The New Soviet Approach to Europe

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Under Mikhail S. Gorbachev, Soviet policy toward Europe has undergone the most dramatic changes since the end of World War II. Soon after coming to power, Gorbachev embarked on a policy designed to strengthen ties with Western Europe and exploit transatlantic differences. At the same time, he tried to redefine relations with Eastern Europe, putting greater emphasis on "freedom of choice" and economic efficiency.

Gorbachev's policy was predicated on a gradual evolution of the bipolar security system in Europe and the continued existence of two German states. His initiatives, however, unleashed forces that took on a dynamic of their own and resulted in the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the destruction of the bipolar security order based on the division of Europe into two opposing political-ideological blocs. As a result, the Soviet leadership is now faced with the need to construct a new policy not only toward Eastern Europe but toward Europe as a whole. Moreover, it must do so at a time when the Soviet Union faces major internal difficulties that could severely limit its capacity to pursue a vigorous and coherent European policy.

Brezhnev's Legacy

Soviet policy in Europe under Gorbachev must be seen against the background of the policy that he inherited from his predecessors, especially Leonid I. Brezhnev. Brezhnev's policy during his latter years was characterized by two principal features. The first was the USSR's isolation in Western Europe. Brezhnev's military buildup, especially the development of the SS-20 medium-range missile, proved...
to be a major strategic blunder and had a negative impact on Soviet relations with Western Europe. Rather than weakening Western cohesion and providing the USSR with important military advantages — as was its apparent intention — the buildup had the opposite effect, strengthening the cohesion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and leading to a counterdeployment of United States missiles on European soil.

This miscalculation was compounded by a serious tactical error: the decision to walk out of the intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) talks in Geneva in November 1983. This walkout made the Soviet Union appear to be the main obstacle to arms control, further tarnishing its image in Western Europe. As a result, by the time Gorbachev assumed power in March 1985 the Soviet Union had become seriously isolated.

The second feature of Brezhnev’s policy was a visible erosion of Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe. On the economic side, progress toward integration within the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) had virtually ground to a halt. On the political side, the Soviet effort to freeze East-West relations after the collapse of the INF talks upset the USSR’s East European allies and accentuated differences within the Warsaw Pact, particularly with Hungary and East Germany, both of which had developed a strong vested stake in East-West détente. These problems were compounded by the impact of the succession issue, which increasingly preoccupied the Soviet leadership, deflecting attention away from pressing international problems, including those in Eastern Europe. As a result, Soviet policy toward Eastern Europe was increasingly characterized by drift and stagnation.

In short, by the mid-1980s the Soviet empire, as Charles Gati aptly put it, was “alive but not well.” The once monolithic bloc had become not only more diverse but also more fragmented. Stability had been bought at the price of stagnation, and ideological corrosion had replaced ideological cohesion as the hallmark of Soviet policy toward Eastern Europe.

New Thinking and Western Europe

When Gorbachev assumed power in March 1985, he inherited a European policy in deep crisis. In Western Europe, the Soviet Union was isolated, its policy stalled as a result of the INF debacle. In Eastern Europe, the USSR found itself at odds with its allies, many of which increasingly sought to exploit the Soviet preoccupation with internal problems — particularly the succession issue — to expand their room for maneuver. At the same time, Gorbachev was confronted with a mounting economic crisis that threatened to undermine the Soviet Union’s ability to remain a major military and political power.

These developments required changes in Soviet policy toward Europe. Moreover, they coincided with a shift in Soviet perspectives on Western Europe and NATO. In the 1950s and 1960s the Soviet Union had seen Western Europe (with the exception of France) largely as a pliant tool in the United States global strategy. While the Soviets realized that West European interests were not always identical with
those of the United States, they thought that American economic and military power ensured that American interests would largely prevail.

In the 1970s and 1980s, however, there was a growing recognition of the importance of Western Europe as an independent "power center" within the capitalist world. As Alexander Yakovlev, one of Gorbachev's closest advisers, noted in 1985: "The distancing of Western Europe, Japan, and other capitalist countries from U.S. strategic military plans in the near future is neither an excessively rash fantasy nor a nebulous prospect. It is dictated by objective factors having to do with the rational guarantee of all of their political and economic interests, including security."2

Gorbachev's report to the Twenty-seventh Party Congress reflected some of these insights. He noted that the economic, financial, and technological superiority that the United States had exercised in the past had been "put to a serious test" and that Western Europe and Japan were challenging the United States even in areas where it had traditionally exerted undisputed hegemony, such as high technology. Many sectors of West European public opinion, he claimed, "had begun to openly discuss whether US policy coincides with Western Europe's notions about its own security and whether the US was going too far in its claims to leadership." While admitting that the economic, political, military, and other common interests of the three centers of power (the United States, Japan, and Western Europe) could not be expected to break up in the near future, he warned that the United States "should not expect unquestioning obedience of its allies" and predicted that "contradictions" within the capitalist camp were likely to increase as a result of the emergence of new centers of power.3

Gorbachev's early statements clearly suggested that he intended to take a more differentiated approach to relations with the West, according greater importance to Western Europe. Soon after coming to power, for instance, he acknowledged the importance of relations with the United States but noted: "We do not view the world solely through the prism of these relationships. We understand the importance of other countries."4 In effect, this represented an upgrading of the role of other areas, especially Western Europe, in Soviet policy.

There were other signs that the USSR was according Western Europe greater priority. One of the most important was the creation in late 1987 of the Institute on Europe, headed by a highly respected academic, Vitali Zhurkin, former deputy director of the Institute of USA and Canada. The establishment of the new institute reflected the Kremlin's growing appreciation of the importance and autonomy of Western Europe. At the same time, it provided the Soviet leadership with an important additional source of information and informed analyses on current developments in Europe.

This is not to argue, as some observers have, that Gorbachev has adopted a "Europe first" strategy.5 Indeed, one of the striking features of Gorbachev's first years in power was his high priority on obtaining an accommodation with the United States. Relations with Western Europe, though accorded a higher priority than in the past, were still regarded as secondary to the improvement of relations with the United States.
Some Soviet officials, in fact, openly complained that this preoccupation with the United States had blinded the USSR to trends toward greater political and military self-assertion on the part of Western Europe:

US monopoly on engaging in dialogue with the USSR consolidates American leadership in the West, leaving Western Europe a secondary role in world politics. In our view, we largely facilitated this ourselves. Bewitched by the industrial and military might of the United States, we failed to notice, or—to be more precise—did not take fully into account, the fact that Pax Americana was shaking and had begun to crumble, while other imperialist centres, including Western Europe, were becoming more active in world affairs.\(^6\)

Soviet policy, they charged, had failed to pay sufficient attention to these changes. They pointed in particular to the intensification of European military integration, which "had picked up speed since Reykjavik," warning that "passivity" and attempts to ignore the creation of a European defense "will inescapably lead to a situation where this defense will be fashioned according to American formulas, to the prejudice of the USSR." As a result, the Soviet Union would be forced to deal with a joint NATO position, in this case a United States position, just as it was increasingly forced to deal with a joint European position of the European Community (EC). These officials called for "new approaches" that would take due account of the European desire for greater independence in security matters.

These remarks, though hardly typical, reflected a growing debate about the implications of European defense. On this issue, as on others, there was no consensus. One school of thought saw the prospects for serious cooperation as largely ephemeral; a second, taking the trend more seriously, argued that the intensification of economic integration was providing the basis for much closer security and military cooperation.

The key issue, in Moscow's view, was the impact of these developments on East-West relations. Were they an effort to develop Western Europe into a truly independent power center or simply an attempt to strengthen the European pillar of NATO and influence Western Europe's voice in the shaping of NATO military policy? Again, there were different views. However, the dominant one—at least within the Soviet Foreign Ministry—tended to regard the trend toward closer military cooperation as a potential threat to East-West détente and an effort to strengthen the European pillar of NATO. Writing in *International Affairs*, the journal of the Soviet Foreign Ministry, V. Stupishin, a high-ranking Foreign Ministry official, concluded:

The growth of military integration in Western Europe and creation of some new organizational forms of a "European buttress" of NATO may provide Western Europe with yet another instrument for influencing the USA. But a far more essential and really negative result of this will be that the split of Europe into opposed blocs will be consolidated and new obstacles will be put up in the general European process and the construction of a common European home will be impeded, to the detriment of our interests as well. That is why we are so concerned over the military-integration tendencies in Western Europe.\(^7\)
The debate over European defense reflected a broader shift in Soviet attitudes in the late 1980s regarding developments in Western Europe. In the 1970s and early 1980s the greater self-confidence and assertiveness of Western Europe had generally been welcomed and seen as undermining United States influence within NATO. Gorbachev’s remarks at the Twenty-seventh Party Congress had largely reflected this perspective. By the late 1980s, however, Soviet officials and analysts were beginning to take a more differentiated view of these developments. The critical West European reaction to the Reykjavik summit and the fears of “denuclearization” prompted by the INF treaty, especially in France and Great Britain, contributed to a growing recognition that this new West European self-assertiveness might not always work to Soviet advantage.

These growing doubts were also visible in the shift in Soviet attitudes and policy toward France. When Gorbachev came to power in 1985 he tried to make France the centerpiece of his West European policy. This effort, however, produced few positive results. Soviet commentary on France after 1986 reflected growing disappointment with the course of French policy. France’s adherence to nuclear deterrence and its plans to modernize its strategic nuclear arsenal caused particular concern. France was also seen as the spearhead behind the intensification of military and security cooperation in Western Europe, which, Soviet officials charged, was designed to justify France’s adherence to nuclear deterrence: “The revival of the military articles of the 1963 Elysée Treaty with the FRG [Federal Republic of Germany], the stepped-up military cooperation with Britain, Italy and Spain, the reanimation of Western European Union, the Platform for European Security Interests adopted in the Hague—all these and other integrational processes in Western Europe have been inspired and organized mainly by Paris, which clearly is looking for a ‘European’ political justification of its policy of perpetuating ‘nuclear deterrence.’”

The intensification of French military ties with West Germany also provoked concern. “What and whom are these ties directed against?” asked Soviet officials. Such questions reflected the USSR’s fear that French-German military cooperation might provide the basis for broader West European cooperation in the military area and possibly even help West Germany acquire nuclear weapons through the back door. Thus, after 1986, Soviet enthusiasm for France’s “Europeanism” was largely overshadowed by a concern that the emerging military cooperation with West Germany would strengthen NATO and tip the military balance in Europe against the Soviet Union.

The European Community

Concern with the implications of West European military integration has been one aspect of the broader Soviet concern with the process of West European integration generally. For many years the USSR regarded the EC as little more than an instrument to strengthen the European pillar of NATO. Soviet attitudes to-
ward the EC, however, have undergone a significant evolution under Gorbachev. Since the mid-1980s, Soviet analysts have shown an increasing appreciation of the growing role of the EC as an economic and political actor in international affairs. In particular, analysts have pointed to a marked evolution toward formulating common EC positions on foreign policy.10

Soviet analysts see the EC decision to create a single internal market by 1992 as "a qualitatively new stage" in the integration process, which will have major implications for East-West relations.11 This, they argue, will accelerate integration—including foreign policy and military—and encourage closer cooperation in other areas. In the 1990s the United States (and, by implication, the Soviet Union) will have to deal with a Western Europe that is economically and technologically stronger as well as politically and militarily more cohesive.

The emergence of the EC as a new power center has required the Soviet Union to adopt a new approach toward the organization. This new approach began to manifest itself soon after Gorbachev assumed power. During Italian Prime Minister Bettino Craxi's visit to Moscow in May 1985, the new Soviet leader announced the USSR's willingness to recognize the EC as a "political entity" and to resume negotiations regulating relations between the EC and the CMEA, which had been broken off in the spring of 1980.12 These negotiations led to the signing of a "Common Declaration" between the EC and the CMEA on 25 June 1988, which provided the framework for the establishment of diplomatic relations and the conclusion of trade agreements between the EC and individual members of the CMEA.

The 1988 Common Declaration was primarily motivated by economic concerns, particularly the USSR's desire for access to West European trade and technology. But it also reflected the Soviet leadership's growing appreciation of the important political role that the EC had begun to play in East-West relations. Soviet officials and analysts have increasingly pointed to the long-term political implications of accelerated integration, which is seen as laying the groundwork for closer cooperation in other areas, including foreign policy and the military.

From the Soviet Union's perspective, the main danger is that West European integration will solidify the division of Europe into blocs, erecting new barriers to East-West trade, and deepening the economic and technological gap between the two parts of Europe. Gorbachev's emphasis on the "common European home" has thus partly been aimed at preventing the creation of new impediments to Soviet access to West European research and development programs and ensuring that the USSR will benefit from new technology as West European integration intensifies.

Eastern Europe

Gorbachev does not appear to have had a "grand design" for Eastern Europe. Rather, his policy emerged gradually as a result of incremental changes and adjustments. The cumulative effect of these changes, however, has been seriously to erode Soviet influence in Eastern Europe.

Initially, Gorbachev's policy differed little from that of his predecessors. Its em-
phasis was on increasing political, economic, and military integration — albeit on a more consultative basis. In effect, Gorbachev tried to strike a balance between the legitimization of "national interests" and the promotion of "international obligations" and between the demands of diversity and the desire for unity. The greater weight, however, was clearly on the side of closer unity.

Gorbachev's statements during 1986 and 1987 continued to reflect this uneasy balance between the demands of diversity and the desire for unity. The sense of continuity in Soviet policy in this period was reinforced by the appearance of authoritative articles by top Soviet officials in the Soviet press stressing the importance of "proletarian internationalism" (a code word for Soviet hegemony) and attacking market-oriented policies and other steps that violated "general laws of socialist construction." Such articles were counterbalanced, however, by others representing a more open and flexible policy, suggesting the lack of a firm line on Soviet policy toward Eastern Europe.

During late 1987 and early 1988, however, the outlines of a new policy toward Eastern Europe — a "Gorbachev doctrine" began to emerge. In essence, this doctrine represented an effort to extend the principles of perestroika and "new thinking" to relations with the USSR's East European allies. It was designed to eliminate "distortions" that had inhibited socioeconomic development of the bloc countries in the past — many of them rooted in the Stalinist system imposed on these countries in the late 1940s and early 1950s — and to create a more balanced relationship based on true partnership and mutual respect for national differences.

In the political arena, Gorbachev showed a willingness to grant East European leaders greater flexibility and freedom to decide their own affairs — as long as their efforts did not directly contradict or undercut Soviet interests. Allies were allowed greater initiative, especially in disarmament matters and relations with Western Europe. Consultation between the Soviet Union and its allies became more regularized and more genuine. While the Soviet Union continued to set the agenda for bloc relations, especially on military matters, the views of the East European allies were more frequently solicited.

There was also greater recognition — and tolerance — of diversity within the bloc. As Gorbachev stressed in a speech in Prague in April 1987: "We are far from calling on anyone to copy us. Every socialist country has its specific features, and the fraternal parties determine their political line with a view to the national conditions. . . . No one has the right to claim a special status in the socialist world. The independence of every party, its responsibility to its people, and its right to resolve problems of the country's development in a sovereign way — these are indisputable principles for us." He reiterated this point in his speech commemorating the seventieth anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution on 2 November 1987, noting: "Unity does not mean identity or uniformity." In short, the Soviet Union no longer claimed that there was a single path to socialism or that only one model is universally valid. Each national party had the right to decide how socialism should best be developed in its own country, taking into account its own circumstances as well as its obligations to the socialist community as a whole.

The most important shift, however, was Gorbachev's willingness to repudiate
the Brezhnev doctrine. Initially, Gorbachev showed a reluctance to face the issue squarely, in part because he did not want to destabilize the Gustáv Husák/Milos Jakes regime in Prague, which was closely associated with the period of "normalization" following the Soviet-led invasion in 1968. Soviet domestic considerations—above all, resistance from the conservatives within the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU)—also probably played a role.

Beginning in 1988, however, Gorbachev began step by step to move closer to repudiating the doctrine. The communique issued at the end of the Gorbachev trip to Yugoslavia in March 1988, for example, expressed "respect for different paths to socialism and stressed the right of all countries to unimpeded independence and equal rights" regardless of their sociopolitical system.17 In his speech to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg in July 1989 Gorbachev was even more explicit, stating that "any interference in internal affairs, any attempts to limit the sovereignty of states—both friends and allies or anyone else—is inadmissible."18

Finally, during his visit to Finland in October 1989, Gorbachev openly repudiated the Brezhnev doctrine. The doctrine, Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman Gennadi Gerasimov stressed, was "dead." It had been replaced by what he termed the "Sinatra doctrine," referring to Frank Sinatra's popular song entitled "My Way." This implied, as Gerasimov put it, that each East European country was free to carry out political and social changes "their way" without interference from the USSR. At the Warsaw Pact meeting in Moscow in December 1989 the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia was formally condemned as "illegal," and the member states committed themselves to following a policy of strict noninterference in each other's internal affairs.

These measures were accompanied by a strong emphasis on the need for economic reform. While Gorbachev did not force the Soviet model of reform on his East European allies, he made it clear that the East European economies had to be restructured to make them more efficient and competitive. On the one hand, he stepped up the pressure on his East European allies to increase the quality of their manufactured goods exported to the Soviet Union; on the other, he indicated that the USSR was no longer willing to provide Eastern Europe with raw materials and energy at previous levels.

Rather than creating greater cohesion within the bloc, however, Gorbachev's emphasis on reform accentuated the divisions among the Soviet Union's East European allies. Within Hungary and Poland, his calls for reform legitimized the reformers' calls for more radical, more rapid change. At the same time, these calls indirectly increased the pressure on the remaining bloc members to embrace reform more seriously.

By 1988 the bloc had in effect split into two camps. On one side was a reformist group composed of the USSR, Hungary, and Poland. On the other was a "rejectionist front" consisting of Czechoslovakia, East Germany, and Romania, which either rejected reforms outright or were less than enthusiastic about implementing them. Bulgaria was somewhere in between: General Secretary Todor Zhivkov paid lip service to reform, but he dragged his feet in actually implementing them.
To be sure, Gorbachev did not directly demand that his allies adopt the Soviet model of reform. However, by way of example and word he indirectly increased the pressure on the orthodox members of the bloc to embrace reform more seriously. Perhaps most important, he increased popular expectations and pressures for change from below. In many East European countries, such as East Germany and Bulgaria, Gorbachev became a symbol of reform and a rallying point for discontent, especially among intellectuals.

In several instances, moreover, Gorbachev directly intervened to accelerate the process of change. In Poland, for example, Mieczyslaw Rakowski, the party leader, reportedly agreed to the creation of a Solidarity-led government in August 1989 after a telephone call from Gorbachev. In Bulgaria, Foreign Minister Petar Mladenov apparently received a green light to oust Zhivkov during a stopover in Moscow just before the critical Central Committee meeting that led to Zhivkov’s removal on 10 November 1989. And, in Czechoslovakia, Soviet officials reportedly worked behind the scenes in November 1989 to undermine the Jakes government.

Gorbachev’s role in initiating the transition in East Germany was also critical. He did not stop Hungary from opening its borders and allowing the East German refugees camped in Budapest to emigrate to West Germany — the move that touched off the crisis in East Germany — and he intervened to press the East German leadership to allow the East German refugees in the West German embassy in Prague to emigrate to the Federal Republic. Moreover, in the crucial period in August and September 1989 the Soviets appear to have encouraged the efforts by Egon Krenz and some of his close associates to depose Erich Honecker.19

Finally, during his visit to East Berlin in early October 1989, Gorbachev made it clear to the East German leadership that in case of any turmoil the Soviet troops in East Germany would stay in their barracks. Thus, effectively withdrawing his support of Honecker, Gorbachev accelerated the crisis in East Germany (and indirectly the entire bloc). In the past the East German leaders had assumed that in case of major unrest they could count on Soviet “fraternal assistance.” Gorbachev’s remarks, however, made it clear that the East German leaders could no longer count on Moscow to intervene to save them if things got out of hand.

The unrest in East Germany had an important “demonstration effect” throughout Eastern Europe: it provided concrete proof that the Brezhnev doctrine was really dead. Once this became clear, the other regimes fell in rapid succession. Bulgarian leader Todor Zhivkov was ousted on 10 November 1989; Czechoslovak leader Milos Jakes stepped down in early December; and Nicolae Ceausescu was forced to flee on 22 December and was executed a few days later. By Christmas the spasm of revolt was over and the transition process had begun in all the former Communist countries of the Soviet bloc.

This is not to argue that Gorbachev consciously sought to introduce Western-style democracy in Eastern Europe. Clearly, he did not. What he hoped for was to replace orthodox Communists with more reform-minded ones. However, the legitimacy of the Communist parties in Eastern Europe was so weak that the process of change, once initiated, was impossible to control from above. Even in Hun-
gary, where the party had begun the transition and carefully sought to stage-manage the process, the changes soon took on a momentum of their own, eroding support for the party and eventually sweeping it from power in the March 1990 elections.

The German Question

Soviet policy toward West Germany — and the German Question — also underwent a major, far-reaching shift under Gorbachev. Gorbachev's German policy, however, was not animated by any sort of grand design to resolve the German Question. Rather, it emerged incrementally, largely in reaction to events that Gorbachev unleashed but then proved powerless to control.

Gorbachev did not set out to unify Germany. On the contrary, he initially saw its division as a key element of a new European security order. However, he recognized the need for a new policy and saw that Andrey Gromyko's effort to isolate and "punish" West Germany after the collapse of the INF talks had largely backfired, resulting instead in the Soviet Union's self-isolation. Soon after coming to power, therefore, Gorbachev gradually began to abandon the policy of isolation and to cultivate more cordial and cooperative relations with West Germany.

This shift in policy did not manifest itself immediately. During the first year and a half after Gorbachev assumed power, West Germany continued to be the subject of constant vituperation for its "revanchist" policy. Gorbachev made highly visible visits to Paris and London in 1985 and 1986 but bypassed Bonn. Indeed, Gorbachev's policy during this period bears striking similarities to Soviet Westpolitik in the late 1960s, when the Soviet Union sought to make France the centerpiece of its détente efforts and at the same time tried to isolate West Germany.

By 1986, however, the Soviet attitude showed signs of softening. The campaign against German "revanchism" initiated in the spring of 1984 gradually began to abate. During Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher's visit to Moscow in July 1986, Gorbachev offered to open a "new page" in relations; a number of important bilateral agreements were initiated or signed, including a long-delayed framework agreement on scientific and technological cooperation.

Genscher's visit was followed by other small but important signs that the Soviet attitude toward West Germany was softening: a visible increase in the number of high-level visits, an increase in the number of ethnic Germans allowed to emigrate to West Germany, and a more cooperative attitude toward Berlin. These changes contributed to an improvement in relations and paved the way for Chancellor Helmut Kohl's visit to Moscow in October 1988.

Kohl's visit was a watershed in relations. The visit essentially ended the quarantine that had been imposed on West Germany in the aftermath of the Soviet walkout from INF talks. During the visit, six new governmental agreements were signed in areas ranging from environmental protection to nuclear and maritime safety. In addition, more than thirty new contracts with West German firms were signed, including a major deal for the sale of a high-temperature nuclear reactor.

The Kohl visit was the culmination of the shift in Soviet policy that had begun
soon after Gorbachev assumed power. In effect, it represented the Soviet Union's effort to bring its policy toward West Germany into harmony with its policy toward the rest of Western Europe. Given West Germany's key role in Europe and within the Western alliance, any détente policy that excluded it had little chance of success.

The reassessment of policy toward West Germany also reflected a disappointment with French policy. Initially, Gorbachev seemed to have had hopes of reviving the Soviet Union's special relationship with France and making France the centerpiece of Soviet policy toward Western Europe. The progressive hardening of French policy during President François Mitterrand's first term, however, and France's reserved attitude toward arms control—especially the INF agreement—dashed whatever hopes Gorbachev may have had in this regard and made rapprochement with West Germany more attractive. At the same time, West Germany's favorable attitude toward perestroika and arms control, embodied particularly in Foreign Minister Genscher's Davos speech in February 1989, undoubtedly encouraged Gorbachev to seek closer ties to West Germany.20

Economic factors also played an important role. West Germany was the Soviet Union's largest trading partner in the West. If Gorbachev's policy of perestroika were to succeed, the USSR would require financial assistance from the West. Since West Germany was the most likely source of both credits and technology, the Soviets had an additional incentive to improve their ties.

This rapprochement, however, did not imply a shift in the Soviet approach to German unification or Berlin. During Kohl's visit, Gorbachev emphasized that Germany's division was the result of a specific historical development. Any attempt to change the situation or pursue "unrealistic policies," he said, would be "an unpredictable and even dangerous business."21 Similarly, he warned that efforts to seek improvements in the status of West Berlin contradicted the 1971 Four Power Agreement on Berlin as well as the Helsinki Accord. In other words, limited "reassociation" between the two German states was one thing, unification quite another.

Gorbachev's remarks during Kohl's 1988 visit, however, were made within the context of a relatively stable Eastern bloc. This situation changed dramatically in the latter half of 1989, after the Hungarian government allowed East German refugees camped in Budapest to emigrate to West Germany. This move precipitated a mass exodus of refugees from East Germany and contributed to Honecker's fall and to the collapse of the German Democratic Republic (GDR).

In sanctioning—or at least not stopping—the opening of the Hungarian borders, Gorbachev clearly did not intend to precipitate the collapse of the GDR. Rather, he apparently hoped to encourage the removal of Honecker and the installation of a more reform-oriented leader who would be more flexible but could still be counted on to maintain firm control of the reform process. Wittingly or not, however, Gorbachev's actions did contribute to the collapse of the GDR and the growth of pressure for unification. Once it was clear that the Soviets would not intervene militarily, the demands for reform took on a momentum of their own, sweeping
first Honecker, then his successor Egon Krenz, and finally the whole Socialist Unity Party (SED) from power.

Gorbachev seems to have been caught off balance by the dynamism and rapidity of events in East Germany. From the onset of the crisis and throughout the spring of 1990, Soviet policy toward East Germany was largely reactive, and Gorbachev was more a prisoner of events than their master. Once the Berlin Wall fell, events took on a momentum of their own and Gorbachev was largely forced to react to fast-changing developments that neither he nor the Western allies proved capable of controlling. While he expressed a willingness to allow German unification during Chancellor Kohl's visit to Moscow in February 1990, he insisted that a united Germany could not be a member of NATO. Indeed, Soviet policy during the first months of 1990 was remarkably rigid and inflexible.

The reasons for this have both psychological and political roots. The division of Germany was regarded as the main prize of World War II. For many Soviets, especially those in the top ranks of the military and the party, it was inconceivable that a united Germany would be allowed to enter NATO, which they regarded as an “anti-Soviet” alliance. In their minds, this would suggest that World War II had been fought in vain.

Moreover, many of these officials failed to grasp how significantly Soviet political influence in Eastern Europe had eroded as a result of the collapse of communism in the area. They continued to act as if the Soviet Union still had more political leverage than it actually had. In addition, few Soviet officials had foreseen that pressures for unification would emerge so rapidly or so soon. Moscow thus had no contingency plans on which it could draw. As a result, the Soviet leadership was ill-prepared to deal with the growing pressure for unification and its policy had an ad hoc and inconsistent character.

Domestic factors also influenced Soviet policy calculations. Indeed, they may have been decisive. Before the Twenty-eighth Party Congress in July 1990, Gorbachev faced mounting criticism of his policies on a wide variety of issues. At a time when perestroika was under fire for having shown few concrete results and he was being attacked for having “sold out” Eastern Europe, Gorbachev could ill-afford to give his domestic critics another weapon to use against him. The military in particular was strongly opposed to a united Germany's membership in NATO. But it was not alone. Party conservatives also warned of a “new German danger.”

As a consequence, Gorbachev put forward a variety of schemes designed to forestall or prevent the integration of a united Germany in NATO: neutrality, a continuation of four-power rights for an extended duration after unification, the integration of Germany into both alliances, a pan-European security system based on the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), and finally a “French” solution in which Germany would be a member of the alliance but not of its military command. None of these proposals, however, were acceptable to West Germany or the other Western powers. Moreover, the USSR found itself isolated within its own alliance: the majority of the East European members of
the Warsaw Pact, including Poland, favored a united Germany integrated into NATO.

By the time of the Washington summit with President George Bush in June 1990 there were signs that Gorbachev was looking for a face-saving mechanism that would allow him to accept a united Germany's incorporation into NATO but which could be portrayed in such a way that it did not look like a Soviet defeat and capitulation to a Western ultimatum. The main elements of such a package were contained in the nine-point plan that Bush presented at the Washington summit. The package was designed to make German membership in NATO more palatable and involved, inter alia, a gradual and phased withdrawal of Soviet troops, no forward deployment of NATO troops on East German territory, and economic assistance and compensation to the Soviet Union.

For domestic reasons, however, Gorbachev was unwilling to agree to final terms until after the Twenty-eighth Party Congress. As noted earlier, he apparently feared that his critics would use any concession on the German issue against him. The defeat of Egor K. Ligachev and the conservative faction at the congress, however, removed this danger. At the same time, the shift in NATO strategy announced at the NATO summit in London in early July 1990, together with promises by West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl of economic assistance and a reduction of the united Germany's armed forces to 370,000 men made it easier for Gorbachev to argue that Germany's entry into NATO would benefit the Soviet Union.

West Germany's agreement to reduce the size of its army was particularly important. This demonstrated that West Germany was willing to make a concrete contribution to military détente and paved the way for Gorbachev's formal agreement to the membership of a united Germany in NATO, which was announced at a joint press conference during Chancellor Kohl's visit to the Soviet Union in mid-July. In order to provide Moscow with further assurance, this commitment to reduce the size of the armed forces of a united Germany to 370,000 men was explicitly incorporated in article 3 of the "Final Settlement" of the "two plus four talks" regulating the external aspects of German unification, signed in Moscow on 12 September 1990.

In addition, in September, West Germany and the USSR signed a separate treaty of Good-neighborliness, Partnership and Cooperation, designed to expand and update the Renunciation of Force Agreement signed by the two countries in August 1970. Like the 1970 treaty, the new agreement emphasizes that the two sides will refrain from using force to resolve their differences. However, it goes considerably further than the 1970 treaty and contains a controversial nonaggression pledge (article 3). Although the new treaty specifically states that it does not infringe on rights and obligations arising from other bilateral and multilateral agreements signed by the two parties (article 19), the nonaggression clause has raised concerns in some Western capitals that it could lead to a weakening of Germany's commitment to Western defense.

As part of the overall settlement of German unification, Bonn also agreed to provide a 12 billion DM (about $8 billion) package to help underwrite the cost
of the housing and withdrawal of the 380,000 Soviet troops stationed in East Germany. This package also included a 3 billion DM interest-free credit to aid the ailing Soviet economy.

Despite these “sweeteners,” the unification of Germany, particularly a united Germany’s membership in NATO, is a bitter pill for the Soviets to swallow. It effectively means the Soviet Union’s military expulsion from Europe and a dramatic shift in the balance of power in favor of the West. More fundamentally, it represents the collapse of the USSR’s postwar strategy toward Europe, which at least since 1955 has been aimed at maintaining two separate German states. Thus the USSR is now faced with the need to construct a new policy not just toward Germany but toward Europe as a whole.

Arms Control

In contrast to his predecessors, especially Leonid I. Brezhnev, Gorbachev has seen arms control as the primary means of enhancing Soviet security and reducing East-West confrontation. Moreover, he has been willing to adopt more flexible positions than his predecessors, especially regarding verification, in order to obtain agreements. He has also shown a much greater appreciation of the political impact of such agreements.

This change is well illustrated by Gorbachev’s approach to limitations on intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF). Leonid I. Brezhnev and Yuri V. Andropov had consistently rejected President Ronald Reagan’s proposal to eliminate all INF systems (the “zero option”). Instead, they tried to maintain Soviet superiority in this category of weapons, arguing that they wanted only “equal security,” which in reality meant that the USSR should be allowed to maintain intermediate-range weapons equal to all those possessed by the United States and its European allies. This refusal led to the breakup of the negotiations and the American counter-deployment of American cruise and Pershing II missiles in later 1983.

In contrast to Brezhnev and Andropov, however, Gorbachev—after some hesitation—agreed to the total elimination of all Soviet medium-range missiles, including those based in Asia. Moreover, during United States Secretary of State George Schultz’s visit to Moscow in April 1987, Gorbachev proposed eliminating not only all intermediate-range missiles but also all shorter-range missiles (with ranges from 500 km to 1,000 km) — the “double zero” option. This proposal caused considerable consternation within NATO, especially in West Germany, because it meant that the West would be left with only short-range missiles and nuclear artillery with ranges below 500 km for defense against a Soviet conventional attack. Many Europeans thought the proposal was a dangerous step toward the “denuclearization” of Europe. Once the United States had signaled its willingness to accept the offer, however, the West European countries, especially West Germany, had little choice but to accept the decision and put the best face on it.

Gorbachev’s willingness to agree to eliminate all intermediate- and shorter-range missiles appears to have had several motives. First, in contrast to his predecessors,
Gorbachev thought that Soviet security could be better ensured by "political means"—i.e., arms control—than through a continued military buildup. Second, Gorbachev needed to break the general deadlock in arms control in the wake of the collapse of the Reykjavik summit in October 1988. The West saw the INF issue as the main obstacle to improved East-West relations. Thus, Gorbachev apparently hoped that the INF agreement would have a positive impact on East-West relations and break the logjam in other areas, especially the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START).

Third, there were sound military reasons for agreeing to the zero option. While the accord required the Soviet Union to scrap its entire SS-20 force as well as its remaining SS-4s and SS-5s, it eliminated an important nuclear threat to Soviet territory—particularly from the Pershing II, which has a short flight time of twelve to fourteen minutes. Moreover, the Soviet Union could still cover many of the same targets in Europe by redirecting some of its strategic forces—a fact that may well have helped convince the Soviet military to go along with the decision.

Finally, the agreement threatened further to erode the credibility of the American nuclear deterrent and to increase fissures within NATO. As Western analysts and officials pointed out, the elimination of all INF and shorter-range nuclear missiles in Europe would make the strategy of flexible response much more difficult and probably require some changes in Western strategy. The pressure for further reductions was bound to increase, especially from West Germany, where most of the remaining short-range nuclear systems were deployed. Thus the long-term political benefits may have seemed worth the short-term military costs.

The INF accord also had important advantages for the West. First, it eliminated an important military threat to Western Europe. Second, it required the Soviet Union to make large asymmetrical reductions and set an important precedent for other negotiations, especially those related to conventional arms. Third, the agreement contained stringent verification provisions, including on-site inspection. This represented a significant shift in the Soviet position and set another important precedent for other negotiations.

In the field of conventional arms control, however, Gorbachev has shown the greatest inclination to depart from past Soviet policy. Gorbachev's predecessors, especially Brezhnev, showed little inclination to take conventional arms control seriously. Brezhnev gave top priority to strategic nuclear arms control. Moreover, he feared the consequences of any large-scale withdrawal of Soviet forces on the political stability within the bloc.

Gorbachev, by contrast, seems to believe that Soviet political and military objectives can be furthered by progress in conventional arms control. His interest in conventional arms control has probably been influenced by several factors. First, on the broadest political level, it had become increasingly clear that a major improvement in Soviet relations with Western Europe was impossible without seriously addressing West European concerns about Soviet conventional preponderance. This was the main source of West European insecurity and the main rationale for NATO's existence and its reliance on nuclear weapons for defense. Second,
a major reduction of conventional forces promised substantial economic savings over the long run. Third, on the military level, there was increasing concern that Western advances in high-tech conventional weapons, especially precision-guided missiles, would erode traditional Soviet advantages in tanks and manpower.

Gorbachev's "new thinking" provided an important framework for the shift in the Soviet approach to conventional arms control. The concept of "reasonable sufficiency" was applied not only to strategic weapons but also to conventional arms. This meant, in effect, that the USSR could afford to reduce some conventional forces, since it only needed enough forces to repel an aggressor rather than to conduct an offensive on his territory.

Similarly, the shift in Soviet doctrine toward an increasing emphasis on defense and war prevention pointed in the same direction. In the past, Soviet conventional forces had been configured and trained to conduct a rapid offensive designed to seize and hold Western territory if a conflict in Europe broke out. This required large-scale conventional superiority in order to overrun Western defenses. Under the new doctrine, however, Soviet forces were to be trained to fight defensively in the initial period of a conflict and then to reestablish the status quo ante rather than seek to carry the war immediately over to Western territory.

This new doctrine permitted a gradual reduction and restructuring of Soviet conventional forces in a less offensive and threatening posture. Under the new doctrine the Soviet Union no longer needed great numerical superiority in tanks and manpower. Nor did it need large quantities of offensively oriented materials, such as bridge-building equipment, which was primarily designed to enhance its capacity to conduct large-scale offensives. Long-range offensive aircraft could also be reduced.

Gorbachev's approach to conventional arms control reflected these new realities. Beginning in 1986 the Soviet Union began to adopt a more flexible approach to conventional arms control. The most important shifts in the Soviet position included: Gorbachev's willingness to extend the negotiating zone to admit Soviet territory up to the Ural Mountains, a long-standing Western demand; his open acknowledgment that asymmetries existed—which his predecessors had implicitly denied—and his commitment to eliminate them; the adoption of a more flexible position on verification, especially on-site inspection; a more forthcoming attitude toward the release of data; and a shift, noted above, in Soviet doctrine, putting greater emphasis on defense.

The latter shift was codified in a new Warsaw Pact Doctrine, announced at the meeting of the Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO) Political Consultative Committee in East Berlin at the end of May 1987. The communiqué issued at the end of the meeting specifically stated that the doctrine of the WTO was defensive. In addition, it asserted that the goals of the Vienna negotiations on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) should be guided by the principle of "reasonable sufficiency" and that the negotiations should seek to eliminate the capability for surprise attack and large-scale offensive action. These goals had long been espoused by the
West, and the public commitment to them by the Warsaw Pact implied a significant rapprochement between the two alliances.

The most important indication of Gorbachev's seriousness about conventional arms control, however, came in his speech to the United Nations General Assembly in December 1988. Gorbachev promised unilaterally to withdraw 50,000 Soviet troops and 5,000 Soviet tanks from Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and East Germany; reduce the Soviet armed forces by 500,000 men by 1990; withdraw from Eastern Europe assault-landing troops and other offensively oriented accessories, such as bridge-crossing equipment; cut Soviet forces in the Atlantic-to-the-Urals area by 10,000 tanks, 8,500 artillery systems, and 800 combat aircraft; and restructure Soviet forces in Eastern Europe along "clearly defensive" lines. Although the initiative still left the Soviet Union with substantial advantages in a number of important areas, it significantly undercut the Soviet capability to launch a short-warning attack—a long-standing Western concern.

Few Western officials or analysts had expected Gorbachev to make such a dramatic gesture. Moreover, in taking the initiative, Gorbachev seems to have overridden objections by the military, including those of the chief of the General Staff, Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev, whose removal was announced the same day. Indeed, the initiative was evidently the result of a prolonged debate between those favoring unilateral measures (located primarily in several Soviet think-tanks and in key positions in Foreign Ministry) and those opposed (located mostly in the Ministry of Defense and General Staff.) 24 In the end, Gorbachev was apparently persuaded that a dramatic political gesture was needed to convince the West of his seriousness and to give new momentum to the conventional arms control talks in Vienna due to begin a few months hence. Gorbachev may have also hoped that the unilateral cuts would have a favorable impact on Western public opinion and stimulate pressure in the West to make a reciprocal gesture.

While the West did not respond with a reciprocal reduction, the initiative did have an important political impact on the general climate surrounding the opening of the CFE negotiations in Vienna in March 1989. In fact, by the time that negotiations opened, the Western and Soviet approaches were relatively close. The Soviet proposal presented at the opening round of the talks on 6 March by Foreign Minister Eduard A. Shevardnadze provided for a three-stage process:

- Both NATO and the WTO would reduce their armed forces and conventional armaments 10 to 15 percent below their current levels.
- Troop levels and armaments would be reduced by 25 percent.
- Each side's armed forces would be reduced in all categories of arms, including naval forces.

Shevardnadze also called for strict verification provisions and the immediate initiation of separate negotiations on short-range nuclear systems.

The Soviet proposal was in broad accord with NATO's proposal on several important points: equal limits on important weapons systems; the general magnitude of reductions (the WTO proposed cuts 10 to 15 percent below current levels,
the West 5 to 10 percent), and the need for extensive verification measures. Moreover, both sides agreed that the overall goal of the talks should be to eliminate the capacity for surprise attack and large-scale offensive action.

Important differences, however, remained on whether to include aircraft and troops—the United States wanted to focus solely on tanks and offensive armor—and on short-range nuclear weapons. These differences were narrowed by the USSR's proposal at the end of May, which suggested geographic ceilings on weapons and essentially accepted the basic Western framework for cutting tanks, artillery, and armored troop carriers. The differences were further reduced by President George Bush's proposals at the NATO summit a few days later. The president agreed to include combat aircraft and attack helicopters in the negotiations. He also proposed that each side reduce its armed forces to 275,000 soldiers—a move that would require the United States to withdraw 30,000 and the Soviets 350,000 soldiers. Finally, he agreed that talks on short-range nuclear forces (SNF) could be initiated once the CFE negotiations had been concluded. Bush insisted, however, that the SNF talks should be designed to lead to a "partial reduction" of SNF, not their total elimination. And in deference to West German concerns, a decision regarding the modernization of 88 Lance short-range missiles (FOTL) was postponed.25

These two moves significantly reduced the gap between the two sides and contributed to rapid progress in the talks. The negotiations were given new impetus in March by the agreement in Ottawa to limit each side to 195,000 soldiers in the central zone. The United States, however, was allowed to maintain 225,000 overall in Europe. The latter agreement marked an important compromise by Gorbachev in that it codified unequal ceilings—a major American goal.26 The Soviets, by contrast, were given no right to deploy troops outside the central zone.

However, Soviet interest in a rapid conclusion of the talks waned visibly in the spring of 1989, slowing their momentum. The deadlock appears to have been related to Soviet concerns about the process of German unification. The Soviet Union was apparently unwilling to move forward in Vienna to reduce its own forces substantially until there was greater clarity about the size and configuration of the military forces of a united Germany, as well as the future nature of NATO strategy. The changes in NATO nuclear strategy announced at the NATO summit in July, together with Chancellor Helmut Kohl's public assurances shortly thereafter that the forces of a united Germany would be reduced to around 370,000 men (less than half the current total of the two armies combined), appear to have allayed the most important Soviet concerns. Thereafter, rapid progress was made in resolving the remaining major outstanding issues—limits on weapon holdings by individual nations (the "sufficiency rule"), limitations on naval aircraft, and limitations on weapons in specific subzones. In early October the two sides agreed in principle on the outlines of a draft treaty. The final breakthrough in the negotiations was the result of an important Soviet concession: Moscow agreed to include land-based naval aircraft in the final agreement—a long-standing United States goal—without insisting that the same apply to carrier-based aircraft, which
the United States wanted excluded. This concession removed the last major obstacle to an agreement.

The CFE treaty, which was officially signed at the thirty-four-nation CSCE Summit in Paris in November 1990, is the most important arms-control treaty signed in the postwar period. The treaty codifies a fundamental change in the balance of power in Europe by establishing equal ceilings on major categories of equipment, including tanks, artillery, and personnel carriers, thereby eliminating major Soviet advantages in these weapons systems. As a result of the treaty, the Warsaw Pact will have to destroy about 19,000 tanks, while NATO will have to destroy only about 4,000 tanks. The treaty will require no substantial cuts in NATO's armored troop carriers and no cuts in its artillery or combat aircraft. The Warsaw Pact, by contrast, will have to destroy thousands of these weapons.

The signing of the CFE treaty is likely to be followed by a new set of negotiations (CFE-IB) designed to establish national ceilings on the forces of individual countries. In these talks the Soviet Union's main goal will probably be low ceilings on the military forces of a united Germany. It is also likely to try to obtain treaty-related restrictions on NATO and German forces stationed in the former territory of East Germany.

The conclusion of a CFE I agreement will also open the way for negotiations on short-range nuclear forces (SNF). Such talks have long been a Soviet goal, but there has been a visible shift in the Soviet position on SNF negotiations since mid-1989. Originally, the Soviets seemed intent on pressing for total elimination of all short-range systems (the "third zero"). However, Gorbachev spoke of the creation of a "minimum nuclear deterrent" in his speech in Strasbourg in July 1989.27 Similarly, during a visit to NATO headquarters in Brussels, Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze suggested a two-stage process for SNF negotiations. In the first stage, SNF would be reduced to low common ceilings, and in the second stage they would be eliminated entirely. Leading Soviet analysts have also referred to such a two-stage process.28

The shift in the Soviet position appears to have several motivations. First, the Soviet Union seems to recognize that there is strong resistance in Western Europe, especially in France and Britain, to the total denuclearization of Western Europe and that pressing for such a goal at this point would be counterproductive, stiffening Western resistance to reductions and possibly inhibiting further progress in conventional arms control. Second, with the loss of Soviet conventional superiority, which will be codified in a CFE I agreement, the Soviets may feel a greater need to retain some nuclear weapons as a hedge against NATO's technological superiority. Finally, eliminating all tactical nuclear weapons could precipitate a withdrawal of American troops from Western Europe, thereby increasing instability during the transition period.

Thus, unless the West European countries, particularly Germany, press for a total elimination of short-range systems, the USSR is likely to accept the continued presence of some nuclear weapons on West European soil at least for an interim
period. The first phase of the SNF negotiations will probably be directed at establishing equal but lower ceilings on land-based nuclear systems. Nevertheless, despite what appears to be an emerging consensus on the basic goals of the negotiations, substantial technical problems remain. There is no agreement, for instance, on the "unit of account"—warheads, launchers, or delivery vehicles—or the geographic scope of the negotiations. Moreover, the verification problems are formidable. Finally, the question of whether to include French and British nuclear systems remains unresolved.

The political evolution in Europe, however, may make the resolution of some of these problems easier. It is increasingly likely that the United States will unilaterally withdraw most, if not all, ground-based tactical nuclear weapons from Europe, leaving air- and sea-based nuclear weapons as the backbone of its deterrent strategy. Moreover, from the Soviets' perspective, the change in NATO strategy announced at the NATO summit in London in July 1990—whereby nuclear weapons will only be used as a "last resort"—diminishes the threat posed by the remaining weapons on European soil. At the same time, the withdrawal of Soviet troops and military equipment from Eastern Europe will significantly reduce the Soviet short-range nuclear threat to Western Europe.

These developments have somewhat diminished the importance of the SNF negotiations. Nevertheless, since such weapons can be easily moved back into the negotiating zone, it will be useful to have agreed, verifiable constraints on them. For political reasons, moreover, the Soviet Union is likely to press for the rapid commencement of negotiations. They strengthen the impression, both at home and in Europe, that Europe is entering a new era of reduced confrontation, thereby legitimizing the Soviet push for a greater reliance on pan-European security structures. In addition, negotiations offer an important means to try to block the modernization of NATO's air-based component, particularly plans to develop a new tactical air-to-surface missile (TASM). Thus, in future talks, the Soviets are likely to press for deep cuts in nuclear-capable aircraft as well as restrictive provisions on air-to-surface missiles. Initially, the USSR may also try to link the negotiations to the question of tactical nuclear weapons at sea, though it seems likely that this issue will be dealt with in separate talks on naval arms control.

The USSR and the Future European Security Order

The collapse of communism and the unification of Germany have shattered the foundations of the USSR's postwar policy toward Europe. This policy was based on three pillars: (1) Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe; (2) the division of Germany; and (3) the bipolar political division of Europe. All three pillars are now destroyed beyond repair. The USSR is thus faced with the task of constructing a new policy not only toward Eastern Europe but toward Europe as a whole.

Originally, Gorbachev appears to have envisaged a gradual process of change in Europe during which both alliances would continue to exist but would lose their predominately military character and take on increasingly political func-
tions. The alliances, including the Warsaw Pact, were seen as stabilizing mechanisms. Soviet analysts argued, for instance, that the Warsaw Pact could play a useful role as an instrument for the “controlled and orderly transition” of the two blocs to a lower level of military confrontation and as a means for conducting arms-control negotiations. Others argued that the pact should be maintained, but that it should be transformed into a “mature political partnership” in which all parties enjoyed equal rights. They suggested that the East European role be expanded and that a permanent secretariat be set up in one of the East European countries.

The idea of a prolonged transition based on the continued existence of the two alliances, however, seems increasingly unrealistic. As a result of the rapid changes in Eastern Europe, the Warsaw Pact has become a hollow shell. It may continue to exist for several more years but as an effective military alliance it is clinically dead. The unification of Germany deprives the pact of its most important military asset. At the same time, the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Hungary and Czechoslovakia—scheduled to be completed by the end of 1991—severely weakens the USSR's ability to conduct coalitional warfare. Hungary, moreover, has announced that it will formally withdraw from the pact in 1991, which could lead to the formal disbanding of the Warsaw Pact.

As the pact has disintegrated, the Soviet Union has begun to push more forcefully for strengthening pan-European structures as an alternative to the two alliances. Some Soviet analysts, for instance, have suggested a two-phase approach. The first phase (1990–91) would begin with the creation of all-European centers for the prevention of crisis and arms-control verification. This phase would be followed by a second stage in which a permanent secretariat and agencies on ecology, migration, and economic cooperation would be set up. Soviet analysts have also suggested that the Council of Europe could be expanded to take on a pan-European character.

There have also been hints that the USSR may favor setting up a two-tier security structure with a permanent council, composed of the USSR, the United States, France, Britain, and Germany, which would become the core of a new security system and report back to the 35. Such ideas, moreover, dovetail closely with those put forward by Moscow's former East European allies. The foreign minister of Czechoslovakia, Jiri Dienstbier, for example, has proposed that a European Security Commission be formed with headquarters in Prague. This commission would act as an executive organ of a pan-European system of collective security.

In the future the Soviets can be expected to push such pan-European schemes more vigorously. They are one of the few ways that the USSR can be assured of exerting influence in Europe. In addition, such schemes could contain the growth of instability and nationalism in Eastern Europe, which many Soviet analysts see as a growing threat to European security. To counteract this danger, some Soviet analysts have called for the intensification of ties to Western countries and the “accelerated construction of a new security system, particularly the creation of permanent institutions for all-European control of political processes.” Such a
system is also seen as providing a "corset" to ensure that German unification evolves peacefully and does not pose a threat to the general trend toward increased East-West cooperation.

The Soviets recognize, of course, that NATO is unlikely to fade away immediately, but they hope that the general political climate of East-West détente will make it increasingly less relevant and that its military functions will gradually atrophy. Thus they can be expected to put intensified emphasis on disarmament proposals that will weaken NATO's military potential, especially its nuclear capability. As noted earlier, one of the USSR's prime goals will probably be eliminating land-based missiles and nuclear artillery and preventing any modernization of NATO's air-delivered nuclear component. Soviet negotiators are also likely to press for significant reductions of United States combat aircraft and troop levels in any follow-on negotiation to CFE.

This does not mean, however, that the Soviet Union wishes to see the United States withdraw from Europe. The USSR recognizes that it will take some time to create a new security order in Europe and that the transition period could be destabilizing. Thus, it has come to see the presence of American troops—albeit at significantly reduced levels—as a factor of stability, at least for the short to medium term.33 In addition, it seems willing temporarily to accept some stationing of American nuclear weapons on European soil.

This shift has been part of a general evolution of the Soviet attitude toward the American role in the construction of the "common European home." Initially, the concept had a strongly anti-United States edge and Soviet officials were ambiguous about the American role. Recently, however, Soviet officials and analysts have stressed that the United States has an important place in the European home. In his speech before the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, for instance, Gorbachev noted that the United States and the Soviet Union were a "natural part of the European international-political structure" and that their participation was "not only justified but historically qualified."34 Soviet analysts, echoing this line, have argued that without the participation of the United States, construction of the common European home would be more difficult.

The process of German unification, moreover, is likely to reinforce the Soviets' predisposition to keep the United States involved in Europe. Although Gorbachev has accepted German unification as well as German membership in NATO, the USSR cannot be sure about the long-term direction of political developments in Germany. The United States remains an important constraint on German freedom of action, especially regarding nuclear weapons. A total withdrawal of American forces might reopen the nuclear question in Germany—something the Soviet Union strongly wishes to avoid. This concern gives the USSR an added incentive to keep the United States engaged in Europe rather than to encourage its total withdrawal.

At the same time, Germany's importance in the Soviet Union's European policy is likely to increase. Germany is the USSR's largest Western trading partner and its main source of technology and credits, which will be important for the modernization of the Soviet economy. Moreover, Germany will be the most important
political actor in Europe. Thus, if the Soviet Union wishes to pursue an active policy toward Europe, it will have little choice but to strengthen its ties with Germany. Indeed, Gorbachev's invitation to Kohl to visit his hometown of Stavropol during the chancellor's visit to the USSR in July 1990 — an honor accorded to no other Western leader to date — seemed designed to initiate a new era of more cooperative relations with a united Germany.

The unification of Germany, moreover, is likely to give a new push to the process of European unification. Over the long term, unification may lead to a weakening of Atlanticism and United States influence in Western Europe, but it will also pose serious dilemmas for the USSR. For one thing, it will increase the attractiveness of the EC to the countries of Eastern Europe, making any efforts by the Soviet Union to transform the CMEA or keep it alive more difficult. For another, it will make the export of Soviet industrial products and other commercial transactions to Western Europe more difficult.

On the political level, the process of integration is likely to foster a more cohesive foreign policy on the part of Western Europe, allowing EC members to speak more forcefully with one voice on international issues. Internally, moreover, it will accelerate a shift in the locus of decision-making power on many issues from national capitals to Brussels and Strasbourg. Thus, if the Soviet Union wishes to pursue an active European policy, it will have to develop stronger ties to the EC and its associated institutions rather than simply concentrating on expanding ties to individual West European countries.

The CMEA, however, is not likely to disappear, at least not immediately. The countries of Eastern Europe conduct 40 to 80 percent of their trade within the CMEA. If it were to be disbanded, they would have to redirect their trade toward new markets. Replacing the Soviet market quickly would be difficult — and costly — since many East European goods are not internationally competitive. Thus the CMEA will probably continue to exist in some form for the next few years, at least as a means of facilitating bilateral trade. It is likely, however, to become much more of an "information gathering agency" like the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in Paris than a mechanism for promoting close economic cooperation between the Soviet Union and its former East-European allies. Moreover, given the Soviet Union's own growing economic difficulties, the USSR is likely to reduce its delivery of energy and raw materials to Eastern Europe. This will exacerbate these countries' economic problems as they attempt to transform their economies along market lines.

**Conclusion**

The Soviet Union will face a substantially changed security environment in Europe in the 1990s. In order to adapt to this environment, major adjustments in Soviet policy will be necessary. These adjustments will have to be made at a time when the Soviet Union is undergoing profound change. How this process evolves
will have a major influence on the Soviet Union's role in Europe in the coming decade.

Indeed, the disintegration of the Soviet internal empire is likely to be one of the most important factors affecting the future of Europe in the 1990s. It is highly questionable whether the Soviet Union will remain an integral multinational state. As centrifugal pressures increase, some of the republics, such as the Russian Federation and the Ukraine, are likely to seek greater autonomy—even independence—and may begin to pursue their own "European" policies, especially in the economic area. The growing political fragmentation of the USSR could be a major source of instability in Europe and make the integration of the Soviet Union—or major remnants of it—into a broader European framework more difficult.

It would be short-sighted, however, for the West to exploit this period of convulsion and weakness to exclude the Soviet Union from Europe. That would only strengthen the more radical nationalist and exclusionist forces in Soviet society. Rather, Western policy should encourage a gradual evolution toward greater internal democracy, a greater reform of the Soviet economy, and its integration into the world economy. A less inward-looking, more democratic Soviet Union integrated into a broader European security order in which it has a strong but not dominant voice is more likely to guarantee peace and stability than a frustrated but still militarily powerful empire that feels isolated and excluded from Europe.

NOTES

7. V. Stupishin, "Indeed, Nothing in Europe Is Simple," International Affairs, no. 5 (May 1988), 73. This article was essentially a reply to the Vybornov, Gusenkov, and Leontief article cited in n. 6.
8. Ibid., 72.
10. See the report on the EC prepared by the Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO), in Moscow, "Europeiskoe soobshchestvo segodnia. Tezisy Instituty mirovoy ekonomiki i mezdunarodnykh otoshenii AN SSSR," Mirovaia ekonomika i mezdunarodnye otoshenii, no. 12, April 1988, 8-9.
11. See the material prepared by the West European Research Department of IMEMO on the implications of the formation of the internal market of the EC, "Posledstviia formiro-vanilja edinogo rynka Evropeiskogo soobshchestva material podgotovien otdelom zapadnoevropeiskikh issledovanii IMEMO," Mirovaia ekonomika i mezdunarodnye otoshenii, no. 4, April 1989, 40.
12. On the background to the Gorbachev Initiative and the development of relations between the EC and the CMEA before 1985, see Christian Meier, "Die Gorbachev-Initiative vom 29 Mai 1985-vor

13. See in particular O. Vladimirov, "Vedushchi faktor mirovogo revolyutsionnogo protsessi," Pravda, 21 June 1985. The article was reportedly written by Oleg Rakhmanin, the hard-line deputy chief of the Department for the Liaison with Socialist Countries within the International Department of the Central Committee. In the fall of 1986, Rakhmanin was replaced by Georgi Shakhnazarov, a prominent supporter of reform. Rakhmanin's removal and Shakhnazarov's ascendency were important signs that the reformist line was beginning to gain ground.


18. Ibid., 7 July 1989.

21. Izvestija, 26 Oct. 1988. See also Gorbachev's assessment in his book Perestroika: New Thinking in Our Country and the World (New York: Harper and Row, 1987), 200, where he notes the "reality" of the German states with different political systems and asserts that "what there will be in 100 years is for history to decide." This became the standard Soviet line regarding unification up until the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989.


25. In May 1990 the Bush administration quietly shelved the idea of Lance modernization altogether after it became apparent that there was no support for the program in Europe. For a good discussion of the Lance modernization issue, see Hans Binnendijk, "NATO's Nuclear Modernization Dilemma," Survival 30 (March–April 1989): 137–55.

26. The United States was eager to avoid equating American troops in Europe with Soviet troops. Hence, it pressed for unequal ceilings in order to avoid the appearance of parity. See R. Jeffrey Smith, "U.S., Soviets Reach Troops Cut Accord," Washington Post, 14 Feb. 1990.

33. As the study Tactical Nuclear Weapons in Europe by Bayev et al. noted, "Despite all its negative features, the US military presence is a major stabilizing element in relations among Western nations, and to some degree, in the entire system of East-West relations," 12.
34. Pravda, 7 July 1989.