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## Gorbachev's Policy Toward the United States, 1986-88

Special National Intelligence Estimate

~~Secret~~

SNIE 11-9-86  
September 1986



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Special National Intelligence Estimate

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# Gorbachev's Policy Toward the United States, 1986-88

Key Judgments

for the President

~~Secret~~

SNIE 11-9-86W  
September 1986

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Mr. President,

Note this was prepared before  
the Iceland announcement.

John

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THE NATIONAL FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE BOARD CONCURS, EXCEPT AS NOTED IN THE TEXT.

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SNIE 11-9-86

**GORBACHEV'S POLICY TOWARD  
THE UNITED STATES, 1986-88**

Information available as of 12 September 1986 was used in the preparation of this Estimate, which was approved by the National Foreign Intelligence Board on that date.

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CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
SCOPE NOTE .....	1
KEY JUDGMENTS .....	3
DISCUSSION .....	7
I. The US Factor in Gorbachev's Policy Agenda .....	7
II. Gorbachev's Agenda: Policies and Prospects .....	8
Economic Policy .....	8
Military Policy .....	9
A More Activist Foreign Policy .....	9
The Domestic Political Setting for Foreign Policy .....	10
III. Current Soviet Strategy and Tactics Toward the United States .....	10
Assessment of the West .....	10
Tactical Calculations .....	12
Summitry .....	13
Arms Control .....	13
Regional and Other Issues .....	17
IV. The Outlook for Soviet Policy Toward the United States: 1986-88 .....	18
Domestic Variables .....	18
Variables in Foreign Affairs .....	19
Conclusions: Arms Control, Summitry, and 1988 .....	19
ANNEX A: A Regional Profile of Soviet Foreign Policy .....	23
ANNEX B: Exaggeration or Duplicity in Soviet Tactics? .....	25

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## SCOPE NOTE

This Special National Intelligence Estimate assesses the policies of the Gorbachev regime toward the United States during the period 1986 through 1988, the remaining term of the current US administration. This Estimate was stimulated in part by interest in the degree to which Soviet domestic economic conditions encourage accommodation with the United States on key security issues. The Estimate discusses Gorbachev's broader foreign policy aims primarily as they affect US-Soviet relations and does not attempt an exhaustive analysis of Soviet foreign policy in all areas.

Section II summarizes our assessment of current Soviet economic, military, and overall foreign policies and their prospects, Gorbachev's internal political position, and the bearing of these factors on Soviet policy toward the United States in the next two years. Section III gives our assessment of current Soviet policy toward the United States and the calculations shaping it. Section IV presents conclusions and the outlook for the next two years.

The discussion in Section IV rests largely on the assumption that US policies and positions with respect to arms control and regional security issues remain substantially constant. We have not attempted comprehensively to hypothesize the impact of alternative US policies.

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## KEY JUDGMENTS

The Gorbachev regime aims to re-create some sort of detente relationship with the United States to ease the burden of arms competition and, accordingly, the task of domestic economic revival. Because the detente they seek reduces US challenges to Soviet interests, Soviet leaders believe such a relationship can help preserve and advance the USSR's international influence and its relative military power. Gorbachev seeks to relax East-West hostility for a protracted period—he is looking ahead through the 1990s—not to suspend the competition but to put the USSR in an improved long-term position as a globally influential superpower.

These aims have persuaded the Soviets to pursue an active, engaged policy toward the United States. It is focused on arms control (supported by a vigorous worldwide propaganda offensive) and on the prospect of US-Soviet summits (exploited for leverage to moderate US policies and encourage concessions on arms control). The Soviets strive to deflect the Reagan administration away from security policies that, despite some moderation in the last two years, the Soviets see as severely challenging to them and to discourage such hostile US policies from being carried forward into the next US administration.

The Soviets realize, however, that their engaged policy toward the United States risks legitimizing hostile policies of the current administration by muting Western anxieties about them and seeming to show that they are a sound basis for dealing with Moscow. Managing this risk is a delicate problem for the new Soviet leadership. There are differing points of view in Moscow about how to craft a diplomacy sufficiently forthcoming to encourage US concessions while minimizing this risk. Despite such controversies, we believe Gorbachev has the political strength to forge Politburo consensus behind the initiatives and decisions he favors in dealing with the United States.

The central Soviet objective in bilateral dealings with the United States and in the surrounding Soviet diplomacy and propaganda toward US Allies and Western publics is revival of the arms control framework of the 1970s or creation of a similar successor system. The Soviets see such a framework as serving their political, military, and economic interests. It would provide an important element of predictability that would ease the balancing of military requirements and economic revitalization in the 1990s. And, should its political side effects include a flagging of overall US defense efforts such as occurred in the mid-1970s,



so much the better. Gorbachev is more prepared than his predecessors to consider substantial reductions of offensive nuclear forces in such a framework for reasons that include cost avoidance, increasing interest in enhancing the quality of Soviet nonnuclear forces, and a desire to undermine the credibility of US nuclear strategies. The main Soviet motive for considering and negotiating about large nuclear force reductions at present is to undermine the US strategic defense initiative (SDI).

To be acceptable to the Soviets, a comprehensive strategic arms control framework that includes substantial reductions of offensive nuclear forces must provide effective constraints on the US SDI, through formal agreement that limits the program and political effects that they calculate would kill it eventually. Despite its uncertain future, the Soviets are deeply concerned about SDI because it might produce a military and technological revolution and could undermine the war-fighting strategies of Soviet nuclear forces. In the extreme, the Soviets genuinely fear that SDI could give the US confidence it had a damage-limiting first-strike capability. To be in a position to counter SDI, the Soviets believe they must preserve large ballistic missile forces and the option to expand them. For both economic and military reasons, they wish to avoid the costs of a competition to develop and counter advanced ballistic missile defenses in which the United States has the technological initiative. Their campaign against SDI aims to deny the United States that initiative; but they will proceed to develop advanced defense technologies in any event, as they did following the ABM Treaty of 1972.

Despite the seriousness of Soviet economic difficulties and the longer term importance to Moscow of easing East-West tensions to help address them, we believe that these difficulties do not place Gorbachev under so much pressure that he must make fundamental concessions to the United States on major security issues during the next two years. Gorbachev believes he can hold out for an arms control framework and a larger US-Soviet security relationship generally on his terms, while putting political pressures on Washington to make key concessions, particularly on SDI.<sup>1</sup>

Gorbachev believes that only a diplomacy appearing flexible to American and European audiences, especially on arms control, can put pressure on Washington and test the possibilities that may exist for real US concessions. More innovations in Soviet arms control positions of the sort Gorbachev has already introduced are likely if he believes they can

<sup>1</sup> The Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, holds that the opening clause of this paragraph overstates the role of Soviet economic conditions in causing the Soviets to pursue detente in any time frame, and that strategic and political considerations are overriding. See paragraph 4 of "Discussion" for a fuller statement of this view.

help him achieve constraints on SDI and other US defense programs. New unilateral gestures, such as modest cuts in military manpower or in the officially stated defense budget, are possible.

At the same time, Gorbachev sees himself able to defend Soviet interests in the Third World, particularly with regard to embattled Marxist-Leninist client states. He expects a more active Soviet foreign policy overall to open up new opportunities in the Third World and among US Allies.

Soviet policy toward the United States involves two principal tactics: first, holding open the promise of nuclear force reductions if the United States accommodates on SDI; second, holding open the prospect of a series of additional summits if the United States gives ground on arms control. If the United States makes the concessions necessary for this process to proceed, Gorbachev believes that it will serve the political goals of weakening anti-Soviet policies in Washington or encouraging more congenial behavior from the next US administration. Gorbachev sees the popularity of arms control in the United States and Europe and domestic disquiet over the administration's foreign and defense policies as his main source of influence over Washington and Washington's eagerness for summits as his principal point of tactical leverage.

To maximize his leverage, Gorbachev will delay his decision on scheduling another summit as long as possible. All things being equal, Gorbachev would profit politically from additional summits. But we believe he will hold out for terms that advance Soviet political and strategic interests; he does not need a summit for its own sake. [

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Meeting these conditions and holding another US-Soviet summit would not, however, produce Soviet agreement to a comprehensive arms control package on nuclear force reductions. For such an agreement, we believe the Soviets will demand codification in some form of the principle that offensive strategic force reductions must go hand in hand with tight constraints on SDI. By the same token, we believe the Soviets will strongly resist principles and agreement terms that seem to license SDI by reconciling its development and deployment with nuclear force reductions.

Failing agreement along Soviet-preferred lines or publicly visible progress toward it, we believe that Gorbachev is likely at some point to shift his priorities and tactics toward a more concerted effort to discredit the policies of the current US administration, to inject East-West issues into the 1988 Presidential election, and to encourage more

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flexibility from the next US administration. Such a shift would involve harsher propaganda attacks on the administration and the President and stand-pat negotiating tactics, although not a Soviet withdrawal from arms control negotiations or other fundamental changes of behavior. Moscow would continue to position itself to appear the party eager for improved US-Soviet relations, while trying even harder to portray the administration as the recalcitrant side. There is some basis for arguing that this shift has already taken place, but we think this is unlikely and would look for it sometime in late 1987 or early 1988.

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## DISCUSSION

### I. The US Factor in Gorbachev's Policy Agenda

1. The Gorbachev regime is committed to reviving both the domestic economic performance of the Soviet system and the international effectiveness of the USSR as a superpower with expanding military power and global influence. It perceives a mutually reinforcing relationship between these two goals. Revived economic performance is seen as vital to the USSR's future status as a superpower. Soviet foreign policy pursues international conditions conducive to Soviet economic revival, while it also safeguards existing Soviet interests and capitalizes on opportunities to expand Soviet influence.

2. This interrelationship has led the Gorbachev regime to seek some form of detente with the United States to avoid dangerous confrontation and to limit the burdens of arms competition on the Soviet economy. As in the past, the Soviets pursue a detente relationship and arms control arrangements with the United States because they see them as serving Soviet superpower interests, restraining the challenge of US defense and other policies, and giving the USSR increased freedom of action.

3. While attempting to rebuild their economy, Soviet leaders want to contain demands for greater national security expenditures. They want to plan and pursue their domestic objectives in an environment of predictable and, if possible, diminished external threat. Without having to give way significantly to US demands, Soviet leaders want especially to reduce the challenge of US defense and foreign policies seen during the current administration.

4. There is an alternative view, held by the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, that long-standing strategic objectives, such as splitting the Western alliance, isolating the United States from its Allies, and constraining US defense efforts are the primary determinants of Soviet foreign policy toward the United States. The holder of this view believes that economic considerations play a secondary role in the USSR's foreign policy in general, and in the Soviet calculus that has led the Gorbachev regime to seek some form of detente with the United States. Moreover, the holder of this view believes the importance of the economic revitalization, as it relates to the USSR's

overall status as a superpower, is overstated. This view holds that Soviet leaders see a number of clear advantages to their economic revitalization program, but they do not view it as vital to their future as a superpower. They consider it an instrument to further strengthen the USSR's global position. Even if the revitalization is relatively unsuccessful, the Soviets will strive to preserve and expand the military capabilities and posture attributed to a superpower.

#### 5. More specifically the USSR seeks:

— To revive an arms control framework, based either on the agreements of the 1970s or new ones, that makes the strategic planning environment relatively predictable, reduces US commitment to strategic modernization, and thereby helps the USSR preserve and enhance its strategic position. This framework requires some effective and lasting constraint on SDI, which the Soviets see as the most dangerous and uncertain variable in their strategic planning outlook.

— To undermine the policies of the Reagan administration that the Soviets see aimed against them or, failing this, to inhibit their being perpetuated in a successor administration.

— To gain greater respect for Soviet superpower status from the United States and its allies through lessening of US hostility to the Soviet system and its hegemony in Eastern Europe, a reduction of US challenges to Soviet positions in the Third World, and generally a willingness to regard the USSR's interests and policies as legitimate.

— To gain liberalized access to Western technology and credits, which are a necessary part of Gorbachev's economic strategy for modernizing industry and sustaining consumption levels. The inhibitions of hard currency shortfalls and concern about excessive reliance on the West will limit Moscow's commitment to this goal for now. Soviet interest could rise sharply, however, if economic performance proves disappointing.

6. Although the USSR faces more challenging foreign and defense policies from the United States today than it did in the 1970s, until now Gorbachev has

shown no willingness to pursue these goals by means of a fundamental retrenchment of Soviet superpower interests. But his aims require energetic and persistent engagement with the United States, the appearance of new flexibility on many issues in US-Soviet relations, and some degree of real flexibility for diplomatic credibility and to encourage US movement. The risk for Moscow is that, contrary to its aims, active engagement on arms control and summitry could end up confirming for the current and future US administrations the efficacy of hardline policies as the best way for the United States to manage its relations with the Soviet Union. [

prices will continue to be important constraints. Moreover, although Gorbachev has encouraged wider debate on economic reforms, for now his strategy leaves largely intact the centrally planned economy and bureaucratic establishment that have inhibited economic efficiency and technological innovation. Finally, certain elements of the new strategy itself are likely to limit its success, particularly in the short run. The shift of investment resources to the machinery sector, for instance, will almost certainly create disruptions as enterprises strive to rapidly assimilate large amounts of new plant and equipment. Similarly, some organizational changes will cause short-term disruptions.

## II. Gorbachev's Agenda: Policies and Prospects

7. During the past year, the Gorbachev regime outlined its overall domestic and foreign policy agenda. It will continue to evolve, but the main directions of policy for the next few years have probably been set.

### Economic Policy

8. The Gorbachev regime has decided on the outlines of a long-term strategy for economic revival and has taken initial steps toward its implementation. The key elements of this strategy are (1) placement of better managers and enforcement of greater work discipline at all levels (the "human factors" campaign), (2) change in economic organization to reconcile more efficient central planning with more autonomy for technological innovation and greater efficiency at the enterprise level, and (3) substantial new investments in the civilian machine-building sector to accelerate modernization of the USSR's production base.

9. Gorbachev and his colleagues believe they are on the correct economic course, and their 1986 economic performance has been encouraging to them so far. But they know their economic problems are very serious and that they have difficult decisions and a long struggle before them to see lasting results.

10. While Gorbachev's strategy addresses some of the key problems facing the Soviet economy, the success of his program will be limited by a number of interrelated obstacles. He seeks to overcome these obstacles through exhortation and additional reform measures that refine his strategy. But we doubt these measures will be adequate to meet his goals in the long run. Slowing growth of the labor force, increasing costs of extracting raw materials, and depressed world oil

11. For all these reasons, we believe that Gorbachev will fall well short of the main goals of the 1986-90 Five-Year Plan. The plan implies an average annual rate of growth for GNP of 4 percent. We believe some improvement over the 2.2-percent growth achieved in 1981-85 is likely but do not expect growth rates to reach planned figures. To sustain the "human factors" campaign implies real or expected improvement in consumption levels. In our view, the upsurge in investment planned for 1986-90 and the continuing needs of defense mean overall per capita consumption growth probably will average between zero and 1 percent for the five-year period.

12. Success for Gorbachev's strategy in the short term, however, will not necessarily be reflected in the growth of GNP. Some promising improvements in key measures will probably be registered, even though they are short of announced or implied goals. Total labor productivity is planned to grow at 4 percent per year; we would expect something more like 2 percent, a shortfall, but still substantially better than the 1976-85 period. We expect the negative trend in total factor productivity growth to be substantially slowed, although not reversed as the plan stipulates. Selective improvements in consumption, such as housing, availability of meat, clothing quality, and services, are feasible and would brighten a picture that is dismal on the average.

13. The key for Gorbachev is to fortify confidence that he is basically on the right track, that his strategy can work, and, where it is falling short, affords options and next steps. We believe the chances for this kind of success are reasonably good in the near term. Exogenous factors, such as weather and oil prices, can hurt overall performance; accidents such as Chernobyl' can affect the national mood; but they will not deflect Gorbachev's economic strategy until it is given a thorough test. We and some Soviet economists believe the current Gorbachev program will eventually bog down because of the system's deeply rooted obstacles

to innovation, that his strategy will lose promise, and that decisions about truly radical reforms will have to be faced within five to 10 years. But both economic and political considerations make this more likely beyond 1988 than during the next two years.

#### Military Policy

14. Although subject to adjustment, the basic contours of Soviet military policy through the end of this decade have been set by the five-year plan and long-term Soviet weapons programs. Soviet defense outlays will probably continue the slow growth seen since 1976, with defense procurement growing somewhat more slowly.

15. We have not yet observed Gorbachev's personal stamp on Soviet military policy to the same extent as on other issues. He certainly sees enhanced military power as one of the goals of economic revival. While warning the West not to believe that arms competition will break the Soviet economy, Gorbachev clearly wants to limit the economic burden of defense and possibly reduce it as the economy grows. As have previous Soviet leaders, he has turned to the defense sector for talent and facilities to help civilian industry. Political measures, such as limiting the political status of top military officers, indicate Gorbachev's determination to stress the party's control of the military. However, the prominence of military values in the Soviet system assures that military considerations are calculated in making top policy decisions.

16. While there may be friction, we believe most Soviet military leaders recognize that the future military power of the USSR demands major improvements in overall economic performance, which may require restraints on some categories of current military procurement to facilitate long-term improvements in the defense industrial base. At the high levels Soviet defense spending has attained, even very slow growth during the next five years can be expected to yield an impressive flow of additional modern weapons to the Soviet arsenal. For example, within spending levels projected above and a familiar overall procurement profile, the Soviets could produce the following illustrative force mix during 1986-90: some 500 ICBMs, 50 submarines, 200 strategic bombers, 18,000 tanks, 2,000 fighter aircraft, and 2,000 helicopters. There may be some competition at the margin for scarce talent and quality inputs between planned military production and civilian goals. But the production lines for the expected output of Soviet defense industry over the next five years are already in place.

17. The difficulty in reconciling the demands of the Soviet military and economic modernization seems

likely to grow toward the end of this decade and into the early 1990s; however. Soviet military planners expect an increasingly severe technological challenge. Weapon systems of the mid-to-late 1990s will require difficult technological advances in design and production. New resource commitments to accomplish such advances will soon have to be made. The writings of Marshal Ogarkov and others suggest that Soviet military strategy is evolving in a direction that calls for more aggressive modernization of general purposes forces on the basis of advanced nonnuclear technology. Whatever the direction and outcome of this evolution, future military requirements will place heavy new demands on the Soviet technology base that are not certain of being met.

18. We believe Soviet military and political leaders alike see the arms control process, whether it produces agreements or desired political side effects, as helping to manage such uncertainty. The Soviet leadership at present sees a special utility in arms control arrangements that impede the US SDI program, reduce the size of nuclear forces, and avoid the costs of a strategic missile offense-defense competition led by the United States. Agreements along these lines would by no means rescue the Soviet economy or even reduce its current defense burden. But such arrangements would ease the task of moving toward the high-technology, conventional forces being discussed by Soviet marshals and avoid undesired additional costs in the strategic area.

#### A More Activist Foreign Policy

19. In addition to pursuing a policy of active engagement with the United States, the Gorbachev regime has sought to revitalize Soviet foreign policy across the board with new faces in the foreign affairs establishment, organizational changes, new activism, and some seemingly new rhetoric. These innovations have enabled Moscow to reach out more credibly to foreign audiences it wishes to influence, especially in Europe, and now—with the multiple initiatives announced by Gorbachev in Vladivostok—in East Asia. Moscow also wants a more active and more widely influential diplomacy in the Middle East.

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20. The basic direction of his policies toward specific countries and regions does not appear altered so far. Gorbachev apparently intends to continue efforts to consolidate Marxist-Leninist regimes in the Third World, most important in Afghanistan. Moscow's newly activist style may increase its ability to respond to

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Gorbachev's "New Thinking" on International Relations

Gorbachev and some of his foreign affairs minions are giving more emphasis to language that suggests that international affairs should not be dominated by the East-West struggle. Calling for "new thinking" on foreign policy, this language stresses "common security," "interdependence," and "global problems shared by humanity" (such as ecology, nuclear power, health, economic development, and even the issue of peace). It shows a tendency to depolarize the Soviet picture of the world and to dilute the traditional element of "class struggle" in the Moscow's expressed world outlook. Ideological references in foreign policy pronouncements—for example, to the International Communist Movement—have become less frequent.

The nature of the Soviet political system precludes dismissal of these rhetorical shifts as unimportant; but their meaning is far from clear at present. To some extent this verbiage is intended to enhance the image of the USSR in the eyes of foreign audiences. And Gorbachev makes it clear that most of the "new thinking" he calls for obliges the West, rather than the USSR, to change its policies, for example, with respect to arms competition, regional security affairs, and hostility to Soviet client governments and movements. But this language is also directed at internal audiences. Its purpose may be to ready Soviet elites for future policy moves of an accommodating nature. Over time, this language may have the effect of encouraging some Soviet elites to expect such moves, whether this is the leadership's intent or not. For now, we believe that the internal purpose of Gorbachev's call for "new thinking" is to license more pragmatic foreign policy tactics and restaffing of Soviet national security organizations. One consequence we fully expect to see is the complaint that he is neglecting ideology from quarters whose positions are jeopardized by "new thinking."

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new regional opportunities not of its own making. Marginal shifts, if rewarded by the countries at which they are aimed, could lead to more significant Soviet policy shifts in the future. (See annex A, "A Regional Profile of Soviet Foreign Policy.")

21. Gorbachev's Soviet Union still conducts foreign policy in a way that makes most of the world a battleground in the continuing rivalry between the superpowers. Recent shifts in Soviet foreign policy rhetoric toward more emphasis on mutual security and interdependence—and deemphasis of ideological themes in foreign policy—might represent harbingers of future change in the way the Soviets view the larger superpower competition, although this is as yet very

unclear. For now, however, we believe they are intended to enhance the regime's external appeal, to justify tactical flexibility to internal elites, and to license shakeups of the Soviet foreign affairs bureaucracy.

22. The Gorbachev regime is strengthening its foreign affairs staffing, bringing more able people into key positions, and reorganizing to put the focus of policymaking in the Central Committee apparatus and conduct of diplomacy in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The regime clearly seeks more tactical skill, better harmony between diplomacy and propaganda, and more sophistication in its foreign policy. These measures have helped to project an image of foreign policy activism under Gorbachev, along with some false starts in propaganda and raggedness in diplomatic execution. After some shakedown period, however, we expect the overall skill of Gorbachev's foreign affairs apparatus to increase noticeably.

#### The Domestic Political Setting for Foreign Policy

23. Gorbachev's main problems are internal, centering on the economy. Political opposition or resistance to his leadership, whether from entrenched groups or individual competitors, will be inspired mainly by the impact of Gorbachev's domestic policies on the elite's power and privileges. Gorbachev is not a one-man dictator. His power is still that of a leader forging consensus within the Politburo required for policy decisions. Other Politburo figures have power positions and policy views of their own. Moreover, to build his personal strength, Gorbachev must now extend his patronage beyond the central party apparatus into the regional power structure, which his economic strategy requires him to criticize and to threaten. The odds favor Gorbachev's winning his political struggles over the years ahead, although they could become more rather than less difficult.

24. Our insight into Kremlin politics is limited, but we believe Gorbachev now has adequate power to take Soviet foreign policy in the directions he judges necessary. Although there may be serious argument over specific moves and audible skepticism about his general approach, Gorbachev does not, in our view, face a concerted opposition on foreign policy.

### III. Current Soviet Strategy and Tactics Toward the United States

#### Assessment of the West

25. After some initial hopes that the Reagan administration would follow policies like those of President Nixon's first term, the Soviets concluded early that

Gorbachev's Political Position and  
Foreign Policy Leadership

The following assessment underlies our judgment on Gorbachev's power to control Soviet foreign policy.

Gorbachev has established himself as the authoritative leader in foreign affairs in that he has the requisite image in the country at large and is clearly dominant in the small group of leaders and bureaucrats influential on foreign policy issues. Although he must seek Politburo consensus on major policy moves, we believe he has the power to forge consensus on matters where he has developed a clear preference.

We regularly receive reports about contention within the Soviet leadership over foreign policy issues. They frequently concern and often explicitly relate friction over the central challenge of current Soviet tactics toward the United States: how to use an engaged diplomacy to extract concessions without letting Washington claim it is handling US-Soviet relations satisfactorily without concessions. Gorbachev is probably less a partisan in these controversies than their most important audience and judge; he must himself weigh serious tactical uncertainties. The ensuing arguments produce audible grumbling, however, and there probably has been opposition within the Soviet leadership to specific foreign policy moves proposed or taken by Gorbachev. But we do not believe Gorbachev faces a concerted opposition on his overall policy toward the United States.

We have a number of indicators that the advisability of summit meetings has been and continues to be a contentious issue in the Kremlin. Gromyko reportedly has doubts about them and is frequently a skeptical voice on the promise of US-Soviet dialogue. His doubts about summits may stem from the lasting prejudices of a longtime foreign minister. And he may be skeptical about Gorbachev's tactics. But he also appears to be a

political supporter and may have played a key role in swinging the Politburo for his election. Gromyko's role in foreign policy is clearly on the wane, and we see no other Politburo figure positioned or inclined to challenge Gorbachev on foreign policy moves for now. If Gorbachev believes the substantive and atmospheric conditions make a summit desirable, he can, we believe, gain the necessary Politburo consensus.

Both because he has continuing struggles before him on the domestic scene and because he sees reviving the USSR's international effectiveness as a prime task, Gorbachev sees great personal political benefits in projecting the statesman's image. It is important to him politically how he looks in the conduct of foreign policy, be it in terms of publicity or diplomatic results. He also knows that the USSR's leverage depends in some part on his reputation as a man to be reckoned with, a reputation he wants but has only begun to build.

Gorbachev is likely over the next few years to face serious opposition on foreign policy or arms control issues only if he proposes actions that are either very concessionary or dangerously "adventurist." The very need to operate within a Politburo consensus is a guard against this, as it was for Brezhnev. Significant opposition to Gorbachev could arise over such domestic issues as economic reform, party privileges, and lack of control on the cultural front. In such a case, it is likely that an opposition faction would add foreign policy mistakes to their indictment. Khrushchev was taxed with the mistake of adventurism over the Cuban Missile Crisis when he was removed, for largely domestic causes, two years later. More recently, political rivals tried to charge Brezhnev with laxity on defense (1967) and excessive eagerness for detente (1972); in both cases the rivals were ousted from the leadership and Brezhnev grew stronger.

they faced a US Government determined to challenge their interests more seriously than any in several decades. They judged that the new US administration enjoyed an unwelcome degree of domestic and Allied support. Their failure to block INF deployments showed further that Moscow could not effectively respond to US challenges by simply trying to shout them down from a distance.

26. By the mid-1980s, the Soviets claimed to see the growth of forces within the United States and among its allies that could help to contain or deflect Washington's anti-Soviet policies. They are newly attentive to the importance of policy differences within the American body politic and to the role that the Congress can play in constraining the administration's options. They

are also counting on what they see as the growing ability of American and European political forces to challenge US foreign and defense policies by hoisting the banner of "peace" and opposition to nuclear weapons, attacking defense budgets and programs, and obstructing intervention against Soviet interests overseas. The Soviets see tendencies that may reverse the conservative political wave that hit their interests in the early 1980s.

27. The Soviets are also newly attentive to the vagaries of capitalist economics because of their impact on the politics and defense programs of the United States and its allies. They greatly respect the West's economic and technological vitality. Yet they see, particularly in the US deficit, economic cycles,



and trade disputes among the allies, economic forces that can blunt Washington's policies or prevent them from enduring.

28. The Soviets see growing pressure on this administration to deal positively with the USSR on arms control. In Soviet eyes, the administration has so far successfully managed these pressures by feigning sincerity on arms control, while making no real concessions. Conveying an element of authentic frustration, Soviet propaganda roundly attacks Washington for using arms negotiations and summitry as a "smoke screen" behind which it acts to pursue its defense goals. But the Soviets believe they can make this more difficult for Washington.

29. Public Soviet commentaries have claimed that, as 1988 approaches, political pressures for positive developments in US-Soviet relations will mount and the ability of the administration to pursue uniformly anti-Soviet lines will erode. The Soviets perceive that arms control and related defense policy issues have caused serious fissures within the administration.

[the Soviets] have judged that the President would sincerely like to move forward on arms control, were it not for his political dependence on the US "military industrial complex" and certain deep but mistaken convictions, such as his belief in SDI and desire to challenge Soviet aims in the Third World.

30. References to these crosscurrents in the United States and among its allies are widely used by Soviet authorities to help justify Gorbachev's policy of diplomatic engagement and activism on arms control. At the same time, our evidence

[makes clear that] exploiting the political forces in Washington is central to current Soviet policy toward the United States. Gorbachev's placement of experienced Americanists in his foreign policy apparatus—foremost among them Dobrynin—is intended to increase Moscow's skills in this respect.

31. Nonetheless, the current Soviet leadership is deeply skeptical about its ability to reach an arms control agreement with the Reagan administration that meets its chief security concerns, such as braking SDI and other US military programs in the 1990s, and the general political objective of blunting US hostility to Soviet interests. There is a general sense among Soviet leaders that almost any US administration after 1988 will be less challenging to Soviet interests and in some ways easier to deal with, although they also appreciate that the President's politics and popularity give him unusual power to gain support for any arms control compromise he might make.

32. [ ] reporting indicates that there are differing views among Gorbachev's advisers as to whether prospects for an arms agreement with this administration are zero or merely poor but not zero, with Gorbachev currently leaning toward the latter view. Those of the former persuasion are more dubious about the political value of summitry, and more inclined toward policies that simply wait out the present US administration. The latter viewpoint holds that the best tactics for waiting out the current administration require active engagement, because they might produce results and, at a minimum, will favorably shape the political environment for 1988 and beyond.

#### Tactical Calculations

33. Gorbachev and his advisers believe that, whatever the actual prospects, Moscow must act as though a breakthrough with the current US administration is possible. Only a diplomacy that is active and appears forthcoming to many American and European audiences, especially on arms control, can put pressure on Washington, keep it on the defensive, and test the possibilities that may exist for real concessions. This conviction has guided Soviet policy throughout the period since the 1985 Geneva Summit, despite disappointments during the ensuing six months, when the US engaged in a series of actions the Soviets saw as directed against them, and Soviet arms control initiatives found less resonance in the West than expected.

34. Disappointments in early 1986 and the advice of newly influential Americanists around Gorbachev probably persuaded Moscow that it had to add some concreteness to its grandiose arms control proposals. The result was new Soviet proposals on the ABM Treaty and START made on 29 May and 11 June 1986. These initiatives probably had been in planning for some months; and some elements, such as suspending the withdrawal clause of the ABM Treaty, had been talked about by US Soviet experts for several years. Although they were not deliberately timed to coincide with the President's 27 May decision on SALT, the fact that they were advanced at this time indicates Soviet determination to keep up the pressure of positive arms control moves. This coincidence also heightened the receptivity of audiences in the United States and Western Europe to Soviet proposals. While not muffling their unhappiness at the President's

SALT decision, they took his Glassboro speech as evidence that they had made an initiative with which he would have to deal.

35. Through the pressure of arms control diplomacy, Moscow seeks to elicit new US arms control concessions, to broaden opposition to the administration in the absence of such moves, and to complicate the funding of defense programs in Washington. [

] (See annex B, "Exaggeration or Duplicity in Soviet Foreign Policy Tactics").

#### Summitry

36. Gorbachev sees political value in summits. Summits provide a stage for asserting his role as a statesman and the USSR's role as a coequal superpower. They dramatize the new activism of Soviet foreign policy and the competence of its leadership to foreign and domestic audiences. They afford a valuable means of reading Washington. The Soviets believe political pressures on the United States generated by summits can increase the probability of arms control and other agreements that serve Soviet interests. At the same time, Gorbachev is genuinely concerned that Washington uses summitry as a means to mute domestic and allied anxiety about East-West relations without making substantive concessions.

37. Moreover, judging that the US side puts a high political value on summitry, Gorbachev sees leverage in bargaining over whether and when summits occur. Soviet behavior and [ indicate that Moscow plans to hold out as long as possible for favorable US movement on arms control before deciding on the next summit. At the same time, Gorbachev and his key advisers appear aware that they could overplay their hand. Hence, they have not been too explicit, constant, or precise in stating their conditions for another summit beyond some "concrete results" on arms control.

38. [ the Soviets were pleased with the results of the Geneva 1985 summit, despite its lack of concrete results,

because it accelerated political processes the Soviets expected to exploit [ some but not all of it from Soviet statements intended for Western ears, contended that the failure to achieve more in 1985 was politically costly for Gorbachev and cannot be repeated. We believe that Gorbachev was satisfied with the 1985 summit but also wants more tangible products from future summits, less for internal political reasons than because the USSR cannot afford to routinize summits that yield no concessions but rather legitimize hardline US policies.

#### Arms Control

39. The Soviet Union continues to use arms control diplomacy to pursue a range of objectives from the broadly political to the more specifically military and technical. Arms control is the key link in the logic chain of the USSR's whole foreign policy line toward the West. The Soviets want the nexus of "preventing nuclear war—arms control—detente" to dominate the East-West agenda, with or without agreements, because this tends to undermine the legitimacy of Western military programs and to reduce the salience of other issues where hostility to Soviet interests can be mobilized, such as their Third World actions, hegemony in Eastern Europe, and human rights behavior.

40. The Soviets seek through the arms control process and agreements to make their threat environment more predictable and thereby to facilitate orderly, incremental force modernization in harmony with their economic objectives. The Soviets believe that the political environment created by arms control can favor them in the strategic competition because they are able to insulate their programs from political pressures that may depress US military programs, to exploit ambiguities in agreements without domestic criticism, and occasionally to engage in deliberate noncompliance, which the United States could not get away with. They also, however, see a risk, especially in the 1980s, that the United States can exploit its involvement in arms control to gain political support for military programs.

41. Soviet arms control policy, especially its public diplomacy, has a number of other aims. The Soviets seek to undermine political support for US nuclear weapons, programs, and strategies, knowing that they will remain vital to US security and alliance leadership for years to come. At the same time, the Soviets seek to discredit prospective alternatives to nuclear weapons in US strategy, most important SDI but also more proficient nonnuclear forces and weapons, such as those in NATO's "emerging technology" effort.

42. Gorbachev has made a number of important innovations in Soviet arms control policy in his effort to give credibility to Moscow's diplomacy in the West and to elicit changes in US policy. He has:

- Expressed greater readiness than his predecessors to consider substantial reductions in nuclear forces.
- Expressed more willingness to consider onsite inspection to aid verification.
- Announced an extended nuclear testing moratorium.
- Made more artful appeals to US and European publics.
- Made more effort to be "comprehensive," to have Soviet proposals on as many conceivable arms control topics as possible.

43. Combating the US SDI is central to the USSR's arms control policy and, therefore, bears heavily on its entire policy toward the United States. The Soviets are conscious of the great political, budgetary, and technical hurdles that stand in the way of the program. However, they remain deeply apprehensive about SDI and want to kill it through the arms control process, using some combination of formally agreed constraints and political effects that undermine its public and Congressional support. At present, they are not sure whether any combination will work. Personal exchanges at the Geneva 1985 summit and since have convinced Gorbachev of the President's deep commitment to SDI. The Soviets perceive the President as determined to shield SDI from crippling arms control constraints and, if possible, to use the arms control process to enhance its support. Therefore they have adopted a more nuanced approach to attacking SDI than they followed in 1984 and 1985, acceding to the principle that SDI research in the laboratory can be allowed.

44. In addition to their general campaign to depict SDI as offensive, dangerously destabilizing, and conducive to an escalating arms race, the Soviets have developed two lines of attack:

- First, they seek to persuade all audiences that SDI is directly inimical to prospects for nuclear force reductions. This is politically useful because both sides have established deep reductions as the hallmark of real arms control. But it is more than a political contrivance for the Soviets. We believe the Soviets regard expansion of their ballistic missile forces as a valuable option, among several, for countering SDI and see deep reductions as risky so long as SDI proceeds.

#### Soviet Concerns About SDI

SDI poses great technical and political uncertainties for the Soviets. They see it as the most volatile and dangerous uncertainty confronting them in the overall military competition with the United States. It could conceivably produce a highly effective ballistic missile defense, revolutionizing the strategic environment to Soviet disadvantage. Even moderately effective defenses would degrade the calculability of missile strike plans, except for the most massive and indiscriminate attacks, undermining Soviet strategy and doctrine. The Soviets worry that technological spinoffs from the program could give the West new advantages in military competition. Despite US protests to the contrary, the Soviets see SDI as part of a broad effort by the United States to regain strategic superiority and to pressure the Soviet economic and technology base. While they do not know what shape SDI will ultimately take, to compete with and to counter SDI would involve burdens they wish to avoid and undesirable distractions from preferred lines of military modernization. Soviet military plans give heavy attention to future strategic defenses. But the Soviets would much prefer a setting in which they could pursue near and long-term technology options at their own pace while the United States neglected strategic defense, as was largely the case from 1972 until 1983.

- Second, the Soviets see the ABM Treaty as the best instrument for blocking the program. They calculate that reaffirmation of the ABM Treaty in some manner by the current President would create a political obstacle to SDI deployment, which future US leaders would find impossible to surmount, especially if nuclear force reductions were taking place. In a period of tight US defense budgets, they could expect political support for the program in the United States would decline.

45. In their campaign against SDI, the Soviets face their larger dilemma in dealing with the United States. If they are too uncompromising, the arms control process may bog down and leave the United States relatively free to proceed with its plans. But compromises that keep the process going, without an explicit retreat by the administration on SDI, run the risk of legitimizing SDI as reconcilable with arms control and even as an "enforcer" of flexibility on the Soviet side.

46. [

] Their current position calls for powerful and

explicit constraints on SDI in the form of a lengthy suspension of the right to withdraw from the ABM Treaty, definitions that restrict SDI-type research, and a ban on "space strike weapons" clearly intended to prohibit any form of space-based intercept. They are virtually certain the current US administration will not agree to all of this outright. [

] suggests that Gorbachev sees some room to depart from his current position and still strike an effective blow at SDI in the longer run.

47. Moscow has approached *arms control compliance* in pragmatic terms, interpreting its treaty obligations narrowly and stretching treaty ambiguities. [

] Moscow's attitudes toward arms control compliance contributed to the accumulation of a record of Soviet noncompliance over the past two decades. In our view, prior to the President's May 1986 decision on interim restraint, the Soviets regarded expressed US concern about their noncompliance as a nuisance to them, to be dealt with by whatever means best permitted them to deny US charges and by countercharges. They charge, and also largely believe, that US accusations of Soviet noncompliance are politically motivated devices for undermining arms control and progress in US-Soviet relations. The Soviets have seen the compliance issues as marginal to US-Soviet political and arms control dealings.

48. The President's decision in principle to depart from adherence to the SALT I and SALT II accords because of Soviet noncompliance has changed the situation significantly for Moscow. We do not believe it has changed basic Soviet attitudes. But it has made Soviet noncompliance a more central political issue because it has jeopardized a major Soviet objective, the preservation of the arms control framework of the 1970s—both the ABM Treaty and SALT—or the creation of a congenial successor system. The Soviet reaction, so far, has been to charge that the President's decision is part of a larger strategy for scuttling arms control and to mount political pressures to encourage his retreat. At the same time, positive hints about Soviet openness to new forms of verification are

The Soviet View of Arms Control Compliance  
as a Political Issue

] In our view, Soviet leaders operate on the following propositions:

- Power politics involves cheating on the margins of international undertakings by all nations. The ability of a closed society to get away with it better than an open one is an objective reality to be exploited.
- All things being equal, cheating is not intrinsically desirable, and a record of cheating can be harmful. But where important interests are at issue, it is justifiable. The key determinant is the interest that requires cheating versus the USSR's ability to conceal it or manage the consequences of its revelation.
- Charges of cheating and noncompliance must never be admitted, whether they relate to purposeful or inadvertent behavior. Such admissions, whatever their nature, would undermine the international and domestic authority of the Soviet system itself. Moreover, the outside world must be conditioned, so far as possible, to accept that intolerance of Soviet cheating behavior, real or perceived, is a threat to peace more serious than the Soviet behavior in question.

According to an alternative view held by the Director, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, for the Department of State, this inset ignores the detailed and internally consistent views the Soviets have presented on many compliance issues—such as the SS-25 and encryption. The holder of this view believes the evidence does not support the inference that the Soviets "actually" know themselves to be in violation of arms control agreements, but rather that—by their own interpretation—they believe they are in compliance.

designed to raise hopes that the future could be better so long as the arms control process progresses.

49. We cannot judge whether and, if so, to what degree Gorbachev and his colleagues are prepared to admit to themselves that the erosion of the arms control framework is in large part a political consequence of Soviet behavior. Erosion of the existing arms control framework concerns the Soviets because they fear what the United States could do if US military planning is freed from the formal and indirect constraints of arms limits. Moreover, their whole foreign policy line toward the West would be undermined if arms control came to seem less central to international security. Despite these concerns, we believe Soviet attitudes and positions on compliance will not change significantly in the future.

50. The Director, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, for the Department of State agrees that the Soviets interpret arms control obligations narrowly and frequently exploit their ambiguities, but holds that analysis of their activities indicates that the Soviets consider their action to be consistent with the letter of the SALT accords as they interpret them. The Soviets do not appreciate the nature and depth of US compliance concerns and continue to view compliance as a marginal issue in relations with the United States. Because the Soviets do not perceive their actions to be the actual rationale for the US 27 May interim restraint decision, this decision has not changed Soviet attitudes toward compliance.

51. Soviet policy on *offensive strategic nuclear force reductions* has both political and military aims. In our view, the present Soviet leadership does not believe that all nuclear weapons can be eliminated. Gorbachev made his 15 January proposal to get political high ground. But we believe the Soviets are more serious generally about nuclear force reductions than they have been in the past:

— Modernized but reduced Soviet forces, along with major constraints on US force modernization programs could preserve their current nuclear force capabilities and perhaps improve their relative capabilities, compared to a situation in which both sides carry out their strategic modernization programs as planned.

— The Soviets expect that the more controversial US strategic force modernization programs might be unilaterally constrained by political and budget pressures in an environment in which nuclear force levels were being reduced.

— The Soviets would see strategic nuclear force reductions generally as helping to erode the public appeal of nuclear strategies vital to US alliance commitments and leadership role.

52. For these reasons, the Soviets want to keep the prospect of large nuclear force reductions on the East-West arms control agenda. More immediately important, this prospect is their best weapon against SDI.

53. Additionally, in one view,<sup>1</sup> it is possible that the evolution of Soviet doctrine on the nature of a future general war—which sees greater likelihood that it could remain conventional for an extended period or terminate without nuclear escalation—has increased Soviet willingness to consider reduced nuclear arsenals on both sides as militarily tolerable and perhaps even attractive for Soviet military strategy. Several NFIB agencies are skeptical about the impact of evolving Soviet military doctrine upon attitudes toward nuclear force reductions. They note that Soviet military literature—including writings on the possibility of protracted conventional war—continues to underscore the importance of robust nuclear forces for deterrence and warfighting; they observe that the modernization of Soviet nuclear forces continues apace; and they doubt that possible shifts in Soviet military doctrine would greatly influence Soviet willingness to reduce nuclear forces in the next two years.

54. There is a specific alternative view<sup>2</sup> that believes the possible linkage between Soviet military doctrine and expressed willingness to consider nuclear force reductions is too broadly stated. This view recognizes that the Soviet military is examining the future threats and opportunities posed by technically advanced conventional weapons, which have the potential for high lethality and great precision over distances. Exactly how these emerging nonnuclear technologies will shape Soviet perceptions of military doctrine, force requirements, and dependence on the various categories of weapons (tactical, theater, and strategic) is yet evolving.

55. The Soviets regard *INF* as a possible area for interim steps that may keep up the momentum of the arms control process where other issues prove unyielding. Initially they hoped to stop NATO's deployments both to block a new and worrisome military threat and to disrupt the whole political process of managing

<sup>1</sup> The holder of this view is the Deputy Director for Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency.

<sup>2</sup> The holders of this view are the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency; the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army; the Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of the Navy; and the Director of Intelligence, Headquarters, Marine Corps.

nuclear strategy within the Alliance. When they failed to do so, their calculus became more political, mainly to use the INF issue as a means to generate prospects for the whole arms control process and allied pressures on Washington. Over the past year, the Soviets discovered that the West Europeans became reluctant to negotiate the complete reversal of INF deployments. This has obliged the Soviets to consider interim steps, which allow some US INF deployments.

56. Eventually the Soviet leadership wants to use INF negotiations as a means to limit the size and modernization of French and British nuclear forces. For now, however, it plays down this objective in order to avoid antagonizing Paris and London. Meanwhile, programs for the modernization of Soviet intermediate and theater nuclear systems suggest that Soviet planners continue to see a role for nuclear strike systems of varying ranges in the future.

57. The immediate purpose of the Soviet campaign for a *comprehensive nuclear test ban* (CTB) is to put political pressure on the United States across the entire spectrum of arms control issues. The Soviets probably regard the likelihood of achieving a CTB as low. However, they do see practical benefits to be derived from such a ban. It would block nuclear tests they believe important for SDI and US strategic force modernization. Soviet nuclear weapons designs are conservative, stable, and in continuing production, permitting them to engage in testing moratoria and to consider an extended CTB, which would halt US testing at a time when they probably perceive US nuclear weapons technology as newly dynamic. Because the Soviets see nuclear weapons as an enduring reality, requiring them to make nuclear weapons technology advances of their own, we suspect that the Soviets would enter a CTB openminded about its permanence, believing that they could renegotiate or abrogate if future circumstances gave them a strong need to test.

58. Moscow's initiatives on limiting *conventional arms in Europe* are primarily intended to add credibility to its overall political stance and arms control posture. By proposing large-scale reductions of wide geographic scope, including the possibility of asymmetric weapon reductions and discussion of surprise attack and doctrine, the Soviets want to persuade NATO audiences that arms control can redress any imbalances that may exist, that conventional force improvements are not necessary, and that large nuclear reductions are reasonable. The Soviets hope through this to help revive the antinuclear movement in Europe. Gorbachev has called for a ban on new conventional weapons whose overall effectiveness "ap-

proaches that of nuclear weapons," a clear allusion to advanced precision and area weapons. Because high Soviet military figures believe these weapons will be vital to Soviet military posture in the future, this ploy may be intended to delay such programs in the West while Eastern technology advances. Lately, the Soviets have indicated their belief that MBFR is virtually moribund and that something like a second-phase CDE should provide the setting for comprehensive negotiations on conventional arms. The size and diversity of the resulting forum shows that the Soviets are, for the moment, more interested in political theater than in real agreements on this front. In multiple bilateral dealings with NATO governments, however, the Soviets may express more serious interest in substantial force reductions, aiming at such traditional Soviet goals as limitations on the Bundeswehr. The Soviets might be prepared to give impetus to their initiatives by announcing a modest unilateral cut in standing military manpower.

#### Regional and Other Issues

59. The Soviets see regional security issues—the Middle East, the Persian Gulf, Indochina, and the conflicts surrounding Soviet efforts to consolidate Marxist-Leninist regimes in Afghanistan, South Yemen, Ethiopia, Angola, and Nicaragua—as integral aspects of the larger US-Soviet competition. They see the administration as bent on denying them advances, supporting their opponents, and undermining their positions throughout the Third World. But for the present, the Soviets see these issues as peripheral to managing the US-Soviet relationship through dialogue, allied and public pressures, and arms control negotiations. [

60. While confronting problems in all areas of Third World commitment, the Gorbachev regime does not feel under pressure to make real concessions in any of them and would find it politically costly for Soviet regional interests to do so. The USSR is willing to discuss the regional issues with the United States largely because Washington is concerned to keep these issues part of the broader US-Soviet dialogue, and the USSR can accede to this desire without jeopardizing the overwhelming centrality of arms control. Meanwhile, the USSR has its own interests to press in such dialogue without expecting real concessions to be made by either side:

—Superpower dialogue and the language of diplomacy tend to legitimize Soviet interests in regional conflict situations, despite US hostility to them.

- Such appearances could undermine public support in the United States for policies that challenge Soviet interests or aid Soviet adversaries in the Third World, for example, on the Contras.
- The appearance of US-Soviet cooperation on regional issues makes US allies and clients anxious. Making Pakistan and the Afghan resistance nervous is of special interest to Moscow at present even though Kabul is also made nervous.
- Such exchanges provide a forum for airing to US counterparts the Soviet view of Third World conflicts, that they arise from local factors or US interference, not the hand of Moscow; but must be dealt with "realistically," that is, with respect for Moscow's interests.

61. The Soviets would like to encourage the view that active US hostility to Soviet interests and clients in the Third World could jeopardize the bilateral dialogue. But they believe there are too many in Washington who would applaud this effect, making it a risky ploy to use forcefully. The furthest that Moscow has gone in trying to exploit such linkage was to cancel the meeting of foreign ministers over the US strikes on Libya. E

62. Although human rights, various kinds of exchanges, and trade issues are on the US-Soviet political agenda, these too are seen as largely peripheral issues to the current relationship. In the case of human rights, the Soviets want, on one hand, to use isolated gestures to encourage Western optimism about their policies while, on the other, making sure that domestic impacts are limited. The Soviets manage the dialogue on exchanges not only with an eye to the informational and propaganda opportunities they contain, but also to minimize the intrusiveness of Western presence in the USSR. In the area of trade, the current Soviet strategy is to use the political atmosphere created by the prospect of movement in US-Soviet relations to enhance their dealings with West European and Japanese partners, while maintaining pressures for change in US policies on technology transfer and other trade issues that may yield benefits in the longer term.

#### IV. The Outlook for Soviet Policy Toward the United States, 1986-88

63. Although specific Soviet moves cannot be predicted in detail—and Gorbachev has demonstrated a knack for diplomatic surprises—the main contours of Soviet policy toward the United States are likely to

remain in place for the next several years. The Soviets will continue to strive for their main objective, an arms control framework that constrains or kills SDI, makes the strategic environment of the 1990s more predictable, and inhibits US policies hostile to the USSR.

64. Although they probably believe agreements on principles or of limited scope remain possible, they probably doubt a comprehensive agreement with respect to space and strategic arms as likely during the next two and a half years. In addition to agreement on complex and controversial offensive arms issues, this would require a prompt US retreat from SDI, which the Soviets seek but cannot be confident of getting, or Soviet sanction of SDI, which they are most unlikely to grant.

65. Whether they agree to schedule summits in 1986 and 1987 or not, they will try to use the politics of summits for leverage on Washington. And the approaching 1988 US Presidential election will loom ever larger in Soviet calculations.

#### Domestic Variables

66. Forseeable trends in Soviet internal affairs are unlikely to alter the main directions of Soviet policy toward the United States during the next two years:

- We anticipate that Gorbachev's political power base will slowly but steadily be strengthened.
- The economy will show enough progress to keep his political position and his economic revival strategy intact.
- Further changes in the Soviet military leadership will probably assure that serious policy challenges do not come from that quarter for the rest of the decade.

The 70th anniversary of the October Revolution in 1987 will provide an occasion, akin to the 27th Party Congress, for Gorbachev to celebrate his progress and to elaborate his domestic, foreign policy, and ideological lines.

67. Less likely but possible alternative prognoses on the Soviet internal front involve worse than expected economic news, trouble within the party or with the military over Gorbachev's policies, or perhaps controversy on the cultural front. A Politburo showdown such as Khrushchev faced in 1957 is conceivable but unlikely; Gorbachev's victory would not necessarily be guaranteed. Developments such as these would result in temporizing in policy toward the United States rather than major departures in any direction.

#### Variables in Foreign Affairs

68. Gorbachev's new activism and the consolidation of his Moscow foreign policy team are likely to produce important Soviet initiatives during the next few years in several regions, for example, toward Japan, China, and West Germany, possibly also toward Iran and Israel and in Latin America. He can be expected to make numerous foreign trips. He will pay special attention to Europe, the more so if socialist governments come to power in London or Bonn, to set a trend of West European detente that Washington must try to catch. Gorbachev has powerful incentives to show foreign policy movement that influences US interests but takes place outside the US-Soviet bilateral context. Overall, we expect Gorbachev to be successful in projecting an image of foreign policy dynamism and challenge toward the West during the next two years, although he may not achieve irreversible gains.

69. We do not expect deliberate Soviet retreat from the Third World's Marxist-Leninist regimes. The Soviets will probably supply sufficient military and other support to protect their stakes against predictable levels of challenge. We expect them to hold to course in Afghanistan while intensifying their military, political, and diplomatic operations aimed at improving prospects for eventual victory. They probably will not go looking for trouble with the United States in new areas or undertake commitments involving large economic outlays, but they will not forswear opportunities either, for example, in the Philippines.

70. There are numerous regional trouble spots where crises and some degree of US-Soviet confrontation could upset these predictions. An example involving deliberate Soviet initiative is Afghanistan-Pakistan. Although averse to any direct confrontation over the Afghan war, Gorbachev could find that his progress toward winning it is too slow or elusive to satisfy his political needs. He could, therefore, take additional measures against Pakistan that could risk such confrontation with the United States. A degree of confrontation could arise at the initiative of others, including the United States, over Israel-Syria, Libya, or Nicaragua. Trouble in Eastern Europe has a high potential for producing the kind of Soviet behavior that interrupts US-Soviet dialogue.

#### Conclusions: Arms Control, Summitry, and 1988

71. Although a long shot, Gorbachev wants an arms control agreement on space and strategic weapons with this administration if he can get one that sharply constrains SDI, leaves Soviet modernization options

relatively open, curtails the most threatening US strategic modernization programs, and generally helps depress US defense efforts in the years ahead.

72. The troubled outlook for the Soviet economy contributes to Soviet interest in such an agreement and in its expected political effects. That interest may grow in the years ahead as Gorbachev's economic strategy confronts systemic obstacles and, with it, Soviet flexibility on the terms may increase. But in the next two years or so, neither the domestic situation nor the foreign policy outlook of the regime obliges Gorbachev to compromise substantially on central arms control or security issues in dispute with the United States.

73. Gorbachev will try during the next year to create political pressures that encourage compromises from the US side. His tactics will be to hold out the promise of summits while bargaining hard about timing and content, to suggest the possibility of compromise on arms issues, and to conduct a broad diplomatic and propaganda effort, including new arms proposals, to depict the USSR as the reasonable party. We believe Gorbachev will stand substantially by his present objectives. But we do not rule out further shifts in Soviet negotiating positions to encourage US concessions. More unilateral gestures are also possible, for instance a modest reduction of Warsaw Pact military manpower.

74. If this effort fails, as time passes Gorbachev is likely to shift his priorities toward a more concerted effort to demonstrate that US policies for dealing with the USSR during the 1980s have been a failure, to inject East-West issues into the US Presidential elections of 1988, and to cultivate an environment that encourages more accommodating behavior from the next US administration. Such a shift of priorities would involve subtle but important tactical shifts: continued participation in NST in Geneva, but little give on substance; expressions of interest in summitry without agreement to hold summits; a propaganda line giving much more stress to the negative than to the promise of dealings with this administration; and possibly but less likely a revival of the Soviet "danger of war" propaganda of the early 1980s aimed at heightening popular anxieties in the West.

75. Although demanding and fairly rigid at its core, the stance described above would still give Gorbachev room for maneuver on numerous secondary issues where convergence between US and Soviet positions might occur—such as an interim INF agreement or an accord limiting nuclear tests—and a sense of momentum toward further accommodation might be generated, with its attendant political pressures on Washing-



ton. Moreover, despite its central importance to them, the Soviets have some flexibility on SDI with respect to the duration of a ban on deployment (a minimum of nine to 10 years has been mentioned by Soviet officials, vice the 15 to 20 years officially proposed), the definition of permitted research, and the manner in which the ABM Treaty is employed to define constraints. This flexibility on SDI issues derives from the expectation, or at least hope, that acceptance of some formal constraint by the current US administration will eventually leach away SDI's political support. We believe the minimum they will insist on is some codification of the principle that SDI must be constrained for large offensive reductions to be seriously considered. They will reject any approach that appears to license SDI by accepting that full-scale development and deployment of SDI-type strategic defenses can be reconciled with deep offensive force reductions.

76. Two alternative outlooks are possible, but, we believe, a good deal less likely:

- While prepared to bargain hard over arms control substance and summitry for what he can get, Gorbachev may be ready now for two more summits and a strategic offensive arms reduction agreement, without explicit satisfaction on SDI. In this case, his motive would not be that a desperate economic plight obliges prompt progress toward US-Soviet amity, but rather that the political effects of progress on offensive force reductions would eventually kill SDI, deflect the anti-Soviet directions of the current administration before it left office, and create a climate for further accommodation after 1988. We believe this outlook is unlikely because it would be too great a gamble for Gorbachev and his regime, running too high a risk of seeming to reward US policies the Soviets aim to undermine.
- Alternatively, Gorbachev may already have given up on changing the policies of the current administration sufficiently to allow accommodation with it. In this case, he would already be pursuing tactics that look beyond 1988, plan no future summits while not publicly foreclosing their possibility, and be unwilling to explore serious compromise on arms and security issues. We believe this alternative overstates the rigidity of the Soviet side. Fear of rewarding a hostile administration remains a factor in Gorbachev's calculations, but it is unlikely, in our view, to preclude accommodation on something like his terms.

77. We believe the Soviets are still open to the prospect of a summit in the winter of 1986-87 and desire to have one if the United States makes concessions that somehow meet their stated conditions of "concrete achievements on arms control" and "an improved atmosphere." We also believe that the Soviets have not yet decided specifically what US concessions they will deem satisfactory to meet these vaguely stated conditions. They will delay a final decision as long as possible to see what they can get, making their decision on the basis of substantive US positions and their assessment of where political pressures will take the United States following another summit.

78. NFIB agencies are uncertain as to where exactly the Soviets will come down with respect to their minimum conditions for the next summit:

- We believe they are nearly certain to come if the United States agrees in principle to reaffirm the ABM Treaty as a means of dealing with advanced space-based strategic defenses or agrees to pursue a CTB in the immediate future.
- We believe the odds that they will come are better than even should agreement be achieved on one or more significant arms control issues other than Space-START, such as INF, CBW, and TTB.
- There is a small chance that the Soviets will not insist on any specific agreements, but will be satisfied with a communique that conveys the impression of progress on a range of arms control issues.

We believe that Gorbachev will not agree to a summit in the face of US actions that cause him embarrassment, such as a US strike on Libya.

79. The Soviets will want the United States to believe that continued adherence to the SALT accords is a condition for another summit but will probably be satisfied if the United States merely refrains from breaching their limits for a decent interval or makes an attractive offer on mutual restraint largely consistent with SALT accords. We believe it very unlikely that the Soviets will deliver any significant improvement in their own compliance behavior. Should the United States actually exceed the SALT limits before another summit, the likelihood of Soviet agreement to have one decreases, but does not, in our view, disappear. If the United States does exceed the limits, the USSR will view this in conjunction with other trends in US security policy in determining its own actions. It will feel the need to take some programmatic action to show that the US move is not without consequences

and to excite public concern. Soviet political and military responses will seek to exploit opportunities and hedge against threats posed by the absence of arms control constraints, and also to maximize pressures for the restoration of a congenial successor framework under a new US administration.

80. Gorbachev will feel some pressure to accept another summit in order to give the impression he is subjecting the US President's proposals to a fair hearing and, more generally, to keep up an image of foreign policy momentum. But he will fear coming away from a second summit with the President having won political credibility on arms control while protecting SDI.

81. Gorbachev will seek to prevent this from continuing indefinitely. Unless the United States makes what the Soviets regard as significant concessions on SDI or some other combination of issues, we believe that sometime during the next 30 months he will shift his tactics toward a more uncompromising line while still engaged in active diplomacy with the United States, aiming primarily to influence 1988 and beyond. In deciding on such a shift, the Soviets would be influenced by the content of US-Soviet dealings, their reading of US politics, and developments in NATO governments. On balance, we believe the more the Soviets see what they regard as "healthy forces" working in these various arenas against unchanged US policies, the more likely they will try to encourage those forces while looking beyond the current US administration.

82. It is very important for the Gorbachev regime to prevent, if at all possible, the current US administration from perpetuating a legacy of anti-Soviet policies into another Presidency. This goal is as important as stopping SDI and reviving the 1970s arms control framework, even more so if the latter objectives are unattainable by 1988. Even if his economic strategy is relatively successful, Gorbachev wants protracted relief from the kinds of military and political challenges shown the USSR by the United States in the 1980s. Although optimistic about his economic strategy, Gorbachev knows its success is far from assured. If his economic policies are relatively unsuccessful, he will be bargaining from a weaker position with the United States and its Allies in the 1990s, on arms, trade, credits, and technology. He does not want to do that bargaining with a US Government carrying on the policies of the Reagan administration.

83. The USSR's domestic problems and international interests augur now for Soviet policies designed to induce change in long-term US behavior, not accommodation to it in the near term. Gorbachev wants such change to help sustain—and in the case of the economy, revive—Soviet capabilities as a superpower. Accommodating to the United States now on major security issues without substantially compensating rewards would make the USSR a less imposing superpower in the future. His problems at home and abroad are not at present so severe, nor the immediate strengths and staying power of hostile US policies so convincing, that he must move toward real accommodation now.

## ANNEX A

### A Regional Profile of Soviet Foreign Policy

1. In *Eastern Europe*, Gorbachev's basic aim is that of previous regimes, to keep complex economic and political problems from either jeopardizing Soviet hegemony or impelling the nasty interventions that hurt other foreign policy interests. His techniques are familiar: Bloc integration and jawboning, combined with a bit more willingness to listen to his allies than previous Soviet leaders. He is not interested in any basic liberalization of the Soviet-East European relationship, and has restated the essentials of the Brezhnev Doctrine: Eastern Europe is in the Soviet camp to stay and any moves to change this are a threat to peace. Heightened Soviet economic demands, leadership changes and other domestic stresses in Eastern Europe, and uncertainty about the exact limits of Soviet tolerance, however, are likely to cause trouble for Moscow in this region.

2. Toward *China*, Gorbachev has hopes of gradually expanding on the minidetente that became possible because Beijing became willing to take a more equidistant stance between the superpowers. At Vladivostok he showed willingness to consider movement on one of China's "three obstacles," the Sino-Soviet military relationship near the border, an issue on which he has great room for maneuver without hurting Soviet security interests. On a second, Afghanistan, he expresses flexibility, which we and the Chinese so far regard as feigned, not real. On the third obstacle, Indochina, his flexibility is limited by Vietnam's commitments in Cambodia and fears of China and the importance to Moscow of the Soviet-Vietnamese relationship. Gorbachev clearly wishes, among other objectives, to confront the United States with a progressing Sino-Soviet rapprochement in the context of an active Asian diplomacy. How far he can carry this now depends greatly on China. We believe China will react positively, but cautiously and skeptically, and soon will find limits to Soviet flexibility. Hence, China will remain in the camp of challengers to Soviet interests for the foreseeable future.

3. Soviet policy toward US Allies, *Western Europe and Japan*, has been both active and more stylistically appealing under Gorbachev. He clearly aims to derive the twin benefits of increasing their ability to put

pressure on the United States, on such issues as arms control and trade, and making them more flexible toward Soviet concerns. Moscow also strives, through its diplomacy and new flexibility toward the West European Left, to influence the domestic politics of US Allies, as a means to further foreign policy goals. Moscow has lately begun to take relations with Bonn off the back burner and is clearly attempting to woo Tokyo. However, the Soviets have shown only limited willingness so far to compromise on the more important security and national issues that encumber these relationships, such as the Northern Territories with Japan and inner-German relations with West Germany. They are seeing what political benefits can be gotten at low cost and perhaps positioning for more substantial moves in the future. In all cases, Soviet influence with US Allies is somewhat enhanced by the sense of promise produced by more active policies toward the United States.

4. The Gorbachev regime has expressed understandable displeasure with the USSR's lack of influence in the *Middle East* and the immobility of its policies in this vital region, reportedly under basic review at present. Actual policy lines being followed under Gorbachev have been in place for some years, however: preservation of the key client relationships with Syria and Iraq; pressing for unity within the PLO, among radical Arabs, and all Arab states, if possible; testing for openings with moderate Arab governments; holding up an international conference as the main instrument for addressing the Arab-Israeli conflict; watching for useful openings with Iran against the day of a more promising post-Khomeini environment and, possibly, to contain the damage of an Iranian victory over Iraq. Moscow is experimenting with moves toward relations with Israel, recognizing that influence with both Arabs and Israel are crucial to a serious political role in the region. But the risks are considerable and the gains uncertain.

5. In *Afghanistan* Gorbachev clearly wishes to increase the prospects for eventual Soviet success in pacifying and controlling the country through a more effective Kabul regime, better military performance

against the Mujahedin, and, especially, a combination of pressures and inducements that could change Pakistan's policies. The costs and risks of alternatives—either withdrawal without regard for the survival of a Communist regime or substantial escalation of military action in the country and against Pakistan—have persuaded him to hold to course. His announcement of a token withdrawal of Soviet troops, new emphasis on Afghanistan as a US-Soviet issue, and protests about Pakistan's nuclear program are, in our view, political gambits pursuant to a constant policy, with Pakistan's resolve the key target.

6. Elsewhere in the *Third World* the accession of a new Soviet leadership does not appear to have had practical impact on the main lines of Soviet policy. Gorbachev knows, as did his two predecessors, that the USSR cannot underwrite the economic and social development of any but a very few Third World countries. But it remains as willing as previously to

underwrite the military strength of chosen clients, especially those developing along Marxist-Leninist lines; to provide economic support where vital to their survival; and generally to use arms transfers as the mainstay of diplomacy throughout the Third World. Rhetorically, the Soviet leadership has somewhat downgraded the prominence it accords to Third World "revolutions" in its depiction of the international scene and placed new emphasis on nonaligned capitalist oriented Third World states. In practice, however, it proceeds largely as it has in the past for, in practice, providing arms and political support to Third World clients, particularly those pressing revolutionary causes with which Moscow identifies, is vital to Soviet superpower status. A retrenchment from such policies might remove irritants in East-West relations and economize on resources; but it would remove a major element of Soviet foreign policy, which the USSR lacks the economic, technological, or cultural appeal to replace.

## ANNEX B

### Exaggeration or Duplicity in Soviet Tactics?

1. This annex assess the evidence that Soviet foreign policy tactics involve more than an exaggeration of Soviet flexibility but involve a significant degree of duplicity.

2. Afghanistan provides a test case. Numerous Soviet actions—from Gorbachev's public statements to [ ] have been designed to convey Soviet interest in a "political solution" that facilitates the withdrawal of Soviet troops. [ ]

[ ] But, to our knowledge, no Soviet figure of any authority has explicitly claimed Soviet flexibility on the key issue and Moscow's top priority, the survival of the Communist regime in Kabul, nor claimed that troop withdrawal has become the top priority. Gorbachev's Vladivostok announcement of a token troop withdrawal was accompanied by pledges that Moscow will stand by its Afghan friends so long as they are under attack. Moscow's effective condition for withdrawal remains outside acquiescence in its victory, namely total cessation of support to the Mujahedin. Soviet diplomacy clouds, but does not refute this judgment.

3. On human rights, similarly, Gorbachev's willingness to concede it as a valid issue and make such gestures as the release of Shcharanskiy have clearly been aimed at creating a picture of Soviet flexibility. But other visible actions, such as Sakharov's treatment, have belied any fundamental change of Soviet policy, and no authoritative Soviet has claimed such change to be possible.

4. On arms control, Soviet tactics may or may not be intended to confuse the United States and its Allies. They are certainly intended to convey a more activist and forthcoming Soviet image than the West is used to. Moreover, we do not believe that Gorbachev or any Soviet authority genuinely regards the elimination of nuclear weapons as an operational objective or a real possibility within any foreseeable time frame, the 15 January proposal to the contrary notwithstanding. But we cannot cite explicit reporting for this judgment.

5. We believe the Soviets have deliberately and misleadingly inflated their flexibility on major issues, more often by insinuation than by outright lies, but have generally avoided explicit indications of interest in policies they are not prepared to consider or readiness for commitments they are not intending to keep. Whether there is a further order of duplicity in the policies and tactics of the Gorbachev leadership is not clear. Three interpretations, not altogether mutually exclusive, are possible.

6. [ ]

[ ] the Gorbachev leadership, aided by efforts to present a more appealing image generally, is genuinely willing to show flexibility at the margin of issues and to follow through on its more substantial proposals if their essential elements are agreed to, but not to sacrifice those essential elements in bargaining. Thus, were the United States to make agreements that, in the Kremlin's view, assured the end of the SDI program, the USSR would seriously pursue deep cuts in offensive strategic arms consistent with its national security requirements. If support to the Mujahedin were ended and the resistance could be expected to dry up over a year or so, the USSR would be willing to implement a troop withdrawal timetable commensurate with the survival of the communist regime in Kabul.

7. We believe the foregoing is the most likely interpretation because it accounts best for the total body of our evidence, including our best interpretation

of official Soviet positions, and with the logic of the Soviet external and internal situation. We cannot entirely rule out the following alternative explanations, however, although we believe they are much less probable. (c)

8. In part because he does not expect the United States to satisfy him on essential elements of his current positions and proposals, Gorbachev does not expect or intend to follow through materially on any of them and has communicated this into the Soviet bureaucracy. Further, if by chance the United States were to accede to a major demand, such as taking positions that promised termination of SDI or an end to support of the Afghan resistance, the Soviets would pocket the political benefits of such concessions to the extent they could and retreat from their seemingly flexible positions, or, delay at least, further movement

on their part until the next US administration. The underlying motive for this kind of Soviet calculus would be that the Kremlin does not really want, much less expect, any real breakthrough with the Reagan administration because of its anti-Soviet legacy. (c)

9. Alternatively [

] He himself, however, could be willing to be more flexible on fundamental security issues if the United States and other partners create the right atmosphere through marginal concessions that help him sell further Soviet movement to his reluctant colleagues. (c)

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