudek, 'Kalendarium, 1986–1989: Polska droga do demokracji', in Machcewicz (ed.), *Referaty*, p. 205.
- 56 'Vypiska iz protokola No. 166 Zasedaniya Politbyuro TsK KPSS ot 28 sentyabrya 1989 goda: Ob obstanovke v Pol'she, vozmozhnykh variantakh ee razvitiya, perspektivakh sovetsko-pol'skikh otnoshenii', No. P166/23 (Top Secret), 28 September 1989, in RGANI, F. 89, Op. 9, D. 33, Ll. 1–15.
- 57 'Vstrecha M. S. Gorbacheva s T. Mazovetskim', *Pravda* (Moscow), 25 November 1989, p. 1.
- 58 Thomas L. Friedman, 'Baker Gives U.S. Approval if Soviets Act on Rumania', *New York Times*, 25 December 1999, p. 6; Steven Greenhouse, 'France Offers Aid to Ceausescu Foes', *New York Times*, 25 December 1999, p. 6.
- 59 'Vypiska iz protokola No. 175 zasedaniya Politbyuro TsK KPSS ot 23 dekabrya 1989 goda: O pervoocherednykh merakh v svyazi s obstanovkoi v Rumynii', No. P175/50 (Top Secret), 23 December 1989, in RGANI, F. 89, Op. 8, D. 77, Ll. 1–3.
- 60 The impact on East–West relations is highlighted in memoirs by former key Western officials: George H. W. Bush and Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed* (New York: Knopf, 1998); James A. Baker III, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War, and Peace, 1989–1992* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1995); Robert M. Gates, *From the Shadows: The Ultimate Insider's Story of Five Presidents and How They Won the Cold War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996); Jack F. Matlock, Jr, *Autopsy on an Empire: The American Ambassador's Account of the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (New York: Random House, 1995); Helmut Kohl, *Ich wollte Deutschlands Einheit*, ed. Kai Diekmann and Ralf Georg Reuth (Berlin: Propyläen, 1996); Hans-Dietrich Genscher, *Erinnerungen* (Berlin: Siedler, 1995); Margaret Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years* (New York: HarperCollins, 1993); and Rodric Braithwaite, *Across the Moscow*

- River: The World Turned Upside Down* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002). See also the new memoir by the Soviet ambassador in Washington from 1986 to 1990, Yurii Dubinin, *Vremya peremen: Zapiski posla SSShA* (Moscow: Aviarus-XXI, 2003).
- 61 TASS, 16 November 1989.
- 62 Sergei A. Karaganov, 'The Year of Europe: A Soviet View', *Survival*, 32, 1 (Spring 1990), p. 122.
- 63 V. Dashichev, 'Edinaya Germaniya v edinoi Evrope', *Svobodnaya mysl'* (Moscow), 7 (July 1999), p. 119.
- 64 'Voenno-politicheskie aspekty obstanovki v Evrope (Analiticheskaya zapiska)', prepared by the Soviet Foreign Ministry's Directorate on Arms Control and Disarmament, n.d. (c. early March 1990), in AGF, F. 2, Op. 2, D. 12, Ll. 1–16.
- 65 Ibid., Ll. 1, 2.
- 66 S. F. Akhromeev and G. M. Kornienko, *Glazami marshala i diplomata* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya, 1992), p. 295.
- 67 'Soglasenie mezhdru Pravitel'stvom Soyuzu Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik i Pravitel'stvom Chekhoslovatskoi Sotsialisticheskoi Respubliki o vyvode sovetskikh voisk s territorii Chekhoslovatskoi Sotsialisticheskoi Respubliki', *Vestnik Ministerstva inostrannykh del SSSR* (Moscow), 6 (31 March 1990), pp. 4–5; and 'Soglasenie mezhdru Pravitsl'stvom Soyuzu Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik i Pravitel'stvom Vengerskoi Respubliki o vyvode sovetskikh voisk, vremenno nakhodyashchikhsya na territorii Vengrii', 9 March 1990, supplement to 'Postanovlenie TsK KPSS: O vyvode sovetskikh voisk iz Vengrii', K-227/OS (Secret), 9 March 1990, pp. 10–13, in RGANI, F. 89, Per. 8, D. 21, Ll. 1–8. The Hungarian and Czechoslovak governments initially had pressed for the withdrawals to be completed by the end of 1990. Only with reluctance did they settle for the mid-1991 deadline.
- 68 Interview with Kulikov in Ekaterina Labetskaya, 'Marshal Kulikov: "Voennye byli slishkom poslushnymi"', *Vremya MN* (Moscow), 6 September 1999, p. 2.
- 69 Marek Henzler and Włodzimierz Kalski, 'Wychali: Armia Radziecka z nami od dziecka', *Polityka* (Warsaw), 39 (25 September 1993), pp. 12–13.
- 70 'Dogovor ob okonchatel'nom uregulirovanii v otnoshenii Germanii', *Izvestiya* (Moscow), 13 September 1990, p. 4; and "Dogovor mezhdru Soyuzom Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik i Federativnoi Respublikoi Germanii ob usloviyakh vremennogo prebyvaniya i planomernogo vyvoda sovetskikh voisk s territorii Federativnoi Respubliki Germanii," *Izvestiya* (Moscow), 13 October 1990, p. 3.
- 71 See, for example, A. Shabalin, 'Ekonomika vostochnoevropeskikh stran: Mify i real'nost', *Pravitel'svennyi vestnik* (Moscow), 14 (April 1990), pp. 8–9.
- 72 See 'Voenno-politicheskie aspekty obstanovki v Evrope', Ll. 2–3, 7.

12 The end of Soviet communism

A review

Francesco Benvenuti and Silvio Pons

The standard account of *perestroika*

The history of *perestroika* is a history of a double failure: the failure of communism and the failure of Gorbachev. From the early 1970s, Soviet communism was in serious decline. The economic system was irreversibly obsolescent, and becoming more so every day, while Soviet commitment to upholding the country's international status and to constantly improving (if modestly) the living standards of its population exacted a growing toll from the increasingly strained resources of the country. Bureaucratic corruption and social laxity came to be identified by the Soviet leadership as major problems inherent in the system. The perception of decline was exacerbated during the first half of the 1980s by the pressure resulting from a renewed cycle of confrontation with the United States, the swift advances of Western technology, and the crisis in Poland that exposed the instability of Soviet hegemony in eastern Europe and elicited a new skepticism in regard to the virtues of the 'Brezhnev Doctrine'. The old party guard (its advanced average age portending future leadership problems) gradually came to the conclusion that the young and energetic Mikhail S. Gorbachev was the best hope for the position of General Secretary of the CPSU. The latter began the implementation of a program of reforms in both the economic and political spheres that was intended to infuse the system with the inspiration and material strength it had lost.

However, after a promising start that included crucial steps towards ending the Cold War and legalizing dissent within the Soviet Union, Gorbachev ultimately failed. The international position of the USSR dramatically weakened as a consequence of the 'abdication' of communist regimes in eastern Europe, an unforeseen, if eventually accepted, consequence of *perestroika*.¹ An extreme economic crisis ravaged the Soviet Union itself while new national movements arose in the separate republics that jeopardized the very existence of the state. Instead of rejuvenating Soviet communism, in fact, Gorbachev's reforms accelerated its demise, precipitating its final crisis as the country came apart and broke into pieces, the CPSU was disbanded in response to a wave of popular indignation, Gorbachev was forced to resign from his twin posts as General Secretary of the Party and President of the Union, and market capitalism was abruptly introduced into Russia and other countries of the former Soviet empire.

Scholars have focused their critical attention on the relationship between Gorbachev's personality and the systemic constraints that plagued his own political activity. As the supreme Soviet leader, he played a role of historical magnitude that surprised many both inside the USSR and abroad. The end of Soviet communism, let alone the abrupt, bloodless manner in which it ended, had not been prophesied by even its most inflexible critics. Such a spectacular event has obviously brought with it a great deal of emotional resonance, critical analysis and personal reflection regarding the drama's principal figure.

Opinions differ over the actual scale of Gorbachev's program of reforms. If he had intended to mainly provide a cure for communism he could never have succeeded.² The General Secretary is reported to have been pushed forward by the force of events. This was why he succeeded in 'messing everything up', and created a socially and politically 'dangerous' internal situation by which the system, in order to save itself, finally dissolved itself.³ In that respect, Gorbachev can be compared to the sorcerer's apprentice who loses control of the forces he has ingenuously released, forces that ultimately controlled him (by means of uncensored speech, embryonic representational institutions, and national movements in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union itself).⁴ These were the powerful social forces that generated radical systemic change that Gorbachev had never intended to carry out, and had even tried to avoid. As a consequence, the Soviet system collapsed (or was rather benignly swept away) as did the international position of the Soviet Union as a bipolar power. In regard to Gorbachev himself, the would-be reformer lost out to his non-communist rivals and soon disappeared into the dustbin of history, together with the rump of the system he had so inappropriately striven to transform.

Gorbachev is said to have failed because he was allegedly inconsistent, both intellectually and politically. Both his aims and his means were confused, contradictory and incompatible. His general political outlook was flawed. His attempts at reform were elusive and palliative. His ability to grasp the true depth of the crisis of Soviet communism and the Soviet system was fatally limited.⁵ Rejecting the gloomy prognosis of communist exhaustion, he sought to reinvent a more viable and palatable version of communism, something from the repertoire of 'socialism with a human face'. He consistently stuck to the hope that some kind of ideologically inspired state and society (resting on the concept of an idealized, 'true' Leninism) could be salvaged.⁶

He is accordingly reported to have meant to change the political system only half way, at first aiming toward an ideal type of mono-party democracy,⁷ or 'socialist pluralism',⁸ and later persistently refusing to turn the CPSU into a proper parliamentary party of the Western type.⁹ Some scholars have suggested that in rescinding Article 6 of the Soviet Constitution (that which prescribed the 'party's leading role') in February–March 1990, Gorbachev may have envisioned a multi-party system dominated *de facto* by a single ruling party, as had been the case in pre-1992 Italy with the Christian Democratic Party,¹⁰ or in Mexico with the Revolutionary Institutional Party (the latter's 'revolutionary legitimacy being rooted in time immemorial'¹¹).

However, again paradoxically, Gorbachev attempted to reform the Soviet system by using the very institutions, levers and structures of power that were the

flesh and blood of the system itself.¹² In other words, he sought to fill at once the roles of both Luther and the Pope.¹³ He continuously replaced upper party, state and economic bureaucrats with similar, hopelessly unreconstructed, conservative cadres who ignored, distorted or sabotaged his own directives (and so provoked the final economic crisis and breakdown of authority). Dismantlement of the Central Committee's economic apparatus in September 1988 (in the wake of Gorbachev's momentous presentation of the need for a *Staatsrecht* at the 19th Party Conference) has puzzled several scholars, who view this reform with a mixture of skepticism and bewilderment.¹⁴

But in engineering what might have been a decent *political* reform, Gorbachev seemed to fatally hesitate; or perhaps he did not at all really seek a significant reform of the second pillar of Soviet communism, namely, its socialized economy. He legalized private and cooperative property and allowed for private economic initiative, but the scope of these measures was inherently limited and their impact on the economic system was not substantial.¹⁵ His law of June 1987 democratized the management of state enterprises and allowed them a large degree of autonomy. At the same time, he inexplicably delayed implementation of free prices. As a result, the June law initiated a disintegration of centralized planning without making it possible that market exchange would sooner or later take its place.¹⁶ Gorbachev was either an uncompromising supporter of socialist-communist economic principles, or he was irremediably incompetent and intellectually dishonest.¹⁷

In regard to the national disintegration of the Soviet Union, Gorbachev did not initiate any major innovation in this area. According to the standard account, this additional failure stemmed from the same roots as his general political and economic failures: his persistent ideological bias and/or his half-hearted reformism. The national and ethnic turmoil that overtook the USSR in 1988–91 was the result of Gorbachev's own unawareness of the depth of the problem, one born of historical resentments, new de-colonizing tendencies and escalating nationalism. This led him to underestimate the threat posed by *perestroika* to the social fabric of the Soviet Union.¹⁸ Did Gorbachev think that the 'national question' had been successfully resolved by Soviet society, a belief rooted in Leninist orthodoxy and traditional *korenizatsiia* policies, or in an old-fashioned Marxism that assumed there was no place for nationalism in the late twentieth century? Or did Gorbachev reckon that political democratization, in the form created by *perestroika*, would in any case make national claims superfluous under the aegis of a more-or-less benign Russian assimilator?¹⁹ By the time Gorbachev finally grasped in early 1991 the degree to which autonomist and secessionist feelings had grown in the republics, it was too late to accommodate them, even in the looser framework of a reformed federation or confederation. Disintegration inevitably followed.

Alternatives to Gorbachev's course of action

Questions have arisen concerning the wisdom of a number of actual political choices made by Gorbachev in his career at the helm of the Soviet party and state. Many argue that Gorbachev committed crucial 'mistakes', although it is not clear

to what degree these observers think alternative actions by Gorbachev might have influenced the outcome of his career or the final demise of Soviet communism. Three such 'mistakes' have provoked the most speculation.

First, Gorbachev himself could have resigned from the CPSU at the 28th Congress in July 1990 instead of allowing Yeltsin to monopolize public attention by so dramatically walking out alone from both the meeting hall and from the ranks of the party.²⁰ Gorbachev could then have taken the opportunity to create a new political party (possibly a social democratic party to his liking) that would have freed him from the severe constraints he suffered as a result of cohabitation with the die-hard conservatives in the CPSU.

Second, Gorbachev should not have contented himself with election to the office of President of the Soviet Union by the Supreme Soviet in October 1988, but should have submitted his candidacy to a direct, popular vote.²¹ As a result, his democratic legitimation would have been significantly greater, comparable at least to the popular support that sustained Yeltsin at the moment of his elevation to the presidency of the Russian Federation in the Soviet era (RSFSR) in June 1991.

Third, Gorbachev should not have formed a bloc with the party conservatives and accepted the formation of the Pavlov–Yanaev government in December 1990, nor should he have so light-heartedly sacrificed his main reform ally, Shevardnadze. This choice isolated him from the more dynamic sections of public opinion, inevitably linking him to several of the more obscurantist and unpopular actions at the time, such as the Soviet security forces' attack on the Vilnius radio station in January 1991. Gorbachev should have more hopefully relied, instead, on an appeal for the creation of a 'government of public confidence', one addressed to all progressive forces in the country.²²

A most thoughtful exercise in counterfactual history has been undertaken by several observers regarding Gorbachev's whole strategy of reforms. Special attention is devoted below to the issue of the 'Chinese variant' of *perestroika*.²³ In order to avoid the final dissolution of Soviet society and the state, and to preserve his own and the party's leading role in the transformation of the country (while sparing the public many of the pains and sacrifices it suffered after 1989), Gorbachev should have taken the opposite path from the one he did. An enlightened, stern authoritarianism would have succeeded in carrying out a more orderly marketization and partial privatization of the economy, very much in the manner that has unfolded in China since the early 1980s. After all, this was the approximate model that inspired South Korea (and post-Soviet Kazakhstan²⁴) as well as communist Hungary after the late 1960s, and even India.²⁵ Such thinking was probably not foreign to Andropov, or even to the Soviet putsch-makers of August 1991. A large section of the Soviet economic and political *nomenklatura*, while fitting the stereotype of the traditional, 'conservative' Soviet bureaucrats, might also have proven amenable to the 'Chinese variant' of reform.

The hypothesis concerning a 'realistic' 'Chinese alternative' constitutes one of the most severe criticisms of Gorbachev's politics. One of its more recent versions claims that Gorbachev failed because he was led astray by mainly 'ideological' aims. He confused the fate of communism (as an ideology and as a social-political movement of historical-universal significance) with the fate of the Soviet Union

as a country. The result was a shining example of both sheer political ineptitude and incorrigible utopian thinking. Not only was Gorbachev not enough of an economic liberal, but he was too much of a political liberal, refraining as he did from enforcing even 'rational' (under the circumstances) measures of repression that were necessary for maintaining a minimum of social order and discipline while implementing reforms.²⁶

Our presentation of the principal historical effects of *perestroika* would not be complete without pointing to several issues that have yet to be sufficiently explored. First, an accurate account of the political evolution of those forces that came to oppose Gorbachev in 1990 is still missing. This is particularly true of the political and intellectual groupings on the 'democratic' side of the spectrum. Unfortunately, Boris Yeltsin, who had by then become the most powerful political magnet for the democratic opposition, is also a notoriously elusive and disappointing source of information about this process. Mass desertion of the Gorbachev camp by Russian intellectuals in 1990 was crucial in bringing about his political isolation by the end of the year.²⁷ This cannot be explained as a mere reaction to Gorbachev's own growing identification with the right wing within the party. Rather, such a social and political dynamic was most likely an expression of a *longue durée* attitude on the part of the imperial and then the Soviet *intelligentsiia* towards power (*vlast*).²⁸ Support by intellectuals for rapid marketization has also been described as reflecting their allegedly deep-rooted 'Victorianism', their contempt of the working classes.²⁹

The political tendencies of the Soviet bureaucracy during *perestroika* should also be analyzed in more detail. It has been suggested that this crucial group within Soviet society cannot be viewed as a uniform, reactionary mass. And even if it emerged as the main beneficiary of privatization after 1991, there is no proof that the bureaucracy supported such an outcome from the beginning.³⁰

The social dynamic characteristic of the final stage of *perestroika* is part of a more general problem about which scholarly opinion is substantially divided. Was *perestroika* initiated in response to public pressure? Or was it a classic example of an elite 'revolution from above'? Did 'the masses' of the Soviet people play any relevant role in the course of events?³¹

In addition, the August putsch has not yet been the subject of any special scholarly attention. There is consensus among scholars that popular reaction to the putsch, principally in Moscow, constituted a critical moment of shock and detachment for many Russians and Soviet citizens: an irreversible self-liberation from some of the most deeply engrained Russian political archetypes and stereotypes (namely, trust in the Tsar, and in reform from above, as the source of progressive change). This signaled, at the same time, the birth of a new confidence in open political action and behavior that, at least for a while, overwhelmed traditional popular Russian–Soviet concepts of politics (politics as the reserve of statecraft, or as an interplay of *camarillas*, court intrigues and conspiracies, or as 'corridor – *zakulisnye*' politics, that is, intra-party brokerage). But the social reaction to the August putsch must be examined more critically. Was it a crucial element of the civic matrix of post-Soviet Russia? Or was it an ephemeral democratic upheaval, soon overcome by authoritarian developments under Yeltsin, similar to the fate of libertarian forces unchained by the February 1917 revolution?

Against ideological determinism

Perestroika presents the fundamental leitmotiv of the events of the age: the inexorable decay of the 'Soviet compound' (in Robert Service's phrase³²) over its last two decades of existence, and the acceleration of this decay at the hands of Gorbachev himself. *Perestroika* is perceived to be a historical paradox, and its main actor is not without a dramatic persona, or a pathetic one, depending on the relative liberalism of the observer.

However, this narrative can be described as suffering from 'ideological determinism'.³³ This is particularly the case in regards to Gorbachev's political fate. Zbigniew Brzezinski was one of the first scholars to comment on the 'historical vicious circle' characteristic of the problems Gorbachev faced, and on the inherent 'paradoxical' nature of Gorbachev's reform activity. Such circumstances doomed *perestroika per se*. At the same time, Brzezinski also concedes that Gorbachev's intentions and plans might have been even more far-reaching. He notes that Gorbachev's 'new thinking' moved not only beyond Stalinism and Leninism, but beyond Marxism as well.³⁴ He also hints at the possibility that Gorbachev might have been looking for a way out of communism itself. In that case, regardless of how aware or unaware Gorbachev was about the consequences of his own reforms, 'success for *perestroika* would entail a significant dilution of the communist praxis'.³⁵ In other words, any significant weakening of communism should be seen as a success for Gorbachev. According to this perspective, it did not matter if communism appeared to be doomed anyway, for the point is that Gorbachev might have succeeded in transcending communism and leading the USSR towards some unforeseeable (at the time Brzezinski was writing, in 1988) form of an essentially post-communist order. And so, in addition to correcting the 'double failure' model of analysis found throughout the historical literature, Brzezinski also scrupulously suggests that Gorbachev's political performance and historical role cannot be judged only on the basis of the latter's presumed intention to rejuvenate communism. The last General Secretary of the Soviet Union should not be reduced to a pathetic, unsuccessful would-be savior of communism.

The analysis offered by Brzezinski is more nuanced than many other passages in his book, not to mention the various analyses proposed by later commentators. Here are several examples:

[There is a] *pivotal dividing line* [emphasis added] between a defensive, retreating, increasingly tolerant, yet still – in terms of political power – monopolistic communist regime and the appearance of a genuine pluralistic democracy with true freedom of political choice.³⁶

A totalitarian system, unlike an authoritarian one, does not bear within itself the seeds of its own supersession: they have to be planted afterwards, in soil which is ill-prepared.³⁷

...the strategy of reform communism known as *perestroika* was not implemented because it was unimplementable.³⁸

From such a vantage point it was impossible to find a middle ground between a socialist and a market economy because 'suppression [of] private property and [of] the market constituted the *essence* [emphasis added] of socialism'.³⁹ Either Gorbachev wanted a market economy without private property (and without market prices), or a 'socialist market economy, [which is] little more than a phrase'.⁴⁰ In both cases, as the unspoken argument seems to run, *perestroika*'s impasse and its subsequent failure were due to the fact that there is no such thing as semi-virginity.

Sensible objections to these and other examples of determinist thinking have been made. First, while communism might well have been incurable, one cannot take for granted its denouement – namely, the death of the Soviet system without any escalation of the Cold War, without any major threat to the world order (indeed, the opposite proved to be the case) and without a civil war – without taking into account Gorbachev's personality (or, as Archie Brown calls it, the 'Gorbachev factor'): his ability during most of this period to resist or neutralize his more unrepentant and aggressive party comrades. In fact, Gorbachev's reputation as a statesman and a politician of democratic principles seems enhanced when compared to Yeltsin's subsequent management of internal Russian developments in 1991–93.⁴¹

Determinist-minded criticism of Gorbachev is more plausible in regard to his economic policy. His indecisive policy and incomplete reforms contributed significantly to the economic chaos of 1990–91.⁴² This made things even more difficult for Yeltsin's reformers, leading them to believe that no alternative existed to a Russian variant of economic shock therapy.⁴³ One can accept a benign hypothesis by which the transition from the political framework of late *perestroika* to the institutions of democratic Russia could have occurred in a comparatively non-traumatic fashion. One can also speculate that the Soviet Union was bound to more or less hold together were it not for the August putsch. But economic change is hardly conceivable in evolutionary terms (except for the virtual 'Chinese variant', more on which below). The task of economic reform presented such acute and mutually dependent problems that one is tempted to excuse both Gorbachev's hesitations and inconsistencies in this sphere, and the abrupt economic decisions taken by the Russian government in early 1992 that were based on the crude (and very Russian!) principle of *tak vyshlo* – so things have gone.

However, the claim that Gorbachev resisted proposals in favor of free prices and large-scale privatization *because of* residual ideological (Marxist-Leninist communism) scruples cannot but sound flawed. It is not even clear if Western market ideology and the alleged attempt (by both the Yeltsin administration and its Western economic and political sponsors) to effect a pitiless 'engineering of the souls' among reluctant *homines sovietici* really were decisive influences informing actual policy.⁴⁴ A still rather utopian variant of the '500 days plan' was formulated by technicians belonging to Gorbachev's staff (namely, Abalkin and, in part, Ryzhkov) in 1990. It was accepted in principle by Gorbachev himself before he later went on to reject it.⁴⁵ The problem of land privatization during late *perestroika* is sometimes raised as an example of Gorbachev's misplaced 'socialist' zeal. It is true that he occasionally expressed a principled reluctance to

dismantle the collectivist structure of Soviet agriculture. But for years following Gaidar's and Yeltsin's 'capitalist revolution', collective and cooperative property were still extensively widespread forms of land proprietorship in Russia. The numerous administrative regulations governing the alienability of land plots, implemented by both central and local Russian authorities, obviate any discussion of a properly free market in land.⁴⁶ This suggests a telling analogy that can be made to the caution demonstrated by tsarist authorities *vis-à-vis* the privatization of peasant land in post-Emancipation Russian villages up until Stolypin's reform.

In terms of the economy as a whole, some form of a consistent socialist, or simply social, economic policy in the post-communist transition would have been advisable to Gorbachev on purely realistic (i.e. 'non-ideological') grounds. This would have cushioned the invariable social hardships inherent in the process of marketization and privatization.⁴⁷ Finally, the model provided by contemporary western European market economies (and by the socio-economic profile of most of the great European states) may have pushed Gorbachev to the understanding that the final stage of the post-communist transition in the Soviet Union and eastern Europe should continue to offer a considerable degree of social security.

It needs to be acknowledged that no other responsible Soviet politician during the period of *perestroika* openly advocated rapid marketization and privatization. (Yavlinsky and Shatalin, the authors of the '500 days plan', were *not* politicians.) Yeltsin espoused the cause of a full-fledged market economy only after the August putsch (specifically, at the end of October 1991).⁴⁸ At no time before then did he avail himself of Russian 'sovereignty' in order to marketize the Republic's economy. Geoffrey Hosking sounds quite sensible when, in offering an alternative explanation (i.e. one based on non-ideological arguments) for Gorbachev's hesitation in rushing the country towards a market economy, he writes that Gorbachev felt he lacked the political legitimacy to ask new sacrifices of his fellow citizens.⁴⁹ Gorbachev and his advisers might also have been thinking about the 1962 popular revolt in Novocherkassk against price increases. On the other hand, the liberalization of prices in January 1992, followed by privatization, may be said to have been decreed by a Russian government that was leading a widespread, popular, neo-revolutionary trend – a 'strange pathos for novelty' – that caused many Russian and Soviet citizens to view rapid marketization and privatization, now advocated by Yeltsin, as the only hope for resolving the economic crisis.

'New thinking' and the 'Chinese variant'

A close interdependence existed between the various structural problems Gorbachev faced. From this point of view, the 'Chinese road' was actually the least plausible tactical route he could have traveled. The Chinese variant is understood by scholars to be an attempt to imperceptibly moderate the original ideological ambitions of a communist state, gradually assuming the international posture of a 'normal' country, a more or less normal nation-state. It is also an attempt to divide the process of reform into temporally discrete phases of, respectively, economic and political change, all the while striving to maintain a stable,

predictable framework of domestic and foreign political relations. The reform of political institutions is confined to internal rationalization and a tightening of discipline within the governing apparatuses.

We should observe that scholars dealing with the 'Chinese variant' avoid the question of whether they consider China to *still* be a communist country or not. Those who argue in deterministic fashion have avoided the dilemma by defining the current People's Republic of China as a country that either succeeded in reforming itself while *remaining* communist, or as an already post-communist nation. In any event, the 'Chinese variant' loses any relevance to Gorbachev's predicament. It would seem that, one way or the other, both Soviet and Chinese reformers would have finished off communism (though it remains to be explained how the Chinese party managed to remain in power). However, the first of the above definitions overturns the very logic of 'ideological determinism'.

This logical difficulty explains the reluctance on the part of scholars such as Stephen Kotkin to take up the issue of China's political-social nature. Kotkin simultaneously argues along 'determinist' lines *and* in favor of the alternative, allegedly manifest in the 'Chinese variant'. As far as we know, Brzezinski is the only person who tried to answer the question regarding China's communist, or non-communist, nature. He writes that 'its post-communist reformation has been partially successful', resulting in some sort of 'hybrid', though one with 'strong residues of communist dogmatism'. It is a system 'neither totalitarian nor democratic' but, rather, one 'evolving into oligarchic national statism'. In any case, China's reforms are 'an unfinished business' capable of moving towards further democratization and the rule of law in the future.⁵⁰

Let us return to the relevance of the 'Chinese variant' for *perestroika*. Why did Gorbachev not pursue this sensible, 'realistic' and apparently successful pattern of change?

We would argue that there is no question but that the Soviet Union constituted a more advanced and complex economic structure in the second half of the 1980s than does China.⁵¹ In addition, the former played a wholly different role from China in both the history of communism and the history of the twentieth century. What's more, communism played a far more substantial role in the history of the Soviet Union than it did in China's, where Marxism-Leninism served principally as a revolutionary, socially oriented form of nationalism that was never 'capable of posing a universal ideological challenge to the United States',⁵² or to the world at large.

In contrast to the direction and pace of Chinese reforms since the 1980s, Gorbachev had little choice but to reform communism itself, both explicitly and at once, both its praxis and its ideology, both its domestic and its international economy and politics. In fact, not only did Gorbachev choose not to adopt the 'Chinese variant'. He appears to have actively *fought against* it, particularly if we assume that an influential segment of the party and the economic *nomenklatura*, which resisted his reforms, could possibly have been inspired by the Chinese precedent.⁵³

It has been perceptively suggested that an abrupt ideological collapse lay at the core of the Soviet crisis. That collapse resulted from the realization on the part of

many persons found at various levels of the country's leadership that the only genuine ideas actually inspiring Soviet policies after World War II were rooted in Soviet/Russian nationalism and Great Power diplomacy.⁵⁴ This *could* have served as the intellectual underpinning of a reform policy designed to bring the Soviet ideological posture into line with reality. In other words, this could have been the ideological starting point for a Soviet 'Chinese variant'. As confirmation of this hypothesis we need only notice that the August 1991 putsch-makers did not even mention 'socialism' in their program (nor, for that matter, did Jaruzelski at the time of his *coup d'état* in Poland).⁵⁵

But Gorbachev was not simply interested in 'nationalizing', or de-ideologizing, the Soviet historical experience. On the contrary, he sought to grant it a new, more universal significance that could be a substitute for the universalism that communism had by then so obviously lost. According to Dominique Lieven, a 'Chinese' strategy might have been adopted in the Soviet Union by Andropov himself, had he lived longer. Such a choice would most likely have pushed the USSR more decisively on to the path of nationalism. Gorbachev and his reformers chose radical change in the political and foreign policy fields because 'they sought to draw closer to Western social democracy and liberalism rather than to the Chinese authoritarian political model or to the Serbian-style ethnic nationalism'.⁵⁶ Gorbachev's *perestroika* and his 'new thinking' were unusually genuine and unprejudiced, and engaged attempts to shift the basis of Soviet universalism on to new grounds. If 'new thinking' could be said to have constituted an 'ideology', it was a kind of Western democratic or socialist *fin de siècle* 'ideology', based on common sense and on an unbiased testing of ideas, and drawing upon more than one cultural and political tradition.⁵⁷

Soviet communism and the Soviet Union played a unique role in the history of the world in the twentieth century. Since its beginning, communism, as a political and social movement originating in the Russian Empire, presented a universalistic claim on behalf of changing the entire world and each of its constituent nations, drawing on a number of intellectually impressive and, for a time, appealing assumptions. This universalism was deeply imbedded in the ideological identity of the CPSU. It was also interwoven into the national identity of the country over which the CPSU had been ruling monocratically for almost seven decades. The birth of the Soviet state was understood by the Bolsheviks as having resulted from a set of fundamental contradictions that plagued the planet in the early twentieth century. Its own political-economic system and foreign policy were essentially intended to represent the solutions to the problems of the entire world, and each particular country. No other communist country, or party, claimed to possess such keys to the future of mankind as those supposedly embodied by Soviet institutions, policies and achievements.

When distinct 'national roads' to socialism were recognized and adopted as official communist doctrine, between World War II and the 20th Party Congress, this did not mean that ideological legitimacy was going to be equally distributed among the various communist parties of the world. On the contrary, the 'national roads' were intended by most 'national communists' to be indigenous interpretations of an

exemplary, universal experience. The case of the Italian Communist Party under Togliatti's leadership is particularly telling. The 'Italian road to socialism' (in terms of both ideology *and* praxis) was clearly an *implicit* acknowledgement of the impossibility of adapting Bolshevik tactics to the competition for political power in the Western countries. It was also an implicit acceptance on the part of the PCI of the warnings traditionally addressed to the communist movement by social democracy. At the same time, Togliatti continued to define the USSR as 'the first model of a socialist society' at the 8th Congress of the PCI in December 1956. Moreover, while invoking a 'polycentric' organization of the international communist movement, the concluding documents of the same Congress willingly confirmed the 'leading' role of the CPSU in the 'socialist world'.⁵⁸

So things continued until the appearance of Eurocommunism, which rapidly (1975–81) progressed from skepticism towards outright denial of the leading role of the Soviet experience for international socialism. In the spirit of an 'orthodox' Marxist revival (the quest for a 'third way', which would be neither a Soviet communist nor a social democratic one),⁵⁹ leadership was now claimed by the three strongest communist parties of western Europe, parties that, moreover, were by this time eager to share power with western European social democratic parties.

As flimsy as it was as a political movement, Eurocommunism presented a most serious threat to the Soviet Union, namely, that in spite of its own inherent universalistic ambitions the USSR would lose its historical relevance and even its appeal within the very movement intended to promote its historical mission.⁶⁰ This was what Gorbachev was responding to. Communism was dying, but its errors, horrors and achievements would not have been in vain, or lost, if its last representatives had succeeded in drawing up an intellectual testament ('new thinking') and leaving a material pledge (the end of the Cold War and reform of the USSR) for the benefit of mankind and the Soviet people.

This is probably why Gorbachev carefully avoided a split in the party and why, by peacefully allowing eastern Europe to go its own way, he was prepared to run the risk that the end of the Cold War would be interpreted as a unilateral withdrawal. This was also why he refrained from resorting to domestic repression, even if it would have probably been excused by the West, at least in some cases. This situation, like the predicament over the question of retail prices, did not just issue from Gorbachev's sense that he lacked sufficient legitimacy, as the last Soviet representative of communist power, to practice mass violence (a Soviet Tiananmen is unthinkable). Unlike the Chinese leadership, Gorbachev's main aim was to show both to the USSR and to the world at large that communism was being radically humanized. In so doing, he was no fanatic idealist. Rather, he was that rare figure of a realistic politician inspired by ideals. He rapidly came to the conclusion that such a reorientation of the USSR's domestic and international posture would only be possible if there was international mutual understanding and international aid. And these were only attainable if he succeeded in eliciting from the West an unprecedented degree of trust. Gorbachev understood that he had to shock the West with something nobody would have expected from a Soviet leader: a simultaneous rejection of military aggression, dictatorial rule and open

political repression. Gorbachev's bold pronouncements and the actual steps he took in this direction secured him the long-lasting gratitude and affection of the *Western* public. Indeed, for the world press, this was the scoop of the century. As Brown claims, Gorbachev really is one of the most influential persons in the history of the second half of his century.

But this is also where Gorbachev indisputably *failed*. He failed to persuade the CPSU to accept the historic role he desired for it. What's more, he can properly be said to have failed because of his own self-deception. Irresolute and as faint-hearted as it proved to be, the August putsch *was* a significant attempt to hijack *perestroika* and lead it towards the 'Chinese variant'. The tacit support given the putsch by the Central Committee exposed the party's inability to convert itself to the new national and international role that Gorbachev intended for it. All that was left of the CPSU was the nationalistic, pro-collectivist, anti-globalization Communist Party of the Russian Federation.

In addition, Gorbachev was unable to capitalize on the popular consensus he commanded in 1986–89. Between the fall of the Berlin Wall and the early draft of the Novo-Ogarevo agreements, the Soviet citizenry was occupied by suspicions that *perestroika* had more to do with a neo-revolutionary, internationalist program than with their own lives. Citizens feared that, in pursuit of these aims, Gorbachev was willing to sell out the country's standing as a Great Power and to put their own daily needs and expectations at risk. After 1990 the escalating economic and national disintegration of the USSR undermined any domestic support that was left for 'new thinking'.

Legitimation crisis

Some scholars have suggested that popular dissatisfaction with the Soviet regime was caused by the country's uninspiring economic realities and the growing gap between the populace's ambitions as consumers and their actual standard of living. Ernst Gellner has observed that, in contrast to Islam, 'Marxism has made itself particularly vulnerable by its claims in the economic sphere.'⁶¹ According to Hobsbawm, communism 'was not based on the mass conversion' of its subjects, as, for instance, Islam is. 'The assent of the masses to communism depended not on their ideological or other convictions but on how they judged what life under communist regimes did for them.'⁶² This was particularly true for the period that began with Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin at the 20th Party Congress, when 'the messianic preaching about the advent of world communism lost all sense' for Soviet citizens.⁶³ In the Brezhnev years domestic legitimation of the system increasingly appeared to be based on 'euodemonism' (the regime's ability to provide citizens with growing economic comfort) rather than ideology.⁶⁴ When economic crisis overran the country in the late 1980s communism had no spare policy with which to salvage its legitimacy.⁶⁵

According to this analysis, the problem faced by both Andropov and, later, Gorbachev was the same: 'How to bridge *the gap between socialism's ideals and its disappointing realities* [emphasis added] within the context of the superpower

competition.⁶⁶ According to Service, 'Gorbachev felt he could build *the kind of socialism* [italics added] in his country that would cause the rest of the world to marvel.'⁶⁷

In our opinion, such a reading of the motives for Gorbachev's reform ambitions fundamentally misunderstands his intentions and misjudges his historical accomplishments. While it might shed some light on the General Secretary's early thinking, his core conception rapidly evolved in quite a different direction.

The origins of the final crisis of Soviet communism were not mainly domestic, nor were they particularly economic. 'The events of 1989–91 make sense only in terms of ideas. There was no military defeat or economic crash; but there was a collapse of legitimacy.'⁶⁸ A 'chang[e] of beliefs and assumptions and the loss of confidence of those at the top of the system'⁶⁹ lay at the core of the crisis. What was at stake was 'a question of identity and purpose'.⁷⁰ In our view, this 'crisis of legitimacy' should be understood by focusing on the nexus between the USSR as a Great Power and as the center of world communism, a nexus whose nature was not purely 'ideological' but also political, economic and strategic – in a word, historical.

This explanation rests on the peculiar path of development by which the 'Soviet compound' constituted itself, at least since Stalin's consolidation in power at the end of the 1920s. This was a path that inexorably, if not directly, turned the USSR into a historical phenomenon basically opposed to economic (but not only economic) globalization: a totalitarian state resting on a basis barely strong enough to support its hegemonic ambitions in the world-wide movement of historical change.⁷¹

George Kennan's analyses and prophecies from 1947 are still worthy of reflection. This is, in the present context, particularly the case concerning his predictions that (1) for a long time following World War II, Soviet Russia would remain a country 'capable of exporting its enthusiasms and of radiating the strange charm of its primitive political vitality, but unable to back up those articles of export by the real evidence of material power and prosperity'; (2) there might be a chance that 'the strong light still cast by the Kremlin on the dissatisfied peoples of the Western world' would turn out to be 'the powerful afterglow of a constellation which is in actuality on the wane': this was so because Soviet power, 'like the capitalist world of its conception, bears within it the seeds of its own decay'; and finally (3) not only was Soviet Russia 'the weaker party' in the confrontation with the West, but Soviet society might reveal 'deficiencies which will eventually weaken its own potential'.⁷² These three points remain relevant to our understanding of the fundamental reasons why the Soviet Union, as a communist power, suffered from comparative weakness and lacked the basic requirements for world hegemony in the post-war world. It was not simply a question of its military-industrial inferiority but of its inherent inability to sustain, in the long run, the interaction between domestic and international factors which is the key to Great Power status.

Under Stalin, the USSR was built up as an isolationist Great Power and an autarkic, military-oriented economic complex. Stalin's approach to world politics was a 'global' one of his own making, inspired by the aim of attaining absolute

state security and, on occasion, projecting its formidable political and military power in order to enlarge its sphere of influence.⁷³ The USSR became an impregnable fortress while it encouraged political and social change around the world, both through revolutionary and peaceful movements (the latter being more vague versions of the earlier 'world revolution'). The most momentous consequence of Stalin's rule was the establishment of a discernible isomorphism between the structures of the Soviet state and economy, on the one hand, and the inclinations of its international posture, on the other. The security and military potential of the USSR was mainly assured by autarkic planning, designed to channel available resources into heavy industry, to marginalize consumption and foreign trade, and to crudely exploit the agricultural sector. The USSR's foreign policy was correspondingly free-handed and strictly isolationist. This 'Soviet compound' resulted in a peculiarly synergetic system, able to produce popular quiescence at home (also by manipulating both real and presumed external threats, as Kennan stressed) and achieve influence abroad (by making use also of existing communist parties). It apparently had no need to engage either in stable collaboration with other Great Powers or in the world market.

The domestic social order and the system's international posture were mutually supportive and legitimating. Soviet statecraft largely consisted of integrating its diverse parts and interests so that they served the overall performance of the state at any given time. Thus, the Soviet system perpetuated itself, and even strengthened itself. This model was reminiscent of the mechanism established following the reforms of Peter the Great. Serfdom then was a function of military power (through the peasant levy), of state revenue (through the 'soul tax') and of the living standard of the nobility, who, in turn, served as army officers and state bureaucrats. The tsarist government was the supreme organizer of the country's security, maintaining Russia's Great Power status and the cause of Orthodox Christianity. At the same time, the nature of this functional, highly integrated social-economic-military structure was the main obstacle to civic reforms in the Russian Empire up until the Crimean War. Military defeat then stripped the system of much of its traditional functionality and legitimacy.

The Soviet/communist experience closely wove together a 'national' and a universalistic dimension. Bolsheviks understood the birth of the Soviet state to be the result of the world's contradictions in the early twentieth century. The Soviet Union's own political and economic system, together with its foreign policy, was the solution that had been discovered and was now available for resolving the world's problems, that is, those of every particular country. The twin tasks of 'catching up and overcoming' the capitalist world and of 'building socialism' were the guiding slogans of Stalin's response to the centuries-old problem of Russian backwardness. Their achievement laid the foundations of future Soviet power. The USSR's participation in World War II resulted in a 'great patriotic war' in which the international struggle against fascism and the Soviet achievement of the status of Global Power coincided.

Particularly significant in the final deterioration of the Soviet system was a double process of erosion, both in its role as one of the world's bipolar Powers

and as the historical center of the communist movement. In its last years, the USSR suffered from strategic and geopolitical overextension ('imperial overstretch'⁷⁴) at the same time that it was fatally separated from the world's centers of economic and technological development. Its industrial-military complex hobbled behind US military innovations. Given the structural peculiarities of the Soviet economy, mounting unproductive expenditures added to the declining efficiency of industrial investment and to declining gains in labor productivity. By the 1980s this perverse mechanism began to eat up the fixed capital of the country itself.⁷⁵ The pressure applied by the Reagan administration has often been viewed as crucial in shaping Soviet reality in the years after 1985. In John Lewis Gaddis's words,

What is apparent is that the United States began to challenge the Soviet Union during the first half of the 1980s in a manner unprecedented since the early Cold War. That state soon exhausted itself and expired – whether from unaccustomed over-exertion or Gorbachev's heroic efforts at resuscitation is also still not completely clear.⁷⁶

'Imperial overstretch' has been pointed to as one of the most persuasive explanations for the fall of the Soviet Union and for understanding Gorbachev's motivations. It was in order to rapidly reduce the defense budget (a task he began to accomplish in 1989) that Gorbachev made the decisive steps and concessions that led to the end of the Cold War.⁷⁷ However, this does not account for the multi-dimensional problem of Soviet collapse. A number of other international factors require careful consideration.

One of these factors was eastern Europe. As Mark Kramer puts it, 'the preservation of a communist bloc was an intrinsic part of the Soviet Union's own ideological identity symbolized by the notion of "defending the Socialist Commonwealth"'.⁷⁸ In the early 1980s chronic political instability in eastern Europe re-emerged in Poland. This dramatically exposed the vulnerability of Soviet dominance. To a significant extent, this instability was a result of *détente*. Brandt's *Ostpolitik* and the Helsinki Conference both played a mixed role: the Soviet sphere of influence in Europe was formally recognized by the West, but this momentous achievement of Soviet diplomacy probably weakened the eastern European communist regimes.⁷⁹ This dynamic can be called 'the paradox of absolute security'. Once the USSR's western border and sphere of influence were secured for good, largely thanks to the 'enemy' itself, the original arguments and pretexts for establishing dictatorial and unpopular regimes in eastern Europe necessarily lost a great deal of their credibility. Nevertheless, Soviet leaders were only capable of reaffirming the 'Brezhnev Doctrine' along the same ideological lines as those that had inspired it more than ten years earlier, in 1968.⁸⁰ At the same time, the decision not to resort in Poland to the pattern of armed invasion that had been adopted against the Hungarian revolution and the Prague Spring exposed a startling, if ambiguous, reluctance on the part of Soviet power to directly intervene by force. This might be considered the first sign of a loss of confidence in their traditional modes of conduct on the part of Soviet leaders.⁸¹

These unwanted developments can explain in part why the fear of Eurocommunism on the part of the Soviet leadership was far out of proportion to its actual importance as a political movement. They sensed that their dual goal of stabilizing superpower bipolarism and overseeing an authoritarian normalization of eastern Europe was seriously challenged by Enrico Berlinguer's new policy. Italian communist membership in the Italian government indirectly threatened the political equilibrium in the Soviet European sphere of influence. Though the PCI never expressed any open heresy, it championed ideas whose source was in the Prague Spring. Moreover, as was noted above, Eurocommunism's denial of the leading role of the Soviet Union in the world communist movement challenged a crucial pillar of Soviet legitimacy. This was the background to the Soviet-Italian rift that took place after the *coup d'état* in Poland in December 1981, when Berlinguer announced to any and all that the 'propulsive thrust of the October revolution is definitively exhausted'. This event fully reflected the state of relations between the two apparently discrete halves of European communism (eastern and western). The increasing erosion of Soviet communism loomed on the horizon.⁸²

The USSR also witnessed the dissolution of its ambitions in the Third World. The presence of Soviet armed forces in areas of the world that had not previously been a strategic interest of the USSR actually had the effect of weakening its international prestige. The Soviet Union also proved unable to integrate the new, socially oriented Third World (principally African) states into the 'socialist' international web of relations.⁸³ The Islamic revolution in Iran and the armed invasion of Afghanistan, respectively, represented the collapse of the USSR's traditional appeal to Muslim nationalism, and a desperate attempt to react by the only means conceivable in the traditional political culture of the older Soviet generation (i.e. military reaction). At this point, the ambition to mount a successful challenge to the United States in the framework of the bipolar world order (an ambition encouraged by the United States' predicament during the Vietnam War) was probably already losing support among many Soviet leaders.⁸⁴ Even the appeal of the Soviet economic model to developing countries was fading.

These various factors suggest that the psychological and political impact of Western economic globalization and technological revolution on Soviet communism should be understood in light of the deep crisis eating away at its historical legitimacy. Soviet-style systems were incapable of competing with capitalist economies (including both established affluent societies and newly emergent economies in the Third World). This could hardly be neglected given the increasing financial dependence of the communist countries on the world economy and, in particular, the pervasive influence of new media and mass communications that made the cultural and political isolationism of communist countries dramatically obsolete.⁸⁵ Globalization was a crucial contributing factor in the declining legitimacy of the Soviet Union. As Odd Arne Westad maintains, 'by the late 1980s it seemed as if not just the Soviet Union's Western enemies but substantial parts of the rest of the world – East and Southeast Asia, Latin America, and parts of the Middle East – were moving away from interaction with it and toward a higher degree of interaction with each other'.⁸⁶

Prior to 1985 the Soviet Union made no serious attempt to transcend Stalin's doctrine of the 'two camps'. This was not in reality a 'global' but, rather, a self-isolating posture. After Stalin's death, the gradual stabilization of the Cold War international system, culminating in 1963,⁸⁷ brought with it the growing mutual recognition (and legitimation) of the two superpowers. In the era of *détente*, the Soviets did no more than soften the more virulent expressions of their traditional theory of the 'inevitability of war' that was to be found at the very core of Stalinist power-building. In fact, their stubborn defense of their own right to support a permanent world 'ideological struggle' reinvigorated the old myth of the 'socialist' and *isolationist* Great Power. This may be seen as an example of how ideology can backfire on foreign policy strategies. The Soviet Union made sure that the Cold War served as implicit confirmation and justification of both its peculiar internal structure and its self-ascribed role as the center of world communism. Conversely, it was just this notable continuity in its international posture that eventually eroded the USSR's ability to carry on Cold War warfare, leading to what Vladislav Zubok has called the 'paralysis of imperial will' that overtook the Soviet elites in the 1980s.⁸⁸

President Reagan's renewal of the policy of containment provoked uncertainty among Soviet leaders over how to react. This hesitation might have provoked unpredictability, developing into an aggressive response to the new cycle of confrontation.⁸⁹ In fact, although Andropov was reluctant to intervene militarily in Poland, he would not withdraw the Red Army from Afghanistan. From the beginning, Gorbachev's inclinations consistently appeared to be different, signaling a marked dissimilarity between the two leaders who were otherwise associated as allied in the succession struggle to Brezhnev.⁹⁰ Even observers who warn against 'idealization' of the Soviet reformers have stressed the generational shift that took place in the Soviet Union around the mid-1980s, when the old cohort of cadres who began their careers during World War II or immediately beforehand was falling out of power. A perceptible change appeared in the ethos of the Soviet elites.⁹¹

Renouncing the continuation of the Afghan war, Gorbachev seems to have understood the contradiction that existed between the USSR's Great Power posture and its weak basis. His personality seems to have played a crucial role here. Gorbachev's management of Soviet foreign and security policies was influenced by his perception of a structural political-economic 'interdependence' in the contemporary world. He endeavored to work out a syncretic 'new thinking' that would be an adequate conceptual tool for dealing with this 'interdependence'. He consequently redefined Soviet interests in the international arena, stressing the primacy of politics over military deterrence, and thus shattered the traditional Soviet perception of the West as an unmitigated threat. This brought the analyses and ideas originating among Soviet *mezhdunarodniki* in the 1970s into actual policymaking.⁹²

The result marked no less than a total metamorphosis of Soviet views of international relations. The logic of 'absolute security' was being overturned. And yet, Gorbachev's new approach was largely pragmatic and evolutionary, even though questions have often been raised about the coherence of his statesmanship.

Criticism has focused, in particular, on the turn he made in 1987–88 from a ‘realist’ foreign policy, largely confined to new arms-control proposals, to a ‘messianic’ conception of *perestroika* as part of a process designed to bring about a new ‘world order’ and, as such, a substitute for the USSR’s traditional ‘revolutionary-imperial’ messianism.⁹³

The point here is that Gorbachev had no choice but to find a new ideal and source of political legitimacy. However revisionist his socialism was prior to 1985, Gorbachev’s personal convictions underwent a remarkable evolution in the years that followed, and particularly during the period between his *tacit* dismissal of Marxism-Leninism in his UN speech of December 1988 and his *explicit* abandonment of the doctrine at the July 1991 CC plenum, where he rejected the idea of a communist order as both politically senseless and historically unattainable. The evolution of his thought reflected his newly matured ambition to lead the obdurate CPSU and the Soviet Union (back) into the mainstreams of the ‘socialist and democratic movement’ and the ‘common history and civilization’ of the world.

‘New thinking’ was an unusually genuine, unprejudiced and engaged attempt to shift the basis of Soviet universalism on to new ground. It probably informed Gorbachev’s decision to let the communist regimes in eastern Europe fall in 1989, which was considered by Soviet reformers to be preferable to violence. ‘The decision to play an active role is what is so striking about the reorientation of Soviet policy toward Eastern Europe.’⁹⁴ Although Gorbachev could not have foreseen how quickly communist rule in eastern Europe would collapse, he showed himself to be prepared to accept the consequences of his policy in that area. This included German reunification.⁹⁵

Once the economic and political difficulties of the USSR began to appear chronic in the late 1970s, Soviet communism automatically faced a crisis of ideological and historical legitimacy. The crisis was born of the increasingly disappointing performance of the Soviet system in both the economic and international arenas. This included the diminution of the international communist movement and its disturbing centrifugal tendencies. The Soviet failures were particularly disheartening when compared to the economic achievements, not only of the traditional standard bearers of advanced capitalism, but of a host of economically innovative and dynamic newcomers around the planet. Not only did the economy of the USSR lag behind the West in the quantity of its industrial output. The type of society and social and civic culture emerging in the rest of the world was increasingly diverging from rather than ‘converging’ with that taking shape in the USSR.⁹⁶ The ‘romance of steel’ and ‘mystique of coal’⁹⁷ of the second industrial revolution – which had found their epiphany in the industrialization of the Soviet Union – were gone for ever. Finally, de-legitimation was fed by the growing popular awareness, resting on new investigations of the Soviet past encouraged by Gorbachev, of the terrible human tragedy inextricably associated with the Soviet experience of ‘building socialism’.

More generally, there was a growing awareness that ‘the competition with capitalism – not a policy, but something inherent to the system’s identity and

survival – was unwinnable’,⁹⁸ and that ‘all that remained of the old hopes... the fact that the USSR, the country of the October Revolution, was one of the two global superpowers’,⁹⁹ was also rapidly fading. This last point had a crucial impact on persons of Marxist convictions throughout the world, who were understandably induced to wonder if the failure of communism’s historical wager with capitalism (and social democracy as well) may have been the result of ‘building socialism’ in an isolated, and isolationist, country. It may be argued that this very project had made communism an arbitrary ‘alternative’ to capitalism (what Trotsky had sensed already in the early 1920s¹⁰⁰) instead of its natural ‘successor’ (as Marx predicted it would become).¹⁰¹

Communism: a tentative balance sheet

Between 1985 and 1988 Gorbachev ceased to see the democratization of the party and the Soviets in mainly instrumental terms (i.e. making the economic system more responsible and efficient),¹⁰² and began thinking about the democratization of the political system *per se*. By February 1990 his reforms had *already* substantially changed the Soviet communist system.¹⁰³ It is pretty clear that Gorbachev was prepared (possibly long before repudiation of Article 6 of the Soviet Constitution) to accept a wide range of outcomes to the process he had initiated, including the abandonment of communism in favor of a socialist-oriented political, economic and social system.¹⁰⁴

After all, the world history of communism in the twentieth century can be viewed as a process of ‘uninterrupted revisionism’ of one or another of the fundamental tenets of Marxism and Leninism: a continuous effort of adaptation by various groups of communists based on time and place. The process began with Lenin himself. In more recent times it gave birth to an astonishingly large number of ideological and practical variants of the original doctrine and praxis, with Eurocommunism at one extreme and Pol Pot at the other.¹⁰⁵ It has also been observed that, far from constituting an ideologically monolithic bloc, Marxism has always been a collection of ‘competing orthodoxies’.¹⁰⁶ It would be difficult to deny, for instance, that the social democratic tradition of Scandinavian Europe represents not simply a milder form of Bolshevism, but a qualitatively different historical experience. It is no less true that social democracy has never been able to command a firm social or historical base in Russia, neither in the imperial age, in the Soviet Union or in the new Russian Federation.¹⁰⁷ Yet, Gorbachev seems to have sensed that the final aims of European social democracy and of the late communist experience could be seen as overlapping: a sort of ‘convergence theory’, such as similar ideas widespread, for instance, in the Italian Communist Party since the mid-1970s.

Various judgments to be found scattered throughout the relevant literature concerning Gorbachev’s purportedly limited intentions *vis-à-vis* his reforms and the alleged absence of clear thinking on his part seem to intentionally obscure the fact that it was he and no one else who led the Soviet Union out of communism.¹⁰⁸ What’s more, Gorbachev clearly harbored something like an international Grand

Design.¹⁰⁹ He was prepared to honestly reckon with the tragic, complex historical record of the party and the country, taking into account his own experience in the process of change. As he remarked in an address to an international audience on the seventieth anniversary of the October revolution, 'We are no longer trying to trick history [*lukavit's istoriei*].'¹¹⁰ He appears to have accepted early on that the process begun by *perestroika* would be an open-ended one.

Mao Zedong had apparently come to the conclusion on the eve of the Cultural Revolution that the fate of communist revolution in China was in danger. It would be 'defeated' (in unspecified fashion) unless something was promptly done to preserve it.¹¹¹ In an ultra-leftist frame of mind, Mao instilled in the Red Guards his sense of uncertainty about the future of the revolution in order to mobilize them. In so doing, the Chinese leader sought to avoid Chinese communism's eventual outcome: the metamorphosis of the Chinese revolution into a self-restrained, 'realistic', authoritarian political regime presiding over a process of national modernization in the context of the world economy and a web of normal international relations. Gorbachev's *inogo ne dano* ('no alternative is left') was intended to likewise convey to the party and the population the sense that the Soviet experience might be reaching a historical cul-de-sac unless radical changes were undertaken in the USSR. However, in contrast to Mao 20 years earlier, Gorbachev sought salvation in the moderate right wing of the socialist/communist political spectrum. He was also searching for corroboration of the myth of the 'last Lenin' (of the winter of 1922–23), whom Gorbachev saw as a reformer trying to alter the fabric of 'war communism' and lead the USSR on to an evolutionary, peaceful road to socialism.¹¹²

However, Gorbachev encountered a particularly intractable problem: his inability to offer his countrymen a convincing and inspiring narrative that would explain the 'reform' of the history of communism and of the USSR. This was – and is – a giant task. Since the inception of *perestroika*, attempts to present the Soviet experience as systematically perverted by the ideological assumptions and utopian aims of the Bolsheviks and by the 'totalitarian' nature of their rule have made a deep impact on the public, both in the USSR and throughout the world.¹¹³ Since 1988 such accounts have found support in archival revelations about the extent of the Soviet regime's murderous activities, particularly in its early decades.

Drawing up a historical balance sheet for communism presents an acute problem for many post-Soviet Russian and non-Russian thinkers. It is also a pressing issue for those post-communists (not only in Russia) who honestly seek an intellectual reckoning with their own political past. Historical debates during the *perestroika* years failed to present the USSR or communist parties throughout the world with 'a clear new interpretation of the significance of Soviet experience' or an 'organic', coherent narrative of contemporary Russian history.¹¹⁴ In fact, after his early 'return to Lenin' and his celebration of the Bukharin-inspired new economic policy (NEP), the General Secretary abandoned any ambition to play a leading role in the creation of a new historiography, confining himself to judgments that expressed his own moral and political values (such as his rather conformist opinion regarding the historical necessity of collectivization¹¹⁵).

François Furet has observed that: (1) contrary to the French revolution, 'communism has left no single idea behind it... principles, law codes, institution, not even a history'; (2) communism now appears to have been 'one of the great anti-liberal and anti-democratic reactions in the European history of the twentieth century'; (3) Bolshevism constituted 'the most eccentric revolution in Europe, [and] proved to be so universally seductive as to impress, beyond Europe and the Americas, a humanity which had remained impermeable even to Christianity and democracy'. In other words, communism has made no visible contribution to world civilization, its sole, disputable 'success' being its appeal to unspeakably backward human masses. Furet's conclusion is that: (4) 'communism finished off by abolishing everything that had been made in its own name'.¹¹⁶ A few additional comments are probably in order here.

Statement (3) is elusive. It does not say very much about the regressive (or alternately progressive) role played by communism in the Third World. Statement (2) contains more than a grain of truth. While proclaiming itself a vanguard in the fight for freedom, equality, democracy and popular welfare, communism upheld its own original, *alternative* interpretations of such principles. Communists fought not only feudalism, imperialism and fascism, but movements and institutions pursuing aims similar to communism's, though in different forms. These were liberal democracy, social democracy and a number of religious creeds. When communists strove to establish states and societies, they came into conflict with some of the other principles noted above, and consequently with the general historical dynamic of political, social and ethical progress in which they pretended to play a demiurgic role.

Furet's statement (4) constitutes standard historical common sense. Every revolution is said to be doomed to somehow contradict itself, to devour its children, etc. Nevertheless, this statement is worthy of further reflection because it touches upon the question of the protracted absence of a Soviet Thermidor. *Perestroika* can be said to have aimed at 'self-transcending' the revolution of 1917 and the revolutionary developments of the following decades.¹¹⁷ In the words of Mikhail Gelfer, it was a 'self-Thermidorizing' event.¹¹⁸ When compared to the English or French revolutions, Soviet Thermidor appears to have occurred disproportionately late, that is, only in the Gorbachev era. Earlier chances were lost in 1921–27 (when NEP should be seen as an incomplete move away from war communism), in 1945–47 (when participation in the post-Nazi international order, and possibly in the Marshall Plan, constituted a road not taken for returning to the European fold, and to world civilization) and in 1953–56 (de-Stalinization as a missed opportunity for radical systemic reform in both the domestic and international spheres). In a sense, *the longer* substantial reforms of the Soviet political-economic and international positions were delayed, *the less* historically relevant became the legacies for communist revolution to leave to the world. In the end, Soviet communism, as system and ideology, had lost all *relevance* to a contemporary world that, in contrast, had kept changing.

This is why Furet's statement (1) is particularly sound. The October revolution bequeathed to posterity no equivalent to the Code Napoléon. To be fair, there

exists a series of Soviet communist principles accumulated over the decades. These are 'social equality', the 'struggle' for a peaceful world, the principle of public responsibility for the performance of economies and societies, an early version of the welfare state project, the 'anti-fascist struggle', and support for the cause of liberation and economic progress in the Third World. And yet, regardless of the degree of relevance these principles had to the problems of their times (and here opinions vary considerably, as can be inferred from Furet's book as well), they can be said to have since become partly obsolescent, and partly metabolized by the course of world history itself, in particular by liberal democracy and social democracy, which are the only currents of thought from among modern Western political ideologies to have stepped over the threshold of the new century.

According to Eric Hobsbawm, 'the failure of Soviet socialism does not reflect on the possibility of other kinds of socialism'. Hobsbawm the historian strips the October revolution of its self-presumed universalism. Owing to historical circumstances, 'it could only produce its kind of ruthless, brutal, command socialism'.¹¹⁹ On the other hand, he maintains that communism has been substantially, if paradoxically, vindicated, since it served to 'reform capitalism out of all recognition', in the form of a 'marriage between economic liberalism and social democracy' celebrated in the West's post-World War II 'golden age', that would have benefited from the Soviet idea of economic planning.¹²⁰

Edward H. Carr's scholarship on the Bolshevik revolution is caught between two poles. On the one hand, it sees Bolshevik revolutionary action as *reflecting*, or trying to address (in a particular national context and a particular conceptual, or ideological, framework), universal historical tendencies that were present in Western civilization in general at the beginning of the twentieth century. These included the disappearance of the 'dividing line between economics and politics', the central role of 'administrative and technological elites', the principle that 'reason can investigate, understand and utilize the irrational' that is inherent in 'the transition from liberal democracy to mass democracy', and 'the extension [from Europe] to other continents of a movement for national liberation'.¹²¹ On the other hand, Carr seems to have seriously entertained the distinctly different possibility that the Bolsheviks themselves constituted the most genuine historical standard bearers of those tendencies. They were a new driving force of universal significance who *brought into* the world the new powerful political, economic and social dynamics and progressive ideals of the twentieth century. In his later years, Carr also seems to have adopted the notion that capitalism had been in decline after 1914–17 and that, in the long run, it could not possibly survive. While conceding (in 1978) that it was by no means clear 'to what end' the USSR was advancing, it could not be denied that it had created 'some of the conditions for the realization (of socialism)'.¹²²

Did the October revolution play a *vanguard* role in history, that is, did it portend the future social organization of humanity? Or were the Bolsheviks just trying to *imitate* historical processes that were at work elsewhere? It seems that Carr was inclined to answer affirmatively to both questions, in the sense that there is little difference between the locomotive and the coach, provided both are traveling on

the 'right' historical track, i.e. modernization.¹²³ 'If you wish to assess the historical significance of the Russian revolution in terms of the influence exercised by it, productivity, industrialization and planning are key words.'¹²⁴

In making up a historical balance sheet of Soviet communism one should be more severe. It should not be taken for granted, for instance, that the truly long-standing principles celebrated by communists throughout their history were entirely of communism's own making. From the vantage point of a post-communist era, and in light of the abnormal economic and social developments of the late USSR, it can be argued that, contrary to Carr's opinions, a difference really *did exist*, and that the Soviet experience is rather to be understood as a consequence of some radical misreading, by the Bolsheviks and their heirs, of the historical path of world civilization in the twentieth century, which they strove *to conform to*.

While the October revolution undoubtedly 'belongs not only to Russian history but to the history of contemporary mankind' – and while it had a 'huge impact' beyond Russia's borders¹²⁵ – the substantial building blocks of our present civilization are to be found elsewhere, in the Weimar Republic and in Roosevelt's New Deal. Both of these experiences drew important, if ambivalent, inspiration from the USSR. In this context, our argument stresses not the self-presumed eschatological virtues of communist ideology, but the *autonomous* work of intellectual and political *mediation* and *interpretation* that political *vanguards* in the West carried out *vis-à-vis* revolutionary events in the USSR. The same can be said of those Third World national leaders in Asia and Africa who, during the last century, sought to distill original political recipes from the Soviet experience that would fit their own countries' historical needs.¹²⁶

In regard to the Soviet Union, as Giuliano Procacci's argument continues,

It was not a capitalist, nor was it a socialist society, as it would proclaim of itself. But whatever the opinions as to its nature, it was a state that really existed. And this was the core of the question, both for its friends, and for its enemies.¹²⁷

We would conclude that: (1) the historically transcendent elements of the communist heritage consist of those actions and ideas that were *not* intentionally directed towards the establishment of a new state order in specific countries, but those that resulted in concrete contributions to the final outcome of the history of the twentieth century, as historians now understand that outcome to be; (2) in these unplanned struggles, communists marshaled large and efficient armies, though as a rule they provided neither the overall battle plans nor the main part of the high command; (3) this political legacy has entirely dissolved into the mainstreams of world history, in the process consuming the original communist stock of political ideals, and leaving no traces. In any case, communism's historical relevance derived much more from the *fallout* of its pursuit of its own distinctive aims than from any success in attaining them. In fact, the forces of communism were a most important detachment in the 'world revolution' of the

twentieth century. But neither the process nor the final outcome of this 'world revolution' was what Lenin and his successors fought for.

In the early periods of its rule in the former Russian and Chinese empires, communism did the dirty work of industrialization, modernization and nation-building. Along the way, it perverted any notion of the 'costs of progress', turning it into an untenable apology for mass crimes that were the consequence of its own ideological-political obsessions and sheer incompetence.

In western and eastern Europe, Soviet and European communists provided the international anti-fascist high command with a substantial part of their officer corps, and with the necessary shock troops and auxiliary forces, in addition to a good deal of ideal ammunition (Tehran, Yalta, Potsdam; Stalingrad; armed resistance in pre-war Spain, in France, in Italy, and in eastern Europe in 1943–45). In large part as a consequence of the anti-fascist experience, communism contributed to the social, political and economic development of the idea and praxis of democracy in western Europe, rivaling liberalism, democracy and social democracy. But in post-1945 eastern Europe communists essentially performed as local administrators of territories occupied, *de facto*, by the USSR.

In the Third World, communism encouraged the emergence of nationalist-revolutionary forces and supported them with important auxiliary troops and some inspiring ideas (India). Sometimes these forces succeeded in taking power (as in China, Vietnam and Cambodia). Sometimes they badly failed in this attempt (in Turkey and in the Arab countries since 1917, and in Indonesia in 1965).¹²⁸ In their experience of power in the Third World, communists replicated some (Vietnam) or all (China and Cambodia) of the Soviet extremes. In Latin America, Marxists and communists were not, as a rule, even able to compete successfully with indigenous, progressive and populist social movements.

In this sense, Furet's basic contention that communism had nothing left to say while lying on its deathbed is accurate. Communism disappeared after having accomplished a number of historical functions that were not, in principle, part of its ideological aims. There is one reservation to be made regarding such a conclusion: having reached its own 'supreme stage', communism was not completely dumb. The last General Secretary himself contributed to a critical assessment of the communist experience in providing hints of radical self-criticism and by offering a number of intellectual guidelines for the political agenda of the next century, guidelines that rested on a substantial reappraisal of the historical experience of the twentieth century and, as such, constituted 'new thinking'.

Notes

- 1 E. Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes* (London: Penguin Group, 1994), p. 486.
- 2 R. Sakwa, *Russian Politics in Perspective*, part I (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), p. 6.
- 3 Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes*, p. 481; R. G. Suny, *The Soviet Experiment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 457.
- 4 N. Werth, *Storia della Russia nel Novecento* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2000), p. 584.

- 5 R. Service, *A History of XXth Century Russia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), pp. 447, 454, 455, 466, 486, 492; Sakwa, *Russian Politics in Perspective*, p. 6; G. Hosking, *The First Socialist Society* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 500; G. Hosking, *The Awakening of the Soviet Union* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), p. 155; J. Hough, *Democratization and Revolution in the USSR, 1985–1991* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institute Press, 1997), pp. 137, 174.
- 6 S. Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 2–3, 57.
- 7 Sakwa, *Russian Politics in Perspective*, p. 6.
- 8 Service, *History of XXth Century Russia*, p. 454.
- 9 Hosking, *Awakening of the Soviet Union*, p. 159; Hough, *Democratization and Revolution in the USSR*, p. 274.
- 10 Hosking, *Awakening of the Soviet Union*, p. 159.
- 11 F. Furet, *Il passato di un'illusione* (Milano: Mondadori, 1997), p. 557.
- 12 Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes*, p. 481; Suny, *Soviet Experiment*, p. 157.
- 13 A. Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 93; Suny, *Soviet Experiment*, p. 157.
- 14 Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted*, p. 77; Service, *History of XXth Century Russia*, p. 462; Hough, *Democratization and Revolution in the USSR*, pp. 140, 271.
- 15 Sakwa, *Russian Politics in Perspective*, p. 25.
- 16 Hough, *Democratization and Revolution in the USSR*, pp. 129–30.
- 17 Ibid.; Service, *History of XXth Century Russia*, pp. 453, 455.
- 18 Hosking, *Awakening of the Soviet Union*, pp. 173, 207.
- 19 B. Nahailo and V. Swoboda, *Disunione sovietica* (Milano: Rizzoli, 1991), pp. 408–10, 425–27.
- 20 Brown, *Gorbachev Factor*, p. 206.
- 21 Ibid., p. 203; R. V. Daniels, *The End of the Communist Revolution* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 38.
- 22 Hosking, *Awakening of the Soviet Union*, p. 214.
- 23 Hough, *Democratization and Revolution in the USSR*, p. 19; A. Dallin, in *The Soviet System: From Crisis to Collapse*, ed. A. Dallin and G. W. Lapidus (Boulder, CO and Oxford: Westview Press, 1995), p. 689; Werth, *Storia della Russia*, p. 642; S. White, *Communism and its Collapse* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 75.
- 24 Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes*, p. 491.
- 25 Hough, *Democratization and Revolution in the USSR*, pp. 210, 252.
- 26 Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted*, p. 84.
- 27 Werth, *Storia della Russia*, p. 594.
- 28 Hough, *Democratization and Revolution in the USSR*, pp. 492–3.
- 29 H. Ticktin, in *Rethinking the Soviet Collapse*, ed. M. Cox (London and New York: Pinter, 1998), p. 79.
- 30 Hough, *Democratization and Revolution in the USSR*, pp. 2, 20; challenged by Ticktin, in Cox (ed.), *Rethinking the Soviet Collapse*, p. 79; R. Di Leo, *Vecchi quadri e nuovi politici* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1992). According to Ticktin, the crux of Gorbachev's reforms was the advance of the system's post-Stalin tendencies of depriving party cadres of authority and favoring economic cadres instead.
- 31 G. Boffa, *Dall'URSS alla Russia* (Bari and Roma: Laterza, 1995), p. 318; Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes*, p. 494; Brown, *Gorbachev Factor*, p. 181; Hosking, *Awakening of the Soviet Union*, p. 137; Daniels, *End of the Communist Revolution*, p. 34.
- 32 Service, *History of XXth Century Russia*, p. 397.
- 33 A. Mayer, *The Furies* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), p. 10.
- 34 Ibid., pp. 49, 59, 62.
- 35 Z. Brzezinski, *The Great Failure* (New York: Scribner, 1989), p. 247.
- 36 Ibid., p. 248.
- 37 Hosking, *Awakening of the Soviet Union*, p. 216.

- 38 Sakwa, *Russian Politics in Perspective*, p. 6.
- 39 Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted*, p. 67.
- 40 Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes*, p. 482.
- 41 Daniels, in Cox (ed.), *Rethinking the Soviet Collapse*, p. 121.
- 42 See S. White, *Russia's New Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 122.
- 43 Hough, *Democratization and Revolution in the USSR*, p. 131.
- 44 Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted*, p. 124.
- 45 Brown, *Gorbachev Factor*, p. 274.
- 46 S. K. Wegren, 'Land Reform and the Land Market in Russia: Operation, Constraints and Prospects', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 6 (1997), pp. 959–88.
- 47 Werth, *Storia della Russia*, p. 599.
- 48 Hough, *The Logic of Economic Reform in Russia* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institute Press, 2001), p. 1.
- 49 Hosking, *Awakening of the Soviet Union*, pp. 153, 213.
- 50 Z. Brzezinski, *The Geostrategic Triad* (Washington, DC: CSIS Press, 2001), pp. 5, 10, 4.
- 51 Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes*, p. 482.
- 52 Brzezinski, *Geostrategic Triad*, p. 4.
- 53 Hough, *Democratization and Revolution in the USSR*, p. 19; Brown, *Gorbachev Factor*, p. 90; Werth, *Storia della Russia*, p. 642.
- 54 See Chapter 9 by V. Zubok, 'Unwrapping an Enigma: Soviet Elites, Gorbachev and the End of the Cold War'.
- 55 Daniels, *End of the Communist Revolution*, p. 171.
- 56 D. Lieven, *Empire: The Russian Empire and its Rivals* (London: John Murray, 2000), pp. 337–9.
- 57 Brown, *Gorbachev Factor*, p. 308.
- 58 *Da Gramsci a Berlinguer: La via italiana al socialismo attraverso i Congressi del PCI* (Venezia: Marsilio, 1985), vol. III, pp. 40, 144.
- 59 R. Pipes, *Communism: A History* (Modern Library: The Modern Library, 2001), p. 112. Pipes probably exaggerates in stating that Eurocommunism was tantamount to a disavowal of everything communism stood for.
- 60 F. Benvenuti, *Storia della Russia contemporanea, 1853–1996* (Bari and Roma: Laterza, 1999), p. 280.
- 61 E. Gellner, 'Conclusions', in C. Merridale and C. Ward (eds) *Perestroika: The Historical Perspective* (London and Auckland: Macmillan, 1991), p. 233.
- 62 Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes*, p. 496.
- 63 V. A. Kozlov, *Massovyie besporiadki v SSSR pri Khrushcheve i Brezhneve* (Novosibirsk: Sibirskii Khronograf, 1999), p. 182.
- 64 L. Holmes, as quoted in Sakwa, *Postcommunism* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1999), p. 29.
- 65 E. Gellner, 'Conclusions', in Merridale and Ward (eds), *Perestroika*, pp. 232–3.
- 66 Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted*, p. 59.
- 67 Service, *History of XXth Century Russia*, p. 443.
- 68 J. Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 283.
- 69 Hough, *Democratization and Revolution in the USSR*, p. 15.
- 70 G. Gill, *The Collapse of a Single-Party System* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 150.
- 71 One of the first thinkers who seem to have understood this phenomenon is Antonio Gramsci. See F. Benvenuti and S. Pons, 'L'Unione Sovietica nei Quaderni del carcere', in G. Vacca (ed.), *Gramsci e il Novecento*, vol. I (Roma: Carocci, 1999).
- 72 G. F. Kennan, 'The Sources of Soviet Conduct', in *Classic Issues in Soviet Foreign Policy* (New York: de Gruyter, 1991), pp. 322–4. On Kennan's analysis of Soviet Communism, see Anders Stephanson, *Kennan and the Art of Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989).

- 73 S. Pons, *Stalin and the Inevitable War 1936–1941* (London: Frank Cass, 2002).
- 74 The formula 'imperial overstretch' has become familiar to scholars, following the publication of P. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* (New York: Random House, 1987).
- 75 V. Zaslavsky, *Storia del sistema sovietico. L'ascesa, la stabilità, il crollo* (Roma: NIS, 1995), pp. 206 ff.
- 76 Gaddis, *We Now Know*, p. 292. On the question of whether US pressure on the Soviet Union in the 1980s was more or less relevant to Gorbachev's rise to power, to his subsequent political actions and to Soviet collapse, see the opposite views offered by P. Schweizer, in *Victory: The Reagan Administration's Secret Strategy that Hastened the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1994); and R. L. Garthoff, *The Great Transition: American–Soviet Relations and the End of the Cold War* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1994).
- 77 G. Lundestad, '“Imperial Overstretch”: Mikhail Gorbachev and the End of the Cold War', *Cold War History*, I (2000), pp. 1–20.
- 78 M. Kramer, 'Realism, Ideology, and the End of the Cold War', *Review of International Studies*, 27 (2001), p. 122.
- 79 See T. Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name* (London: Random House, 1994), and C. S. Maier, *Dissolution: The Crisis of Communism and the End of East Germany* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997).
- 80 *Soviet Deliberations during the Polish Crisis, 1980–1981*, edited, translated, annotated and introduced by M. Kramer, special working paper no. 1, Cold War International History Project, Woodrow Wilson Center, Washington, DC, April 1999.
- 81 This point is emphasized by V. Mastny in 'The Soviet Non-Invasion of Poland in 1980–1981 and the End of the Cold War', *Europe–Asia Studies*, 51 (1999), pp. 189–211.
- 82 S. Pons, 'L'URSS e il PCI nel sistema internazionale della guerra fredda', in R. Gualtieri (ed.), *Il PCI nell'Italia repubblicana*, Annali della Fondazione Gramsci, XI (Roma: Carocci, 2001).
- 83 On Soviet military interventionism see A. Bennett, *Condemned to Repetition? The Rise, Fall, and Reprise of Soviet-Russian Military Interventionism* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999).
- 84 W. Wohlforth, *The Elusive Balance: Power and Perceptions during the Cold War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993).
- 85 P. Grosser, *Les temps de la guerre froide* (Paris: Complexe, 1995), pp. 193 ff.
- 86 O. A. Westad, 'The New International History of the Cold War', *Diplomatic History*, 24 (2000), pp. 559–60. For a multi-dimensional approach to the end of the Cold War, see Chapter 5 by O. A. Westad, 'Beginnings of the End: How the Cold War Crumbled'.
- 87 M. Trachtenberg, *A Constructed Peace: The Making of the European Settlement, 1945–1963* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999).
- 88 V. Zubok, 'Why Did the Cold War End in 1989?', in O. A. Westad (ed.), *Reviewing the Cold War: Approaches, Interpretations, Theory* (London: Frank Cass, 2000), p. 359.
- 89 M. McGwire, *Perestroika and Soviet National Security* (Washington, DC, 1991).
- 90 M. Kramer, 'Ideology and the Cold War', *Review of International Studies*, 25 (1999), pp. 566–7.
- 91 V. Zubok, 'The Collapse of the Soviet Union: Leadership, Elites, and Legitimacy', in G. Lundestad (ed.), *The Fall of the Great Powers: Peace, Stability, and Legitimacy* (Oslo–New York: Scandinavian University Press–Oxford University Press, 1994).
- 92 R. English, *Russia and the Idea of the West: Gorbachev, Intellectuals, and the End of the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).
- 93 Zubok, 'Unwrapping an Enigma'. On Gorbachev's 'new thinking' as an 'idealistic view' of international relations, see J. Lévesque, *The Enigma of 1989: The USSR and the Liberation of Eastern Europe* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997).

- 94 Kramer, 'Ideology and the Cold War', p. 569.
- 95 See Chapter 8 by R. English, 'Ideas and the End of the Cold War: Rethinking Intellectual and Political Change'.
- 96 Sakwa, *Postcommunism*, p. 64.
- 97 Maier, *Dissolution*.
- 98 Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted*, p. 26.
- 99 Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes*, p. 489.
- 100 R. B. Day, *Trotsky and the Politics of Economic Isolation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973).
- 101 Sakwa, *Postcommunism*, p. 70, based on a hint by A. Yakovlev at the 28th Party Congress (July 1990).
- 102 Daniels, *End of the Communist Revolution*, pp. 42–3.
- 103 Brown, *Gorbachev Factor*, p. 162.
- 104 *Ibid.*, p. 118.
- 105 M. Salvadori, *Storia del pensiero comunista* (Milano: Mondadori, 1984), p. ix.
- 106 Daniels, *End of the Communist Revolution*, p. 110.
- 107 Werth, *Storia della Russia*, p. 632.
- 108 Brown, *Gorbachev Factor*, p. 162; Daniels, *End of the Communist Revolution*, p. 3.
- 109 G. Procacci, *Storia del XX secolo* (Milano: Bruno Mondadori, 2000), p. 539. See also Boffa, *Dall'URSS alla Russia*, p. 203.
- 110 M. S. Gorbachev, *Izbrannye rechi i stati*, 7 vols (Moscow: Politizdat, 1987–90), vol. V (1988), p. 437.
- 111 A. Russo, 'The Probable Defeat: Preliminary Notes on the Chinese Cultural Revolution', *Positions*, 6, 1 (Spring 1998), pp. 187–9.
- 112 Brown, *Gorbachev Factor*, p. 119.
- 113 R. W. Davies, *Soviet History in the Gorbachev Revolution* (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, 1989); R. W. Davies, *Soviet History in the Eltsin Era* (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, 1997). See also White, *Russia's New Politics*, pp. 257–62.
- 114 Suny, *Soviet Experiment*, p. 45; White, *Communism and its Collapse*, pp. 73, 75; F. Benvenuti, 'Stalin e lo stalinismo negli anni della perestroika', *Studi storici*, 3 (1991).
- 115 Hosking, *Awakening of the Soviet Union*, p. 149.
- 116 Furet, *Il passato di un'illusione*, pp. 4, 5, 97.
- 117 Sakwa, *Postcommunism*, p. 32.
- 118 M. Ja. Gefter, *Iz tech i etikh let* (Moscow: Progress, 1991), p. 62.
- 119 Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes*, p. 498.
- 120 *Ibid.*, pp. 268, 270, 272.
- 121 E. H. Carr, *1917: Before and After* (London and Toronto: Macmillan, 1969), pp. 15, 24, 26, 28, 51.
- 122 E. H. Carr, 'The Russian Revolution and the West', *New Left Review* (Autumn 1978), pp. 34, 35, 33.
- 123 Carr, *1917*, p. 12.
- 124 *Ibid.*, p. 23.
- 125 Procacci, *Storia del XX secolo*, p. 13.
- 126 See *ibid.*, chaps 7, 8, 25 in particular.
- 127 *Ibid.*, p. 214.
- 128 Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes*, pp. 453–7.

Index

- Abalkin 207
Abrahamian, Ervand 74, 81n
Abramowitz, Moses 115n
Acheson, Dean 56
Adenauer, Konrad 30, 42, 70
Adibekov, G. M. 36n
Adrianopoulos, Argyris 49n
Afanasyev, Yuri N. 161n
Afghanistan 77, 117, 126, 130, 152;
 Soviet invasion of 73, 75, 142, 172,
 216; withdrawal from 76, 124, 128
Aganbegyan, Abel 119–21
Aglietta, Michel 20
Akhromeyev, Sergei F. 128–9, 134–5n,
 142, 161n, 163n, 170, 177n, 200n
Aksyonov, Vassily 161n
Aksyutin, Yuri 162n
Albania 27–8
Algar, Hamid 81n
Aliyev, Geidar 134n
Ambrose, Stephen F. 48n
Anderson, Terry H. 48n
Andreotti, Giulio 72–3
Andrew, Christopher 38n, 80n, 87, 89n
Andropov, Yuri 28, 37n, 123–4, 133n,
 142, 151–2, 158, 168, 172, 204, 210,
 212; Afghan intervention 75; career
 139; death 122; election of Karol
 Wojtyla 87–8
Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty 79
Arbatov, Georgy 120–1, 127, 133n, 135n,
 144
Aron, Raymond 4, 41, 47, 49n, 51n
Arrow, Kenneth 93, 111n, 114n
Attali, Jacques 48n
Bahr, Egon 80n
Baker, James A. III 156, 164n, 199n
Baldissara, Luca 20n
Bale, Jeffrey 51n
Ball, Desmond 35n
Barber, John 112–13n
Barney, William L. 164n
Behrooz, Maziar 81n
Beliaeva, L. G. 133n
Bell, H. E. 112n
Belousov, Rem 168
Belova, Eugenia 102, 112n, 114n
Bennet, Andrew 77, 81n, 227n
Benso, Camillo 47
Benson, Robert Louis 35n
Benvenuti, Francesco 8, 201,
 226n, 228n
Beria, Lavrentii 24, 99, 112n, 139,
 161n, 163n
Beria, Sergo 161n, 163n
Berlin 14, 28, 29, 31–2, 66; division 54;
 crisis 27, 30; fall of Wall 83, 153–4,
 158, 165, 186, 212; Wall 20, 30–1,
 165, 171
Berliner, Joseph S. 113n
Berlinguer, Enrico 5, 71–3, 80n, 81n,
 216, 226n
Berlinguer, Giovanni 80n
Bessmertnykh, Alexander 135n
Bismarck, Otto von 47
Bluth, Christoph 50n
Bodington, Stephen 81n
Boffa, G. 225n, 228n
Bogolomov, Oleg 120, 144, 172,
 183
Boldin, Valery 134–5n, 160n
Boley 175
Bovin, Alexander 144
Boyer, Robert 20n
Bragina, E. A. 133n
Brands, H. W. 49–50n
Brandt, Willy 5, 43, 69–71, 80n, 215

- Brezhnev, Leonid I. 18, 72, 75–6, 80n, 123, 134n, 138, 142, 151–2, 158, 194n, 217, 226n; death 122; and John Paul II 86–7; years 117, 126, 144, 212
- Brezhnev Doctrine 38n, 41, 124, 179–80, 182, 201, 215
- Broadberry, S. N. 96, 111n, 113n, 115n
- Bronda, Antonio 81n
- Brooks, Geoffrey 161n
- Brooks, Stephen G. 136n
- Brown, Archie 3, 10n, 134n, 147, 149, 162n, 164n, 207, 212, 225–6n, 228n
- Brzezinski, Zbigniew 206, 209, 225–6n
- Bukharin, Nikolai I. 36n, 133n, 220
- Bulganin, Nikolai 26
- Bulgaria 24, 185, 192
- Bundy, William 49n
- Burlatskii, Fedor 133n, 144
- Bush, George Sr 156, 158, 160, 164n, 169, 170–1, 199n
- Bussi, Giovanni Andrea 112n
- Buttigieg, Joseph A. 50n
- capitalism 1–2, 19, 117–18, 121
- Capone, Al 58
- Carew, Anthony 51n
- Carley, Michael J. 46, 51n
- Carr, Edward H. 222–3, 228n
- Carter, Jimmy 41, 72, 78
- Casaroli, Agostino 82–4, 86, 89n
- Castle, Marjorie 196n
- Castro, Fidel 28–9, 37–8n
- Catholic Church *see* Vatican
- Cavour *see* Benso, Camillo
- Ceaușescu, Elena 186
- Ceaușescu, Nicolae 186, 191, 199n
- Charter 77 72, 168
- Checkel, Jeffrey T. 134n
- Chen Jian 49n
- Chernenko, Konstantin 122–4
- Chernyaev, Anatoly S. 126–7, 129, 133–6n, 144, 147, 150, 160n, 162–4n, 172, 196n
- Chervov, Nikolai 163n
- China *see* People's Republic of China
- Chu De 28, 37
- Chu En Lai 37n
- Churchill, Winston 127
- Cipolla, Carlo M. 112n
- Cohen, Warren I. 48n
- Cold War 1, 3–4, 9, 14, 20, 24–6, 29–32, 58–9, 62, 66, 71, 73, 77, 117, 120, 140, 143, 146, 150, 166; abolitionism 66; beginning 21–2, 40, 43, 46; concept 1, 4, 45, 47, 52–4; consensus 7; end 2, 3–8, 21, 32–3, 35, 39, 44, 54, 68–9, 75, 78–80, 82, 91, 116, 132, 137, 145, 146, 149, 155–60, 165, 201, 211, 215; endgame 130; escalation 28, 207; history 9, 14; Lippman and 54; nature 28, 32; politics 34; posture 59, 62; second 5, 39, 54; stabilisation 40, 217; system 1, 68–9, 80; US project 4, 52–3; Vatican and 82
- Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) 6, 13, 25, 28, 73, 181, 185, 201–2, 211–12, 218; 20th Congress 108, 126, 139, 210, 212; 27th Congress 125–7, 130; 28th Congress 204; *see also* Soviet communism
- containment 47, 54, 63–5
- Costigliola, Frank 50n
- Cox, M. 225–6n
- CPSU *see* Communist Party of the Soviet Union
- Crafts, Nicholas 115n
- Crawford, Vincent P. 114n
- Cuba 14, 28–9, 117
- Cuban missile crisis 29–30, 82
- Czechoslovakia 24, 33–4, 117, 119, 130, 167–8, 170, 179, 182; Soviet invasion of 31–2, 144, 186, 192–3; *see also* Prague Spring
- Czerwiński, Andrzej 198n
- Dalby, Simon 10n, 67n
- Dallek, Robert 48n, 50n
- Dallin, A. 225n
- Daniels, R. V. 225–6n, 228n
- Danilov, Alexander 162n
- Dankowski, Henryk 189, 198n
- Dashichev, Vyacheslav I. 127, 133n, 136n, 168, 172–3, 183, 193, 195n, 200n
- Daum, Andreas W. 49n
- David, Paul 93, 111n
- Davies, R. W. 112n, 114n, 228n
- Dawisha, Karen 194–5n
- Day, R. B. 228n
- Defrank, Thomas M. 164n
- DeGaulle, Charles 87
- Deng Xiaoping 68, 196n
- de-Stalinization 25, 126, 139, 142, 144, 150, 221
- détente 4–5, 32, 40–1, 42–3, 47, 52, 119–20, 131–2, 143–4, 166, 215; early 40, 44–5; East–West 32; European 32, 70, 169; Soviet–West European 32–3; US–Soviet 32
- Detinov, Nikolai N. 135n

- Deutscher, Isaac 115n
 Di Nolfo, Ennio 3
 Diekmann, K. 177–8n, 199n
 Dobrynin, Anatoly 135n, 157, 161n, 164n
 Drais, Jan 198n
 Dreyfus, Hubert L. 80n
 Dubcek, Alexander 167
 Dubinin, Yurii 200n
 Ducci, Roberto 41, 43, 49–51n
 Dudek, Antoni 199n
 Dulles, John F. 46, 65–6, 67n
 Dunham, Vera Sandomirsky 161n
- East Germany *see* German Democratic Republic
 Ebeling, Hans Wilhelm 175
 Edwards, P. G. 50n
 Einstein, Albert 126
 Eisenhower, Dwight 25–6, 46, 64–5
 Elbe, Frank 164n
 Ellman, Michael 134n, 163n
 empire 14–16; modern formations 3;
 Soviet 3, 13, 16–18, 141, 158; US
 13–14, 16–17, 19
 Enardu, M. G. 49n
 English, Robert D. 6–7, 77, 81n, 116,
 133–4n, 136n, 160n, 162n, 227–8n
 Eppelmann, Rainer 175
 Esposito, Anna 112n
 Eurocommunism 5, 32, 71, 73, 211, 216
- Falin, Valentin 168, 172, 177–8n, 185
 Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) 7,
 30–1, 42–3, 154, 167, 170, 173–6
 Fergusson, Harvey II 20n
 Figatner, Yu. 161n
 Fink, Carole 38n, 194n
 Fischer, Ben B. 38n
 Fischer, Beth 78, 81n
 Fitzpatrick, Sheila 161n
 Flores, Marcello 3
 Foglesong, David 46, 51n
 Fondazione Istituto Gramsci 1
 Fontaine, André 51n
 Foray, Dominique 93, 111n
 Ford, Gerald 41
 Ford, Henry 103, 113n
 Foucault, Michel 80n
 Franco, Francisco 64
 Frazik, Wojciech 196n
 Freeman, J. P. G. 50n
 Friedman, Thomas L. 199n
 Furet, François 221, 224, 225n, 228n
 Furman, Dmitry 160n, 163–4n
- Fursenko, Aleksandr 37–8n
 Fyodorov, Rafail 199n
- Gaddis, John L. 14, 20n, 21, 35n, 215,
 226–7n
 Gaidar, Egor 133n, 208
 Gaiduk, Ilya 42, 49n
 Gaj, Józef 198n
 Gandhi, Mohandas Karamchand 153n
 Gardner, Lloyd C. 35n, 42, 49–50n
 Gareyev, Makhmut 134n
 Garthoff, Raymond L. 49n, 134n, 227n
 Garton Ash, T. 227n
 Gassert, Philipp 38n, 194n
 Gates, Robert 199n
 Gdula, Andrzej 198n
 Geffer, Mikhail Ja. 221, 228n
 Gehler, Michael 50n
 Gellner, Ernst 212, 226n
 Genscher, Hans-Dietrich 39, 48n, 169–70,
 173, 199n
 German Democratic Republic (GDR) 24,
 28, 31, 153–4, 168, 170–3, 175–6,
 182–5, 192–3
 Germany 7, 13, 21, 32, 43, 61, 69–71, 95,
 165, 167, 193; division of 42;
 rearmament of 66; reunification 8, 14,
 132, 148, 154, 167, 177, 194; settlement
 24, 172; *see also* German Democratic
 Republic, Federal Republic of Germany
 Ghosal, Sayantan 115n
 Gibianskii, Leonid 36n
 Giełżyński, Wojciech 197n
 Gill, G. 226n
 Gill, S. 51n
 Ginzburg, Alexandr 72
 Giovagnoli, Agostino 5, 82, 89n
 Gittinger, Ted 42, 49–50n
glasnost 107, 110, 117, 125, 129, 131,
 165, 182, 185
 Gleason, Abbot 162n
 Glomp, Józef 86
 Goebbels 169
 Gomulka, Wladyslaw 86
 Gonzalez, Felipe 127
 Goodhart, C. A. E. 114n
 Gorbachev, Mikhail 5–8, 10n, 35, 70, 73,
 81n, 85, 133–6n, 140–2, 146–7,
 158–60, 161–4n, 178n, 179, 181,
 192–4, 195–7n, 208–13, 215, 217–20,
 225–8n; and Eastern Europe 165–77;
 end of the Cold War 79–80, 137–8; era
 77; failure 201, 203–5; and ideas
 150–5; and ‘Khrushchev Dilemma’

- Gorbachev, Mikhail (*Continued*)
 182–6; ‘new thinking’ 6, 9, 121–32,
 148–9, 155; and *perestroika* 5–6, 138,
 148, 151, 165, 201–3, 206–8;
 personality 147, 202; and Poland
 187–91; reformism 78, 116, 147, 182,
 204, 206, 209, 213; rise to power 34,
 76, 117, 180; Westernism 156–7
- Gorbacheva, Raisa 126–7
- Gordievsky, Oleg 38n
- Gordon, Robert J. 113n
- Gorlitskii, I. *see* Gorlizki, Yoram
- Gorlizki, Yoram 111n, 114n
- Gorodetsky, Gabriel 67n, 136n
- Grachev, Andrei 126, 132–3n, 135n, 164n
- Gramsci, Antonio 117, 226n
- Grant, Ulysses S. 57
- Greenhouse, Steven 199n
- Greenstein, Fred I. 162n
- Gregory, Paul R. 111–14n
- Griffith, William E. 37n
- Grimm, Bruce T. 112n
- Grinevsky, Oleg 162n
- Grishin, Victor 134n
- Gromyko, Anatoly 134n, 161n, 164n
- Gromyko, Andrei 88, 122, 125, 134n,
 143, 152, 155, 161n, 164n, 169, 171
- Grosser, P. 227n
- Grzelec, W. 197n
- Gualtieri, R. 227n
- Guderzo, Massimiliano 49n
- Guetta, Bernard 197n
- Haftendorn, Helga 50n
- Hager, Kurt 168
- Hanrieder, Wolfram F. 50n
- Hanson, Philip 195n
- Hardt, John P. 114n
- Harris, James R. 113n
- Harrison, Mark 6, 93, 112–15n
- Harvey, David 20n
- Haslam, Jonathan 7, 165
- Hayek, F. A. 111n, 113n
- Haynes, John Earl 35n
- Heinzig, Dieter 35n
- Helsinki Conference 70, 83, 86–7, 215
- Hendrich 175
- Henzler, Marek 200n
- Herring, George 50n
- Hershberg, James G. 37n, 49
- Herspring, Dale R. 134n
- Hertle, Hans Hermann 163–4n
- Hintze, Otto 66, 67n
- Hirschman, Albert 15
- Hitler, Adolf 22, 60, 67n, 70
- Hobsbawm, Eric 164n, 222, 224–6n, 228n
- Holliday, John 37n
- Holloway, David 114n
- Holzman, Franklyn D. 113n
- Honecker, Erich 153–4, 167, 171,
 173–5, 197n
- Hopkirk, Peter 162n
- Horn, Gyula 173
- Horner, David 35n
- Hosking, Geoffrey 208, 225–6n, 228n
- Hough, J. 225–6n
- Howe, Geoffrey 162n
- Hoxha, Enver 27, 37n
- human rights 129, 131
- Humphrey 67n
- Hungary 34, 117, 167–8, 173–4, 189,
 204; Soviet intervention in 24–8;
 turmoil in 181–3, 192; withdrawal from
 170, 193
- Husak, Gustav 167
- Hutchings, R. 177n
- Iacopetta, Maurizio 115n
- information: in (Soviet) command system
 93, 100–3, 106; economics of 94–8,
 111
- Inozemtsev, Nikolai 120–1
- intermediate range nuclear forces (INF)
 34, 129; Treaty 130
- Iran 74–5; revolution 68, 216
- Iron Curtain 128, 146, 157
- Isaacson, Walter 48n
- Italian Communist Party (PCI) 41, 71–3,
 211, 216, 219; 8th Congress 211; *see*
also Berlinguer, Enrico
- Italy 9, 61, 72
- Jackson, Patrick 67n
- Jarausch, Konrad H. 164n
- Jaruzelski, Wojciech 34, 38n, 75, 86, 170,
 173, 187–9
- John XXIII (Pope) 82, 84
- John Paul II (Pope) 5, 82–9
- Johnson, Lyndon B. 40, 42, 49–50n
- Jones, Matthew 50n
- Junker, Detlef 38n, 194n
- Kádár, Janos 25
- Kaiser, Kai 115n
- Kaiser, Wolfram 50n
- Kalski, Włodzimierz 200n
- Kamiński, Bartolomiej 196n
- Kamiński, Marek M. 198n

- Kantorovich, Vladimir 134n, 163n
 Kapitsa, Pyotr 126
 Kaplan, Lawrence S. 49n
 Karaganov, Sergei A. 192, 200n
 Karaulov, Andrei 133–4n
 Karavaev, V. P. 133n
 Karmal, Babrak 130
 Karpinsky, Len 144
 Katz, Michael 112n
 Katzenstein, Peter 20n
 Kelly, Aileen 51n
 Kennan, George F. 53–5, 59–64, 67n, 213–14, 226n
 Kennedy, John F. 28–30, 37n, 52, 66n
 Kennedy, Paul 227n
 Kennedy, Robert 29
 KGB 69, 87–8, 166, 142–3, 172, 175
 Khanin, Grigorii I. 107–8, 114n
 Khlevniuk, Oleg V. 111–12n, 114n
 Khomeini, Ruhollah (Ayatollah) 5, 73–5, 81n
 Khrushchev, Nikita 23, 28, 36–8n, 112–13n, 132–3n, 140, 142–3, 146, 149, 158, 162n, 166, 180, 192; Cuban missile crisis 29–30; de-Stalinization 126, 139, 212; Sino-Soviet relations 26–7; in the Thaw era 117–19; US–Soviet relations 26–7; and Yugoslavia 23, 25
 Khrushchev, Sergei N. 162n
 Khrushchev Dilemma 182–3, 186
 Kiessler, Richard 164n
 Kiraly, Bela 36n
 Kirilenko, Andrei 76
 Kissinger, Henry 40–1, 46–7, 48–9n, 170
 Kiszczak, Czeslaw 190
 Klehr, Harvey 35n
 Klinghoffer, Judith A. 49n
 Kohl, Helmut 157–8, 169–71, 173, 175–7, 199n
 Kolko, Gabriel 35n, 53, 67
 Koptel'tsev, V. 171
 Korea 24; North 23, 28; South 23, 204
 Korean War 24
 Kornienko, Georgy K. 134–5n, 157, 161n, 163–4n, 177n, 200n
 Korzhikhina, T. P. 161n
 Kosheleva, L. P. 112n, 114n
 Kotchemasov, Wassily 164n, 174–7, 178n
 Kotkin, Stephen 161n, 209, 225–6n, 228n
 Kotz, David M. 163n
 Kovalev, Anatoly G. 135n, 174, 176, 178n
 Kovalev, Sergei 194n
 Kowalski, Lech 198n
 Kozlov, Vladimir A. 3, 226n
 Kozlova, Natalia 161n
 Kozyrev, Andrei V. 120, 126, 133n
 Kramer, Mark 3–4, 7, 10n, 21, 37–8n, 179, 194–5n, 215, 227–8n
 Krenz, Egon 154, 174–7, 178n
 Kryuchkov, Vladimir 142, 154, 161n, 164n, 172, 178n, 191, 199n
 Kselman, Thomas 50n
 Kuchenmeister, D. 178n
 Kudrov, V. M. 114n
 Kuhn, Ekkehard 163n
 Kuklinski, Ryszard 38n
 Kulavig, Erik 161n
 Kulikov, Viktor G. 75, 193, 200n
 Kunayev, Dinmukhamad 122–3
 Kundigraber, Claudia 196n
 Kunz, Diane B. 48n
 Kuzmin, Ivan N. 164n
 Kvashonkin, A. V. 112n
 Labetskaya, Ekaterina 200n
 Lamoreaux, Naomi 115n
 Landefield, Steven 112n
 Lapidus, G. W. 225n
 Laqueur, Walter 160n
 Latham, Michael E. 51n
 Law, Peter 111n
 Lazar, David 49n
 Lazarev, Valery 111n, 113n
 Ledeneva, Alena V. 113n
 Leffler, Melvyn P. 3
 Legostayev, Valery 135n
 Lekai, Laszlo 85
 Lenin, Vladimir U. 51n, 97, 127, 150–1, 173, 219–20, 224
 Leonov, Nikolai 161n
 Levada, Yurii 195n
 Lévesque, Jacques 163n, 195n, 227n
 Lieven, Anatol 155, 164n
 Lieven, Dominique 210, 226n
 Ligachev, Yegor 122, 134n, 140–1, 154, 160n, 163–4n
 Lin' Byao 37n
 Lincoln, Abraham 4, 57
 Link, Perry 196n
 Lippmann, Walter 53–4, 60–1, 64
 Lowry, Martin 111–12n
 Lukin, Vladimir P. 120, 133n, 156
 Lundestad, Geir 13, 20n, 44, 48n, 51n, 160n, 227n
 Luther, Martin 144, 203
 Lyotard, Jean Francois 80n
 Lyu Shao-tsi 37n

- Machcewicz, Pawel 196n
 McMahon, Robert J. 48n
 Maddison, Angus 115n
 Madrick, Jeff 111n
 Maier, Charles S. 3–4, 6, 13, 20n, 227–8n
 Maksimych, Igor 164n
 Malia, Martin E. 51n
 Malta summit 156, 158
 Mao Zedong 22, 27, 35n, 37n, 220
 Marrs, J. 51n
 Marshall, Barbara 80n
 Marshall Plan 17, 19, 221
 Martin, Keith 195n
 Marx, Karl 80, 219
 Mastny, Vojtech 76, 81n, 227n
 Matlock, Jack F. 163n, 199n
 Mauch, Cristof 49n
 Mausbach, Wilfried 49n
 Mayer, Arno 46, 51n, 225n
 Mazowiecki, Tadeusz 170, 190–1
 Medvedev, Vadim 144, 150, 154, 160n, 164n, 197n
 Meinig, D. W. 66, 67n
 Merridale, C. 226n
 Metternich, Klemens von 47
 Michnik, Adam 69, 198n
 Mićunović, Veljko 37n
 Middle East 68, 216
 Miglio, Massimo 112n
 Mikoian, A. I. 107–8
 Milke, Erich 154
 Milward, Alan S. 3, 10n
 Miniuk, A. I. 114n
 Mitrokhin, Vasili 80n, 86–7, 89n
 Mitterand, François 39, 48n, 127
 Mlechin, Leonid 162n
 Mlynar, Zdenek 135n
 Modigliani, Anna 112n
 Modrow, Hans 154, 175–7
 Moise, Edwin 42
 Molotov, Vyacheslav 18, 123, 143
 Moro, Aldo 43, 49n, 50n
 Mosca, Rodolfo 49n
- Naftali, Timothy 37n
 Nagy, Imre 25
 Nahailo, B. 225n
 Naimark, Norman 36n
 Najibullah, Mohammad 130
 Nasser, Gamel Abdel 26
 Nathan, Andrew 196n
 NATO *see* North Atlantic Treaty Organization
 Nawrocki, Zbigniew 198n
- Nelson, Keith 49
 Nemeth, Miklós 173
 New Deal 56, 58, 223
 new thinking 116, 126–8, 130–1, 147–8; 150–1, 153, 155, 217–18, 224; ‘Chinese variant’ 208–10; Gorbachev’s 6, 9, 132, 149, 156, 159; mobilization of 119; new leadership for 121; roots of 6, 117; *see also perestroika*
 Nguyen Vu Tung 49n
 Nikoforov, A. 133n
 Nitze, Paul 62, 64
 Nixon, Richard 40–1, 46, 48–9n, 127
 Njølstad, Olav 49n
 North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) 8, 26–8, 31, 33–4, 40, 61, 155, 158, 167, 169, 193
 Nove, Alec 114n
 NSC 68 62–5
 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) 30, 40, 43
 Nuti, Leopoldo 4, 39
- Oberdorfer, Don 135n
 Odom, William E. 134n, 195n
 Ogarkov, Nikolai 134n
 Olson, Mancur 110, 115n
 Orlov, B. S. 133n
 Orlov, Iurii 72
 Ortona, Egidio 50n
 Orwell 117
 Osterhammel, Jürgen 81n
 Ostermann, Christian 3
Ostpolitik 5, 31–2, 43, 69–70, 215; Vatican’s 5, 82–5; *see also* Brandt, Willy
 O’Tuathail, Gearóid 10n, 67n
 Ovendale, Ritchie 48n
- Paggi, Leonardo 3
 Pahlevi, Mohammed Reza 73–5
 Palazchenko, Pavel 135n, 162n
 Palmerston, Lord 147–8
 Paul VI (Pope) 82–4
 Pavlov, G. I. 204
 Pearce, Brian 161n
 Pechenev, Vadim 134–5n, 161n
 Pemberton, Gregory 50n
 People’s Republic of China (PRC) 22, 27–8, 58, 120, 128, 185, 188, 204, 209, 220
perestroika 2, 8, 118, 126–7, 132, 158, 168, 182, 184–5, 205, 210, 218, 220–1; ‘Chinese variant’ 204, 207, 209, 212;

- Gorbachev and 5–6, 138, 148, 151, 165, 201, 203, 206, 208; *see also* ‘new thinking’
- Perzkowski, Stanislaw 197n
- Peter the Great 214
- Petersen, Nikolaj 48n
- Petricioli, Marta 49n
- Piacentini, Paola Scarcia 112n
- Pikhoia, Rudolf 161n, 163n
- Pipes, R. 226n
- Pius XI (Pope) 82
- Pius XII (Pope) 82, 84, 86, 89
- Pleshakov, Constantine 132n
- Pliev, Issa 29
- Poland 25, 28, 33–5, 75, 86, 120, 167–8, 170–1, 174, 180, 182, 186–91, 194; Church in 85, 87; crisis 201; non intervention in 5, 76, 215
- Pol Pot 219
- Pomerantz, Grigory 155
- Pompidou, Georges 41, 49n
- Pons, Silvio 1, 8, 201, 226–7n
- Popov 112n
- Portugalov, Nikolay 171
- Prague Spring 6, 32–3, 119, 144, 215–16
- Priest, Andrew J. 38n
- Primakov, Yevgeny 121, 126, 133n, 199n
- Procacci, Giuliano 223, 228n
- Prozumenshchikov, M. Iu. 114n
- Putin, Vladimir 162n
- Pykel, Piotr 3
- Pyn Czhenem 37n
- Pyzhikov, Alexandr 162n
- Qiang Zhai 49n
- Qotbzadeh, Sadeq 81n
- Rabinow, Paul 80n
- Raff, Daniel M. G. 115n
- Rákosi, Mátyás 23
- Rakowski, Mieczyslaw 178n, 190–1
- Reagan, Ronald 5, 33, 48–9n, 81n, 83, 125, 157–8, 160, 162n, 171–2, 176, 217, 227n; administration 34; in Reykjavik (summit) 77–9
- Rees, Arfon 3
- Reich 175
- Retinger, Joseph 44, 51n
- Reuth, R. 177–8n, 198n
- Reuther, Walter 51n
- Reuther brothers 44
- Reykjavik summit 77–9, 129
- Reynolds, D. 66n
- Riccardi, Andrea 82, 84, 89n
- Rice, Condoleezza 163–4n
- Rogovaia, L. A. 112n, 114n
- Romania 167, 181, 185, 191–2
- Romanov, Grigory 122, 134n
- Romero, Federico 1, 20n
- Roosevelt, Franklyn D. 4, 55–60, 63–4, 67n, 223
- Roosevelt, Theodore 46, 55
- Rossi, Elena Aga 20n
- Rothwell, V. 48n
- Russell, Bertrand 126
- Russo, A. 228n
- Ryzhkov, Nikolai 122, 134–5n, 141, 154, 160n, 107
- Sagdeyev, Roald Z. 121, 133n, 135n, 164n
- Sakharov, Andrei 126–7, 130
- Sakwa, R. 224–6n, 228n
- Salazar, Oliveira 59
- Salvadori, Massimo L. 228n
- Sassoon, Donald 43, 50n
- Savel’yev, Aleksandr 135n
- Schabowski, Gunter 176
- Schulzinger, Robert 48n
- Schwartz, Thomas Alan 49n
- Schweizer, P. 227n
- Scowcroft, Brent 164n, 199n
- Seaborg, Glenn 50n
- Second World War *see* World War II
- Semichastny, Vladimir 142
- Serov, Ivan 99, 112n
- Service, Robert 8, 206, 213, 225n
- Shabalin, A. 200n
- Shah *see* Pahlavi, Mohammed Reza
- Shakhnazarov, Georgii 7, 73, 132n, 135–6n, 137–8, 144, 150, 155, 160–4n, 168, 176, 195–6n; memorandum on Eastern Europe 183–4
- Shapiro, Carl 112n, 113n
- Shatalin, Stanislav 119, 127, 208
- Shcherbitsky, Vladimir 122–3
- Sheinis, V. L. 133n
- Shen Zhihua 35n
- Shenin, Oleg 161n
- Shepilov, Alexander 142
- shetidesyatniki* (soviet generation of the 1960s) 6, 143–6, 150–1, 159
- Shevardnadze, Eduard 126, 128, 134–6n, 151, 154, 162n, 171, 183–4, 195n, 204; appointment of 125; and German question 167–8, 172; *rapprochement* with US 148–9; settlement in Afghanistan 130

- Shirae, Eric 162n
 Shishlin, Nikolai 188, 197n, 199n
 Shleifer, Andrei 113n, 114n
 Shmelyev, Nikolai P. 119, 133n
 Siebs 177n
 Siegelbaum, Lewis 161n
 Simonov, Nikolai 112–13n
 Sino-Soviet: normalization 68; relations 22, 31; rift 26–8
 Skórzyński, Jan 197n
 Skvortsov, Oleg 161–4n
 Slypij, Josif 88
 Smith, R. B. 42, 49n
 Smith, Tony 51n
 Smoleński, Pawel 197n
 Snetkov, Boris 171, 174–6
 Sobel, Joel 114n
 Sokolov, Andrei 161n
 Solidarity, 5, 8, 33–5, 86–7, 120, 170, 172, 182, 186–91
 Solnick, Steven L. 110, 115n
 Somonova, S. V. 114n
 Sorensen, T. 66n
 Soutou, Georges-Henri 49n
 Soviet: archives 104, 108; command system 93, 98, 107, 110–11; communism 2, 5, 8, 21, 91, 201–4, 213, 216, 218, 221, 223; economy 95–7, 105–10, 125, 140, 146, 148, 214–15; elites 6, 137–8, 140, 143, 145–6, 151, 159, 217
 Soviet Union 15, 19, 28, 32, 44–6, 52, 62, 64–5, 74–6, 78, 80, 109, 117, 119–20, 122, 127, 140, 145–6, 150, 152–3, 159, 172, 206, 209, 211–13, 217–20, 222–4; and arms control 43; and Cold War 24–5; collapse of 2–3, 6–8, 13, 39, 53, 88, 137, 147, 152, 155–6, 165, 170, 202–3, 215; confrontation with US 160, 201; decline 123–4; deployment of SS-20 missiles 33; domestic repression in 56; and eastern Europe 7, 179, 180–6, 188–94; foreign policy 214; loss of external empire 148–9; national disintegration of 212; post-communist transition 208; *rapprochement* with US 148–9; recruitment of state elites in 138; reform process in 35; and socialist allies 166; struggle against the Vatican 83, 87; in World War II 21–2, 140
 Springer, Axel 70
 Stalin, Josif V. 18, 25, 36n, 46, 55, 61, 67n, 97, 112–14n, 117, 123, 132n, 134n, 138–9, 152–3, 158, 160, 161–2n, 164n, 212–14, 217, 225n, 227–8n; and the Cold War 21–2; command system 102, 106, 108; death 27, 155; elites 141–2; era 21; legacy 35; policy 60, 180; and Yugoslavia 23–4
 Starkov, Boris 112n
 Starovskii, Vladimir Nikonovich 93, 95, 106–7
 Starukhin, A. 199n
 Stent, Angela E. 163n
 Stepanov, Teimuraz 168, 172, 177–8n
 Stephan, G. R. 178n
 Stephanson, Anders 4, 10n, 30–3, 52, 66–7n, 226n
 Stigler, George J. 113n
 Stimson, Henry 57, 67n
 Stoph, Willi 154, 176
 Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) 34, 78, 127–9
 Strober, Deborah Hart 162n
 Strober, Gerald 162n
 Strougal, Lubomir 167
 Subritzsky, John 50n
 Suez crisis 26–7
 Sukarno, 42, 50n
 Suny, R. G. 224–5n, 228n
 Suslov, Mikhail 37n
 Swoboda, V. 225n
 Szalmonowicz, Witold 197n
 Tabako, Tomasz 197n
 Tarasenko, Sergei 163n
 Taubman, William 162n
 Teller, Edward 78
 Teltschik, Horst 177, 178n
 Temin, Peter 115n
 Test Ban Treaty (TBT) 30–1, 42–3
 Thatcher, Margaret 39, 80n, 131, 147, 167, 170–1, 199n
 Third World 33, 60, 75, 124, 143, 172, 216, 221–2, 224; dissolution of Soviet ambitions in 216; Soviet approach to 76–7, 119–21; US intervention in 17
 Thom, Francoise 161n
 Thornton, Richard C. 79n
 Tiananmen Square 185, 189
 Ticktin, H. 225n
 Tikhonov, Vladimir 121–2, 134n
 Tito, Josip Broz 23, 36n, 61
 Togliatti, Palmiro 71, 80n, 211
 Tonneson, Stein 49n
 Toporkov, L. 199n
 Tosi, L. 89n

- Trachtenberg, Marc 4, 10n, 30–1, 38n, 42, 50n
- Treml, Vladimir G. 114n
- Trotsky, Leon 219, 228n
- Truman, Harry 46, 54, 58–60, 62, 64
- Truman Doctrine 54, 60–1
- Tsipko, Alexander 127, 135n
- Tucker, Elizabeth 160n, 162n
- Tucker, Nancy Bernkopf 49n, 50n
- Tyutchev, Feodor 160
- Ulam, Adam 36n
- United States 4, 18, 21–2, 25, 35, 42, 56, 64–5, 71, 74, 78–9, 95, 130, 146, 157, 169; aid to Hungary 173; anti-nuclear movements in 34; and arm talks 43, 148; Cold War project 59–62; confrontation with USSR 47–8, 160; Cuban missile crisis 29; expansionism 66; and Federal Republic of Germany 177; imperial construction 14–16; and NATO 28, 32, 155; Quemoy-Matsu dispute with China 27; *rapprochement* with China 32, 120; Strategic Defense Initiative 127; and Suez crisis 26; and western Europe 72
- Urban, Joan Barth 80n
- US–Soviet relations 25–6, 30, 32–3, 45, 54, 120, 128, 156
- USSR *see* Soviet Union
- Ustinov, Dmitri 122–3, 139, 142
- Vacca, G. 226n
- Vatican 82–4, 87
- Védrine, Hubert 48n
- Velikhov, Yevgeny 121, 128, 135n
- Velychowsky, Vasyl 88
- Vietnam 3, 533; North 28; War 32, 40, 42–3
- Villot, Jean 84
- Virebeau, G. 51n
- Volkogonov, Dmitry 147, 162n
- Vorotnikov, Vitaly 141, 154, 160n, 163n
- Voznesenskii, N. A. 114n
- Vucinich, Wayne S. 36n
- Wałęsa, Lech 81n, 170, 177n, 188, 190
- Wallace, Henry 57, 67n
- Walzer, Michael 15, 20n
- Ward, C. 226n
- Warner, Michael 35n
- Warsaw Pact 8, 26, 31–2, 39, 158, 165, 173, 180–1, 186–7, 189–91, 193–4
- Wegren, S. K. 226n
- Weigel, Gorge 83, 86, 89n
- Weir, Peter 42, 163n
- Weiszacker 169
- Werth, N. 224–6n, 228n
- Westad, Odd Arne 4–5, 10n, 49n, 67n, 68, 133n, 216, 227n
- West Germany *see* Federal Republic of Germany (FRG)
- Wheatcroft, S. G. 114n
- White, S. 225–6n, 228n
- Williams, William Appleman 35n, 53
- Wilson, Charles E. 67n
- Wilson, Woodrow 16, 35n, 46, 153
- Wintrobe, Ronald 112n, 114n
- Woerner, Manfred 158
- Wohlforth, William C. 133n, 136n, 162n, 227n
- Wojtyła, Karol *see* John Paul II
- Wolf, Marcus 168, 171–2, 178n
- Woll, Josephine 161n
- World War II 21, 45–6, 53, 69–70, 95, 128, 140, 144, 146, 213, 217; aftermath of 16, 24, 39, 48, 142; end of 15, 18; Roosevelt and 55, 57; Soviet participation in 214; Soviet policies after 210; US mobilization during 19
- Wyszynsky, Stephan 85–6
- Xiaoming Zhang 49n
- Yakovlev, Alexander 121, 125–6, 133n, 135n, 150–1, 154, 164n, 165, 178n, 183, 189, 192, 228n
- Yanaev, Mikhail S. 204
- Yavlinsky, Grigory 208
- Yazov, Dmitrii 136n, 174, 178n
- Yegorov, Vladimir 164n
- Yeltsin, Boris 140–1, 161n, 204–5, 207–8
- Yugoslavia 23–5, 27, 117, 181
- Zagladin, Vadim 189
- Zaleski, Eugene 107, 114n
- Zaslavskaya, Tatyana 119, 121
- Zaslavsky, V. 227n
- Zelenin, Vladimir 36n
- Zelikow, Philip 163–4n
- Zeina, Maria 162n
- Zhivkov, Todor 80n, 186
- Zhukov, Georgi 142
- Zhurkin, Vitalii 184, 195n
- Zubkova, Helena 162n
- Zubok, Vladislav 6–7, 10n, 132n, 137, 160n, 162–3n, 217, 226–7n