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Problems of Communism

Book Reviews

Nicholas Vaslef
Francis P. Hoerber &
Robert Dannenberg
Robert W. Campbell
Gordon B. Smith
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MAY-JUNE 1983



CHOICE AND CHANGE IN SOVIET POLITICS

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Cover: General Secretary Yuriy Andropov and Soviet Defense Minister Dmitriy Ustinov at the May Day 1983 parade in Moscow's Red Square: Photo by Time.

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Choice and Change in Soviet Politics

by William E. Odom

Anticipated for several years, the post-Brezhnev era is at last here. In the West it has been awaited as a turning point, a time when new policy initiatives and new political forces would come into play. Many viewed it optimistically as a chance for positive change in both Soviet foreign and domestic policies. A new generation of younger leaders, it was hoped, might bring a surge of imagination and energy leading to significant reform internally and a new détente with the West—with genuine concessions on arms control and “rules of the game” for regional competition permitting the USSR to draw back from its rather extended commitments, especially in the Third World—in order to give more attention to solving accumulated domestic problems. Others anticipated a rapid turnover of elites, internal reform, but no retreat from an assertive foreign policy.

When Yuriy Andropov speedily succeeded Leonid Brezhnev as party general secretary, it came as a surprise to many, particularly those who expected positive change. How could this happen? How could Andropov, long the head of the secret police (KGB), achieve what his predecessor Lavrentiy Beria apparently tried and failed to achieve after Stalin's death? Surely his accession must be merely the first round in the succession struggle. Surely the younger set among the leadership will not let things settle down until the geriatric Politburo has been repopulated with a youthful membership. To be sure, old age is forcing

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turnover in elites at an increasing rate; nevertheless, the anticipated breakup of consensus in the Politburo and of the policymaking system has yet to occur and seems unlikely in the near future. The real surprise is that students of Soviet affairs generally did not anticipate what has happened thus far; namely, they did not take the Andropov candidacy seriously and expected a much more erratic transfer of power.

Why Andropov?

Why, indeed, did Andropov win the first round? The answer to this question lies primarily in the organizational and structural features of the Soviet party-state system at its apex. All of Lenin's successors—Stalin, Malenkov, Khrushchev, Brezhnev, and Andropov—held positions in two key institutions: the Politburo and the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. As Merle Fainsod, Leonard Schapiro, and others have pointed out, real power in the party-state system depends above all on controlling party cadre assignments, that is, personnel.¹ The institution offering that control is the Secretariat. Lenin depended on Yakov Sverdlov to manage cadres in the early years of the Soviet regime.² After Sverdlov's death, Stalin gradually took over this task, using the Organization Bureau and the Secretariat to set up a comprehensive personnel system. Challenges to his grip on cadres failed, and Stalin slowly accumulated enough power to have himself named general secretary in 1922.

¹See, e.g., Merle Fainsod, *How Russia is Ruled*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1963, pp. 180–84; and Leonard Schapiro, *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, New York, NY, Random House, 1960, pp. 548, 550–53.

²Schapiro, *op. cit.*, pp. 243–50, and William E. Odom, “Sverdlov: Bolshevik Party Organizer,” *Slavonic and East European Review* (London), July 1966, pp. 421–43.

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Key Soviet leaders at a wreath-laying during the December 1982 observances of the 60th anniversary of the USSR, in the first row, from left to right: Defense Minister Dmitriy Ustinov, Politburo member and Central Committee Secretary Konstantin Chernenko, General Secretary Yuriy Andropov, Premier Nikolay Tikhonov, and Foreign Minister Andrey Gromyko.

—Gamma-Liaison.

The key to cadre control is the *nomenklatura* system, institutionalized early in the Soviet regime. It is a list of positions which can only be filled by persons who have the approval of the higher party apparatus.³ One of the Secretariat's major roles is looking after the hundreds of thousands of *nomenklatura* posts. They include not just positions in the party apparatus but also thousands of posts judged essential for controlling state and economic institutions. The *nomenklatura* system ensures for the Secretariat a network of reliable agents in all institutions of consequence who are beholden to the Secretariat for the rank, stature, and privileges that accompany these strategic posts. There is no sign that this system has

atrophied or weakened significantly since its inception. The Secretariat, therefore, remains key for any aspirant to the top political post in the party. Without it, he could not hope to make the Central Committee and lower party officialdom sing his tune in choosing a new general secretary. It goes without saying, then, that any serious candidate in the post-Brezhnev succession had to be a party secretary. It goes equally without saying that an aspirant for the highest post had also to be a member of the Politburo, the top policy- and decision-making body of the party. There is no precedent in Soviet history of anyone who was not a Politburo member becoming general secretary of the CPSU.

Had Brezhnev died several years ago, Andropov might well have failed to claim the General Secretary's

³See Fainsod, *op cit.*, pp. 224, 515, 518.

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mantle. There were other Politburo members also holding party secretary posts who could have been serious challengers. Mikhail Suslov's position was undoubtedly quite powerful in light of his long tenure in both top party organs. Dmitriy Ustinov held both posts for a time. Andrey Kirilenko was long judged a likely successor precisely because he held both positions. And Konstantin Chernenko's ascendancy as a potential successor derived from the same dual base.

However, in January 1982 Suslov died. Ustinov, who became minister of defense in 1976, had yielded his secretary post in the same year. Kirilenko has been reported to have been in less than robust health during the past few years, a factor that may account for his failure to win the first post-Brezhnev round. Chernenko certainly held the requisite posts, and had to be taken seriously as a competitor, notwithstanding his somewhat mousy character and clerk-like subservience to Brezhnev.

Thus, the key question for a serious Kremlinologist became "who would replace Suslov in the Secretariat?" This would be the critical clue to the nature of the expected succession struggle. There were two dramatically different possibilities. One was unlikely but had to be considered because, had it occurred, the succession dynamics would have been altered fundamentally. This would have been to turn to the Leningrad or Ukrainian party organization, both of which have always played key roles in party factional struggles. Grigoriy Romanov, reportedly a very tough and hard-line younger Politburo member, might well have been brought to Moscow from Leningrad to work as secretary. But Volodymyr Shcherbytskyi, first secretary of the Ukrainian party, was a more likely candidate. Because he is relatively young, he could have brought new energy to the top party apparatus.

Had either of these Politburo members captured Suslov's post as secretary, we would be facing a quite different situation in the post-Brezhnev era. They would have worked rapidly during the last months of Brezhnev's life to shuffle as many party posts as possible in preparation for the succession struggle. They would have brought their own coterie of party *apparatchiki* into the competition. The Moscow center would have been under assault by cadres from a regional center. In that circumstance, a quick and easy transfer of power to a new general secretary would have been virtually impossible. A period of uncertainty would have been inevitable while the regional group fought it out with Andropov, Chernenko, and others who held the important ground in Moscow.

A second possibility is the one that did occur. A new secretary was found in the small circle of those

who were already well-entrenched in Moscow. Had the choice been someone who was not also a Politburo member, that would have augured well for Chernenko. Even Viktor Grishin, a Politburo member and head of the Moscow city party organization, might not have posed a serious challenge to Chernenko, since he lacked two trump cards that Andropov brought to the game.

Andropov's first card was obvious: his many years as head of the KGB. This provided him with the power that comes from KGB counterintelligence work within all state, party, and military organizations. The *internal* counterintelligence role gave Andropov a far stronger position than is generally recognized by Western analysts. It made him very knowledgeable of *nomenklatura* and cadre assignments because clearance for such assignments involves a KGB security check. It also gave Andropov familiarity with the daily institutional activities of all the organizations that his agents watch, that is, virtually the entire state apparatus. In this respect, Andropov had a much closer acquaintance with the operation of the Soviet economy than one might ordinarily suppose. The view occasionally expressed in the West that he has no experience with the economy is factually inaccurate: Andropov has vast experience with the way the economic bureaucrats and factory managers cheat the system, falsify reports, and fulfill their plans in appearance if not in reality. Another little-understood role that Andropov played in the economy as head of the KGB concerns acquisition of Western technology, legally and illegally. The Ministry of Foreign Trade enjoys only a subordinate role in this regard, since the KGB and the Ministry of Defense dominate foreign trade decisions.⁴

Andropov's second card was less obvious. He seems to have been a key figure in the Defense Council. His position on this body may well have been the most significant factor in Andropov's quick gaining of power. To understand the basis for this judgment requires some background on the Defense Council's role and composition. It is the lineal descendant of the Council of Labor and Defense (STO) from the early days of the regime. During World War II, the State Defense Committee (GKO) had a similar role. After the war, the GKO disappeared, at least from public view. The STO and GKO both consisted of a small subset of Politburo members who coordinated manpower, industry, and agriculture on the one hand, with military

⁴Michael Sadykiewicz, "Soviet Military Politics," *Survey* (London), No. 26, Winter 1982, p. 193, shows the Foreign Trade Ministry's intelligence role and its linkage to the Defense Council.

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requirements on the other. Both were extremely powerful bodies whose decisions were not challenged by the Politburo as a whole. They could dictate to the economic and industrial planning apparatus. And they were the highest court of appeal on the allocation of resources for the military.⁵

By the early 1970's, and perhaps even earlier, this old organizational device became operative again. The Military Industrial Commission, headed by the deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers, gave the military industries a corporate executive at the highest level. The Military Collegium in the Ministry of Defense provided a parallel corporate executive for the military leadership. The two institutions undoubtedly work in considerable harmony, but issues are bound to arise that transcend that harmony or require a higher policy decision. Such decisions are made in the Defense Council.⁶

When Andrey Gromyko, Andrey Grechko, and Andropov were elected to the Politburo in 1973, it was not difficult to infer that this old organizational system was reemerging. These men made up the foreign-policy/military/police clique which had formed the STO and GKO in the past.⁷ It made sense for Brezhnev to bring them into the Politburo where they could help him carry the vote on his foreign and military policies. In 1974, the Defense Council was mentioned in the Soviet press and its existence has been public knowledge since that time.⁸

We cannot be entirely sure about the make-up of the Defense Council, but it seems logical that Andropov, Gromyko, and—after Grechko's death—Ustinov must have joined Brezhnev to form this body. Possibly Suslov and Aleksey Kosygin were members. In any event, this group includes those who are knowledgeable about military and foreign policy, as well as economic issues, by virtue of their state duties. Every Politburo member does not have time to immerse himself in these areas. The Defense Council subset of the Politburo, therefore, probably has a free hand in foreign policy and military issues since other Politburo members are not in a position to gain adequate information and staff support to challenge the arguments on such matters by the Council members.

*Ibid., pp. 179–212; Victor Suvorov, *Inside the Soviet Army*, New York, NY, Macmillan, 1983; Sergei Freidzon, "Estimating the Current and Long-run Limitations of the Soviet Defense Burden," prepared for the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Net Assessment, Washington, DC, 1981, pp. 37–57; M. V. Zakharov, et al., *50 let Vooruzhennykh sil SSSR (50 Years of the Armed Forces of the USSR)*, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1968; Edward L. Warner, III, *The Military in Contemporary Soviet Politics*, New York, NY, Praeger Special Studies, 1977, pp. 272–74. There has been a certain amount of confusion in Western literature on lineal descendancy of the Defense Council. Sometimes, as in Warner's case, the STO is seen as the antecedent of the present-day Military Industrial Commission, sometimes of the Military Collegium. Neither is accurate. The Military Industrial Commission traces back

Had an outsider like Shcherbytskyi come to the Secretariat, he would have had to abolish the Defense Council or quickly make it subordinate to his wishes. Otherwise, his chances of gaining the top post in the party would have been small. If Chernenko was not a member of the Defense Council, this would have contributed to his political weakness; however, it is probable that Brezhnev had included him.

Speculation has been widespread that Ustinov and the military establishment threw their lot in with Andropov, making his ascendancy possible. Whatever the case, one can assume that Andropov and Ustinov had worked together in considerable harmony for several years. Moreover, if Ustinov did play a key role in Andropov's selection as general secretary, his personal support sufficed; "military" support in the broader sense was not necessary. And unless Ustinov truly detested Andropov, he was unlikely to have backed a regional party chief like Shcherbytskyi or Romanov given the uncertainty and turmoil that the ascendancy of such a leader would bring to the central party apparatus. In fact, one may wonder why Ustinov himself did not bid for the top post, since institutionally he was in a strong position to do so, having served not long ago as a party secretary.

In any event, the uncertainty of the situation was greatly reduced in the spring of 1982 when Andropov became a party secretary. From that point, there was no real possibility of another challenger making a serious bid. Andropov offered a smooth institutional transition, the least turmoil in the succession process. Furthermore, it is improbable that Andropov, Ustinov, and other key figures had not been working out a succession sequence months if not years before Brezhnev died. The succession struggle—to the degree there is one—did not begin with Brezhnev's death; it had been in progress for some time.

However, Andropov himself is not a young man, and the next succession cannot be far off. Will it proceed as smoothly? This depends on who is brought into the Secretariat and the Politburo. If new people can be co-opted in an orderly fashion, the next succession, too, ought to be smooth. Certainly, the organizational structure is such that it can be. A series of

through the state economic apparatus, while the Military Collegium is within the Ministry of Defense and traces back to the Revolutionary Military Council. The top-level military/economic/scientific infrastructure is more complex than I have portrayed here. Freidzon gives a good description, especially of the state side including Gosplan, the supply system, and the Council of Ministers. Sadykiewicz gives a particularly interesting analysis of the Defense Council's relationship to the rest of the state and party hierarchy.

⁵Sadykiewicz, loc. cit.

⁷See William E. Odom, "Who Controls Whom in Moscow?" *Foreign Policy* (Washington, DC), Summer 1975, esp., pp. 119–23.

⁸V. G. Kulikov, "The Brain of the Army," *Pravda* (Moscow), Nov. 13, 1974.

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West German Chancellor Willy Brandt meets with Soviet party chief Leonid Brezhnev in the Crimea in September 1971.

—BLACK STAR.

deaths among the Politburo members, of course, could force the pace of change, making the co-optation process difficult to manage. But even in that event, the institutional arrangements will remain to define the playing field on which the struggle for the general secretary's position is carried out. The need to organize the society for military-command affairs, for an aggressive foreign policy, and for the continued modernization of Soviet military forces provides strong institutional imperatives that challengers cannot easily dismiss or throw into disarray without consequences they would not desire. The breakup of the central policymaking system, therefore, may not be as likely as some have anticipated.⁹

Brezhnevism: A Legacy

In order to judge prospects for the post-Brezhnev period, it is necessary to define the basic nature of the Brezhnev era. In brief, it combined foreign policy *mobilism* with domestic policy *immobilism*.

In the international arena, Brezhnev scored remarkable gains for the USSR. They were not all of his making, but he certainly took advantage of key opportunities that arose. With the coming to power of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) in West Germany, he reversed Soviet policy toward Bonn and offered small rewards for the SPD's new Ostpolitik. At the same time, he utilized the American opening on strategic arms control to relax tensions between the superpowers. In turn, he got a slowing of US strategic programs, acknowledgment that the USSR was a superpower, and a surge of East-West economic interaction financed by the West. At the same time, he brought the West to recognize more formally (at Helsinki) the post-World War II frontiers in Europe, something Khrushchev tried and failed to achieve.¹⁰

In the Third World, the projection of Soviet power grew unabated. As the United States turned its military attention away from NATO and toward Vietnam, Brezhnev was undoubtedly delighted, not only because it weakened NATO but also because it affected US public attitudes toward an assertive US foreign

⁹See Seweryn Bialer, "The Harsh Decade: Soviet Policies in the 1980s," *Foreign Affairs* (New York, NY), Summer 1981, pp. 1012-15.

¹⁰See Adam Ulam, *The Rivals: America and Russia Since World War II*, New York, NY, The Viking Press, 1971, pp. 299-340, for an account of Khrushchev's scheme to force Western recognition of East Germany.

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policy. While appearing to cooperate with the United States on a settlement in Vietnam, Brezhnev kept an abundant supply of military materiel flowing to his North Vietnamese allies.

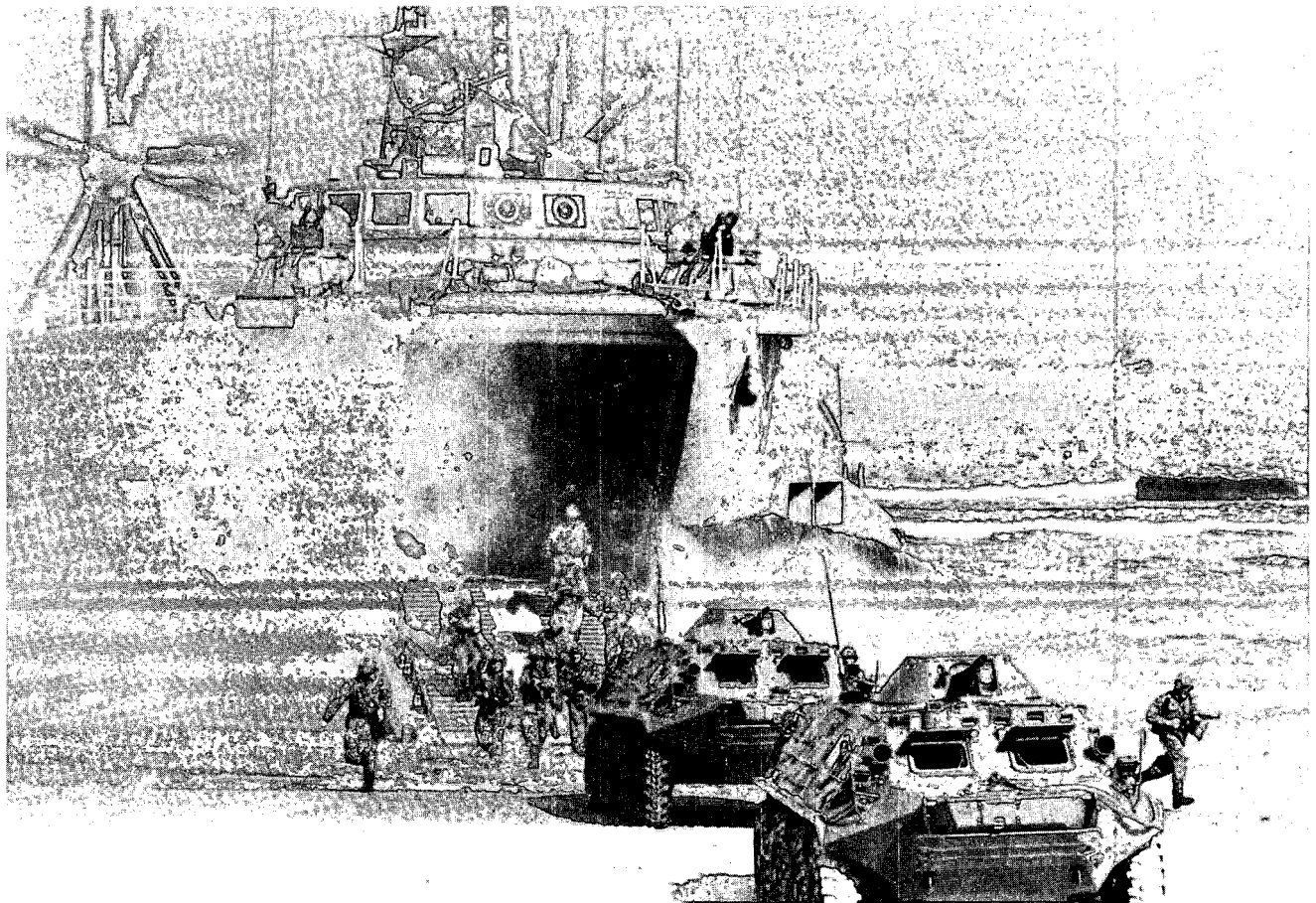
The major setback for Brezhnev came in 1972 in the Middle East when Anwar al-Sadat ordered Soviet advisers out of Egypt. Having invested a great deal there as a strategic anchor for Soviet policy in the Middle East, the USSR found itself abruptly expelled from a key position in the region. By the end of the decade, however, with the help of Cuban forces, Brezhnev had reasserted Soviet influence in the region, gaining important positions in Ethiopia and South Yemen while holding on to significant influence in Syria and Iraq. And, of course, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan created new pressure on the north side of the Persian Gulf region. The Soviet-Cuban venture in Angola made the USSR a larger factor than had been the case previously in southern Africa. After General Anastasio Somoza's fall in Nicaragua in 1979,

Brezhnev was able to launch the Soviet-Cuban partnership on a new offensive in the Caribbean region. The US withdrawal from Vietnam gave the USSR, through its client regime in Hanoi, hegemony in Vietnam, Laos, and Kampuchea.

Other than Egypt, the only major negative development from the Soviet viewpoint was the normalization of relations between the United States and China. Brezhnev, of course, inherited the Sino-Soviet split. Apparently accepting it as irreversible in the short run, he set about containing China, establishing a strong position in Southern Asia—in India and Afghanistan—and reducing tensions in Europe while expanding the size of Soviet military forces on the Sino-Soviet border more than threefold.¹¹

The backdrop for this foreign policy offensive was the steady Soviet military buildup. In almost all cate-

¹¹See Thomas W. Robinson, "The Sino-Soviet Border Conflict," in Stephen Kaplan, Ed., *Diplomacy of Power*, Washington, DC, The Brookings Institution, 1981, p. 287.



Soviet BTR-70 armored personnel carriers come ashore from a hovercraft during 1981 Warsaw Pact maneuvers on the Baltic Coast of Poland.

—SIPA PRESS from BLACK STAR.

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gories of military power, the USSR equaled the United States and exceeded it in some.¹² In a real sense, the Soviet military buildup in the 1970's marks a qualitative change in the postwar East-West military balance, no mean achievement for Brezhnev.

The Brezhnev era indeed was a time of great Soviet foreign policy mobilism. Moscow showed astuteness in reading the political climate in the West and in encouraging "realistic" circles there to curb any serious Western attempt to match or check Soviet assertiveness. In the Third World, Moscow not only replaced US influence almost entirely in southeast Asia but also created a major geopolitical challenge to vital Western interests in the Persian Gulf region. Although he lived only long enough to see it begin, Brezhnev threw the USSR into a new offensive for influence in Central America.

On the domestic front Brezhnev left quite another record. The economy certainly enjoyed an infusion of Western technology, but on the whole, economic entropy seems to have been the dominant trend. The "second economy" and massive corruption have grown to proportions that appear to exceed the regime's capacity (or will) to repress them with punitive and "administrative" methods. Two attempts at reform came to nothing. In the 1960's, a number of reforms, associated with the name of economist Yevsey Liberman, were introduced with little apparent result. In the early 1970's, great press fanfare accompanied the concept of production associations and the freeing of inefficient labor from economic enterprises. Many officials in the central economic apparatus were to move closer to production, away from Moscow. In any event, little of note happened in response to these organizational measures for economic improvement.¹³

Symptomatic of the decay in the economy was the discussion of the need to shift from an "extensive" to an "intensive" approach to economic growth. Abram Bergson's estimates of the trends in Soviet factor productivity cut to the root of the problem.¹⁴ The decline in factor productivity meant that larger and larger amounts of capital would be required to sustain growth, and—at best—the rate of growth would continue to decline unless some significant changes were introduced in the Soviet growth model. By 1975, matters reached a point where the leadership, faced with

the necessity to cut back in at least one major sector—investment, consumption, or defense—decided to reduce investment in favor of consumption without touching defense.¹⁵

This decision tells us a lot about Brezhnevism. The General Secretary realized that the economy was in serious difficulty. Yet he would not touch defense allocations. Rather, he reduced investment to save consumption. This was a sign not of aggressive economic leadership but of resignation—perhaps temporary—in the face of stagnation, lethargy, and inefficiency. It is also possible that the economic planners had concluded that the return on larger investment had become too small to make the pain of sacrifice elsewhere worth it. Defense expenditures, of course, were paying off abroad, earning money from arms sales and bringing increased prestige to the USSR as a military superpower.

Added to Brezhnev's economic woes were a number of bad harvest years and bottlenecks in oil and gas production. Both problems required foreign currency: to buy grain and to import energy production equipment. The overall energy problem brought sharp shifts in resource allocations in 1981-82 aimed at relieving bottlenecks, but the result is meager thus far.¹⁶ The great agricultural program for the non-black earth region, an attempt to ameliorate the agricultural problem, and other schemes have accomplished little, compelling the USSR to rely on imports.¹⁷

Perhaps the most dramatic sign of domestic policy immobilism is to be found in the growth of corruption and the so-called second economy. Konstantin Simis offers an inside account of corruption, its dimensions and the regime's unwillingness to move against it. The party elite seems to be the most corrupt and the least punished when caught. Even the Georgian affair—in which Vasiliy Mzhavanadze, a candidate member of the CPSU Politburo, was implicated—did not bring indictment or loss of party membership to the most heavily involved.¹⁸ Ironically, at about the same time—in 1972—Brezhnev initiated a party "documents exchange" which he described as not simply a "technical" affair but as a "politically principled inspection of the party's ranks."¹⁹ Traditionally such ex-

¹²See *Soviet Military Power*, 2nd ed., Washington, DC, US Government Printing Office, 1983.

¹³See Gertrude Schroeder, "The Soviet Economy on a Treadmill of 'Reforms,'" US Congress, Joint Economic Committee, *Soviet Economy in a Time of Change*, Washington, DC, US Government Printing Office, 1979, Vol. 1, pp. 329-40.

¹⁴See Bergson, "Toward a New Growth Model," *Problems of Communism* (Washington, DC), March-April 1973, pp. 1-9.

¹⁵Myron Rush, "Guns over Growth in Soviet Policy," *International Security* (Cambridge, MA), Winter 1982-83, pp. 167-79.

¹⁶Karl-Eugene Wädekin, "Soviet Agriculture: Dependence on the West," *Foreign Affairs*, No. 60, Spring, 1982, pp. 882-903, provides an analysis of Soviet agrarian problems and performances.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Simis, *USSR: The Corrupt Society*, New York, NY, Simon and Shuster, 1982, pp. 53-60.

¹⁹See the lead editorials in *Pravda*, June 24, 1972 and *Krasnaya zvezda* (Moscow), June 29, 1972.

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Soviet and Czechoslovak party delegations discuss the political crisis in Czechoslovakia at the July 29-August 1, 1968, meeting in Cierna nad Tissou just west of the border with the USSR. Among those accompanying Soviet party leader Leonid Brezhnev (second from left) are, to his right, Nikolay Podgornyy, and to his left, Alexsey Kosygin, Mikhail Suslov, Petro Shelest, Konstantin Katushev, Boris Ponomarev, and Konstantin Ruskov; leading the Czechoslovak delegation was Alexander Dubček (fourth from the foreground at the right)

—EUPRA.

changes were implemented as purges, designed to reinvigorate the party apparatus, to bring it back to Leninist norms of self-sacrifice and revolutionary dedication. The Brezhnev documents exchange dragged on for two years and was still receiving press attention in 1975.²⁰ Notwithstanding this “principled inspection” of the party’s ranks, few if any party members were expelled, and corruption continued unabated. The contrast with the Krushchev and Stalin shake-ups of the party could hardly have been greater.

The Soviet dissident movement offers ambiguous evidence about the Brezhnev regime’s inability to prevent internal decay.²¹ Judgments vary on the extent and importance of this movement, but it did test Soviet repressive capabilities. In the last few years, its vitality has been sapped by the KGB. In fact, the regime has displayed considerable ingenuity in breaking it up and, in this regard, the dissidents appear to have found and exceeded the regime’s limits of toleration. Nevertheless, the mere emergence of the movement indicates a degree of internal decay.

The Brezhnev period also witnessed serious challenges to Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe. Although Brezhnev proved willing to use force to break resistance in Prague, he had to take the entire Politburo with him to negotiate with Alexander Dubček on the Czech-Soviet border in the spring of 1968: clearly he did not have unrestrained power to act on his own, and he also may have wanted to spread the responsibility among his colleagues. Problems in Poland, beginning in the winter of 1970–71, reemerged in far

more threatening dimensions in 1980. Political and police “salami tactics” exercised through Polish authorities have whittled down organized opposition and brought matters in Poland under temporary control, but the mere fact that such developments could occur indicates the degree of immobilism in bloc policy that beset Brezhnev’s leadership.

Today the Soviet leadership is confronted with both the successes and failures of Brezhnevism. The successes derived from a highly flexible and assertive foreign policy accompanied by the largest and most comprehensive military buildup ever witnessed. The failures can be attributed to the retention of the Leninist and Stalinist party/police/state structure resting on a centrally planned economy without retention of the system’s mechanisms for revitalization, that is, purges of the party elite and rigid enforcement of labor discipline. This is not to suggest that the system would have been more successful with the retention of full-blown Stalinism, but it is to identify the basic change that permitted domestic policy immobilism and decay to reach their present dimensions.

Factors of Change and Continuity

The prospects for the Andropov regime and its successors are constrained to a large degree by the objective factors of change that have accompanied Brezhnevism. Western analysis of these factors has not proven very perspicacious. In the 1960’s, it became popular among Western specialists on the Soviet Union to take the “group approach” to the political analysis of change in the USSR. De-Stalinization, many agreed, had introduced conditions for signif-

²⁰See *Pravda*, and *Krasnaya zvezda*, Feb. 7, 1975.

²¹See Andrei Amalrik, *Notes of a Revolutionary*, trans. by Guy Daniels, New York, NY, Knopf, 1982.

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icant change in the Soviet system. The task of analysis was to discover what these conditions were and anticipate the political development of the system. A review of such endeavors based on the group theory of politics led me to the conclusion that the approach anticipated the results before the evidence was thoroughly examined.²² Despite the failure of pluralism to develop in the USSR, many analysts still cling to the interest-group approach in analyzing Soviet politics. Some analysts dismiss critiques of the group approach as being an assertion that the system remains "monolithic," an assertion undercut by signs of the diffusion of power.

The important question, however, is not *whether* power is diffused but *how* it is diffusing. Pluralism is only one way for power to be diffused, and it depends on very particular circumstances in a polity whether the pluralist variant of diffusion takes place. Bureaucratic decay is another way for power to be diffused in a monolithic system. Regionalism is yet another way, and when regionalism is reinforced by nationalism, that represents yet another diffusion mechanism not very compatible with the pluralistic model. A review of key institutional, economic, and social factors in the USSR demonstrates that while much has changed and power has diffused within the system, continuity also remains strong and the diffusion of power has hardly followed pluralist patterns.

In assessing the extent to which institutional change has occurred, one must look, above all, at the *centrally planned economy*. While hundreds of small policy changes have been introduced to cope with undesired organizational consequences and behavior, the essential institutional structure remains unaltered. There has been no significant expansion of market pricing, not even in the marginal manner observed in some East European states, most notably Hungary. The USSR State Planning Commission (Gosplan) retains its dominant role in setting prices and allocating resources. Although "economic success indicators" have been modified in many ways in an unending search for more efficiency, the essential character of the system has been carefully preserved.²³ This lack of institutional change, of course, is a reflection of the leadership's strong preference for the kind of political control the system affords for directing the economy, for making its structural development and its output

conform to "planners' preferences" as opposed to "consumers' preferences."

The most dramatic change is found in what the unchanged planning institutions are capable of doing. In the 1950's, American graduate students studying the Soviet economy were taught that central planning in the USSR permitted directing a higher investment rate at those sectors that the planners desired to expand.²⁴ Problem areas such as agriculture and efficiency of capital investment were not ignored, but professors left their students with the impression that the Soviet system could mobilize resources and direct them more or less as the leaders chose, notwithstanding consumer and other demands. That was probably a fairly accurate assessment of the Soviet economic system in its first three or four decades. Today, it no longer adequately describes the system.

The dialectics of growth have brought a major change in the economic system. As the aggregate capital stock has grown, it has required ever larger amounts of new investment to make a proportional change in the structure of the capital stock. In other words, the central planners' ability to shift investment significantly from one sector to another is not as great as it was earlier. The discretion they retain in altering the capital-stock structure declines each year. The extraordinary restructuring of the economy in the 1930's and in the postwar reconstruction period can not be easily repeated, and is perhaps impossible, today.

This diminution of planners' discretion is not only the result of the size of the economy. It is perhaps equally the result of what economist Fyodor Kushnirsky calls the absence of managerial responsibility.²⁵ It seems to be beyond the power of Soviet planners to close down inefficient economic activities. They may expand activities and create new ones, but they seldom cause a firm to go bankrupt. The forces against bankruptcy action include not only diffusion of responsibility within the managerial system but also regional party influence and the fear of creating unemployment. Official acknowledgment of the decline of planners' discretion is implicit in the slogan that growth now depends on "intensive" methods rather than traditional "extensive" methods of economic development. The call for greater labor productivity is inspired by keen awareness of the decline in discretionary factor inputs at the disposal of planners.

²²See William E. Odom, "A Dissenting View on the Group Approach to Soviet Politics," *World Politics* (Princeton, NJ), July 1976, pp. 542-67.

²³See Fyodor I. Kushnirsky, *Soviet Economic Planning, 1965-1980*, Boulder, CO, Westview Press, 1982, for an insider's account of the search for efficiency while avoiding fundamental reform.

²⁴See, e.g., Maurice Dobbs, *Soviet Economic Development since 1917*, New York, NY, International Publishers, 1948; Harry Schwartz, *Russia's Soviet Economy*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice-Hill, 1950, p. 54; and Abram Bergson, Ed., *Soviet Economic Growth*, Evanston, IL, Row, Peterson, 1953.

²⁵Kushnirsky, op. cit., pp. 136 ff.

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A formation of BTR-70 armored personnel carriers and BMP-A mechanized infantry combat vehicles (at the rear) moves through Red Square during the November 7, 1980, Revolution Day parade. The gigantic poster to the rear calls for "A Worthy Welcome to the 26th CPSU Congress! The people and the party united! Realize the plans of the party! Glory to the CPSU! A resounding finish to the 10th Five-Year Plan."

—*Novosti from Sovfoto.*

Yet another change is the expansion of the "second economy" alluded to earlier. Irregular economic activity seems to have taken root at every level in Soviet society.²⁶ Naturally, this means that resources are diverted from the purposes intended by the central planners. We do not know the size of the second economy; therefore, it is impossible to judge precisely how great a factor it has become in shifting resources away from investment and plan fulfillment. But the impressionistic writings on this subject encourage us to believe that it is not trivial.²⁷

The *military economy* is an objective factor of both continuity and change. Probably the greatest failing of Western study of the Soviet Union lies in lack of attention to the military-industrial sector. True, very little information about it is in the public domain, but a great

deal of information has long been available about its product: Soviet military forces. They have grown steadily in size, and they are receiving technology in many cases not yet fielded in Western armies.²⁸ Considerable information is also available about institutional arrangements within the military-industrial sector and its relationship to the rest of the economy.²⁹

The striking thing about this growing sector is its structural continuity. The essential structure was developed during World War I and the Civil War. During the ensuing New Economic Policy period, the "military industries" were not demobilized but kept under a single trust. During the First Five-Year Plan, military industry was accorded bureaucratic primacy and priority access to investment allocations. "Military representatives" (*voyenpredy*) formed a vast apparatus that

²⁶See Dimitri Simes, "The Soviet Parallel Market," *Survey*, Summer 1975, pp. 42-52.

²⁷See, e.g., Gregory Grossman, "The 'Second Economy' of the USSR," *Problems of Communism*, September-October 1977, pp. 25-40; and idem, "Notes on the Illegal Private Economy and Corruption," in US Congress, Joint Economic Committee, op. cit., Vol. 1, pp. 834-55.

²⁸See *Soviet Military Power*, op. cit.

²⁹See David Holloway, "Innovation in the Defense Sector," in R. Amann and J. Cooper, Eds., *Industrial Innovation in the Soviet Union*, New Haven, CT, Yale University Press, 1982, pp. 303-21; and Sergei Freidzon, op. cit. Also Suvorov, op. cit.; and Karl F. Spielmann, "Defense Industrialists in the USSR," *Problems of Communism*, September-October 1976, pp. 52-69.

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penetrated all industrial activities contributing to the military. They gave the military enormous control over quality, design, and pricing of military goods. They created a supply system of inputs to military industries that ensured priority of allocation. Thus, a siphon system came into being that could pump out of the civilian sector whatever resources the Politburo desired that the military receive.

This system remains essentially unchanged. Without it, the recent Soviet military buildup would have been impossible. And without taking this system into account, no complete understanding of the performance of the Soviet economy is possible. At its apex, three institutions give it unchallengeable power. First, the Military Industrial Commission, chaired by the deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers, provides central focus and management for military requirements within the state economic bureaucracy. Second, the General Staff of the Armed Forces generates the military doctrine that dictates military requirements. Through the Ministry of Defense, these requirements are levied on the Military Industrial Commission. Finally, the Defense Council provides guidance over the entire process. The Defense Industries Section of the Secretariat, of course, provides the Politburo and Defense Council with party control over the defense hierarchy. Today, this structural arrangement looks more like the one operative in the late 1920's than the one existing in the 1950's.³⁰ Continuity, therefore, has reasserted itself.

What has changed is the size and complexity of the military-industrial complex. The military grip on the research and development sector, including the USSR Academy of Sciences, has tightened as modern military technology has increased in diversity and importance. The size of the military-industrial production base, naturally, has grown enormously. This has not been independent of the remainder of the economy. In fact, most Soviet civilian industries have military production lines, active in some cases, on standby in others.³¹ The leadership's concern for war mobilization has constrained the profile of Soviet industry perhaps more than any other factor. Military production and mobilization requirements come first. Other production considerations are secondary.

³⁰See N. Suleiman, *Tyl i snabzheniye deystvuyushchey armii* (Rear Services and Supply for a Combat Army), Moscow, Voenizdat, 1927, Charts 31, 34; A. Vol'pe, "The Bases for Mobilizing Industry in the USSR," *Voyna i revoliutsii* (Moscow), No. 7, November-December 1925, p. 75; M. V. Zakharov, "The Communist Party and the Technical Re-equipment of the Army and Navy during the Prewar Five-Year Plans," *Voyenno-istoricheskii zhurnal* (Moscow), No. 2, 1971, pp. 3-12. Compare these with Holloway, loc. cit., Freidzon, loc. cit., and Sadykiewicz, loc. cit.

³¹See Holloway, loc. cit., p. 304.

The primacy enjoyed by Soviet military industry goes far in explaining some dysfunctions in other parts of the economy. The leadership, including senior military figures, is not indifferent to the health of the economy as a whole. This should be borne in mind in interpreting recent statements of Soviet military leaders about the economy. Marshal Nikolay Ogarkov, the Chief of the General Staff, was quite candid in expressing concern about the Soviet economy.³² Was he, as some observers have suggested, defending the Soviet military budget? Was he anticipating demands by reformers to shift resources away from military production? Or was he, in fact, articulating a general worry within senior military circles that without reforms and increased labor discipline in the overall economy, the military sector would also suffer? The last interpretation seems the most compelling as one looks more closely into the structure of the system. Marshal Ogarkov and the Minister of Defense, Marshal Ustinov, must be as concerned as other senior leaders about problems in the economy as a whole. Unless institutional reforms are proposed that include the breakup of the Military Industrial Commission and the Ministry of Defense's apparatus of "military representatives" throughout the industrial and the research-and-development sectors, the defense budget is not likely to suffer in ways that military leaders would oppose. Discussions of economic reform to date have not suggested any such radical change; rather, they have been directed toward getting the present system to produce more efficiently. Ustinov and Ogarkov surely would desire that kind of change, and they might even support Politburo decisions that trade off present military production for greater future production. There are precedents for such support by the top military in the 1920's, the late 1940's, and possibly in the late 1950's.³³

The *new intelligentsia* has been seen by many Western observers as a source of change. Most often this anticipation takes the form of discussions about "generational change," that is, how younger age cohorts, as their members move into positions of power,

³²N. Ogarkov, "Defending Peaceful Endeavor," *Kommunist* (Moscow), No. 10, July 1981, pp. 80-91.

³³I. B. Berkhin, *Voyennaya reforma v SSSR, 1924-26* (Military Reform in the USSR, 1924-26), Moscow, Voenizdat, 1958, pp. 46-47, details the rationale of the dramatic demobilization of the Red Army in 1921-23: to redirect resources toward technical modernization for a future larger force. Matthew A. Evangelista, "Stalin's Postwar Army Reappraised," *International Security*, Winter 1982-83, pp. 110-138, discusses the extent of Soviet demobilization in 1947-48. Oleg Penkovskiy, *The Penkovskiy Papers*, Garden City, NJ, Doubleday, 1965, pp. 234-43, gives some insight into Khrushchev's manpower reductions in the late 1950's, which, it can be inferred, were aimed at cost reductions and higher technical competence in the officer corps.

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will alter Soviet policy.³⁴ Analysts who place emphasis on this source of change tend to expect it to have a liberalizing effect on both domestic policy and Soviet relations with the West. Jerry Hough, for example, expects that generational change will have a moderating effect on Soviet foreign policy—although it will certainly not usher in “a period of bliss in Russian-American relations”—and will be conducive to significant economic reform on the domestic front. The better-educated younger intelligentsia, particularly in the foreign policy establishment, is not, in Hough’s view, as ideological and tough-minded regarding East-West competition as the older generation.³⁵

Quite a different interpretation can be placed on the apparent growing sophistication of the younger generation in foreign affairs. John Lenczowski, for example, finds the younger Soviet analysts of Western affairs much abler in understanding and exploiting Western political groups and governments. He finds not so much a decline in the role of Marxism-Leninism as a greater sophistication in the use of its categories for analysis of the “international class struggle.”³⁶ While Hough is encouraged by the pro-détente attitudes he finds among younger Soviet analysts, Lenczowski assesses détente as a major Soviet gain in the East-West competition achieved in part thanks to the more sophisticated insights brought to Soviet policymaking by these younger analysts.

The attempt to anticipate Soviet policy as a function of a generational change is likely to fail. Generations do not make policy. A few individuals in the Soviet system make policy, and even their staffs, although quite large in number, may not be a representative sample of their own generation. Moreover, because of the authoritarian character of the Soviet regime and the lack of competitive interest-articulation by social groups, generational change is less likely to have a direct effect on Soviet policymaking than it has in Western liberal democracies. “Generation” is a useful category for sociological analysis, but for political analysis its utility is distinctly limited.

How are we to deal analytically with the new Soviet intelligentsia? No one disputes that it is different from the older generation of educated elites. Better education, greater exposure to Western influences, less sharp memories of the Stalinist period, a larger proportion growing up in an urban environment, less idealism about the official ideology—these and other fac-

tors undoubtedly are causing significant differences between “fathers” and “sons” in the Soviet intelligentsia. Hough suggests that reform on the domestic front—and specifically of the economy—“would tend to benefit the most skilled and the best educated. . . . Since they have every incentive to think of reasons why reform would serve the interests of others and of the economy as a whole, it is difficult to believe that they will not do so. The combination of a demographic problem and an energy crisis will provide them with a golden opportunity to make the case for greater efficiency.”³⁷ This line of reasoning may well occur to many of the new Soviet intelligentsia. Yet, for reasons we shall offer below, such reform is unlikely to occur, notwithstanding the “golden opportunity.”

How will the intelligentsia react to frustration and disappointment? This is the critical factor that the leadership must face, and it is the crux of the kind of change that the new generation will bring to the system. While no one knows how they will react, we are not without historical parallels to stimulate our thinking about the possibilities. Throughout the 19th century, the autocracy frustrated the intelligentsia by rejecting reform or by failing to carry through when reform was introduced. In the last several decades of the empire, the intelligentsia had more institutional bases for pursuing reform than is now the case in the USSR or is likely to be the case in the foreseeable future. Nonetheless, it did not unite behind enlightened reform. Rather, the intelligentsia tended to polarize into radical wings. The left wing turned to revolutionary activity. The right wing became more reactionary in defense of autocracy. Nothing as dramatic as the Great Reforms of the 1860’s is really to be expected in the 1980’s, and even that kind of progress left the 19th-century intelligentsia in despair. Are not the conditions for polarization even greater in the 1980’s?

More than a little evidence is available to suggest exactly such a social development in the USSR. The dissident movement reflects the anti-regime wing of the new Soviet intelligentsia,³⁸ while Lenczowski’s analysis of the younger generation of Marxist-Leninist foreign policy analysts identifies the pro-regime wing. Its members have been described by many émigrés. The younger KGB personnel show remarkable sophistication in dealing with dissidents. Soviet diplomatic officials abroad today are a much more sophisticated and no less uncompromising generation of operatives

³⁴See, e.g., Bialer, *loc. cit.*

³⁵Jerry Hough, *Soviet Leadership in Transition*, Washington, DC, The Brookings Institution, 1980, pp. 127–30, 144 ff.

³⁶John Lenczowski, *Soviet Perceptions of U.S. Foreign Policy*, Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1982.

³⁷Hough, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

³⁸See also Rudolf L. Tokes, Ed., *Dissent in the USSR*, Baltimore, MD, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975, p. 11, for an ideological spectrum of Soviet dissident views.

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for the regime than were their Stalinist predecessors. One can also detect a new confidence and assertive arrogance in the younger officials, as well as a deep cynicism that is perhaps more vicious than that of imperial officials and secret police.

There is little middle ground for the younger intelligentsia. Either they choose the highly principled path of the dissident movement and sacrifice all hope of the comforts of modern society or they submit to the morally debasing standards of success and upward mobility within the Soviet system. Alexander Solzhenitsyn traces the psychological trauma of *Novyy mir* editor Aleksandr Tvardovskiy as he sought to find a middle ground. In the end, Tvardovskiy failed.³⁹ Where this polarization will eventually lead is difficult to anticipate, but it certainly does not augur well for reform. Instead, at least for a decade or so, it would seem to encourage a heightened struggle between the regime and its loyalists on the one hand and periodically emerging dissident groups on the other. In any event, the appearance of a better-educated intelligentsia is an important factor of change within the system, one which the regime is already devising new means of managing.

It is important to remember that the military intelligentsia is not immune to the general social and political dilemmas that confront the Soviet intelligentsia as a whole. The imperatives of modern military technology have led to a dramatic growth in the system of officer education, not just in size but also in sophistication.⁴⁰ Officers probably feel sufficiently secure personally to explore unorthodox ideas more readily than many of their civilian contemporaries. The Riga naval officers' group of dissidents and Major General Petro Grigorenko provide examples, albeit small in number.⁴¹ While most officers are likely to tilt to the pro-regime wing of the intelligentsia, some of them are likely to join the anti-regime wing. It seems most unlikely, however, that this polarization will affect the policy orientation of the senior military leadership. Rather, the anti-regime elements will be expelled from the military as they are discovered, and will lend their support—those who have the courage—to dissident groups in the civilian sector, provided such groups continue to exist either openly or furtively.

Much attention has been given to *demographic change* in the USSR. The expanding Central Asian ethnic groups stand in contrast to the slower-growing



Aleksandr Tvardovskiy, former editor of *Novyy mir*.

—Sovfoto.

Slavic ethnic groups. Employment opportunities are greater in the Slavic area, leading some analysts to anticipate migrations from Central Asia into the European part of the USSR. Such a migration, however, has not occurred at a dramatic level; it is also possible to infer that hidden unemployment exists in the large industrial centers.⁴² It does not seem, therefore, that labor migration would necessarily help the Soviet economy. Demography may eventually have a significant impact on Soviet politics, but we are not likely to see this in the 1980's. It is not likely to have much of an impact on Soviet military manpower policy.⁴³ In fact, the trained reserve manpower pool is sufficiently large for the baby booms and busts to be absorbed without a noticeable effect on force levels or change in

³⁹*The Oak and the Calf*, New York, NY, Harper & Row, 1975.

⁴⁰See William E. Odom, "The 'Militarization' of Soviet Society," *Problems of Communism*, September-October 1976, pp. 34-51.

⁴¹Peter Reddaway, ED., *Uncensored Russia*, London, Jonathan Cape, 1972, pp. 127 ff, 171 ff.

⁴²Murray Feshbach, "Soviet Dynamics in the USSR," paper presented at the conference, "The Soviet Union in the 1980's," January 14, 1983, Washington, DC, sponsored by the US Information Agency, with the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University, and the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies, Woodrow Wilson Center for Advanced International Studies.

⁴³See Ellen Jones, "Manning the Soviet Military," *International Security*, No. 7, Summer 1982, pp. 105-31.

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military-service policy. Demography may have some effect on policies toward minority nationalities and on regional party politics, but it does not promise to be a large factor in Soviet political development in the Andropov period, and perhaps not even during the rule of his successor.

Alcoholism and a high male death rate have been cited by Vladimir Treml as significant factors in Soviet demography.⁴⁴ They definitely indicate social and moral fatigue resulting from low Soviet living standards and impose a resource constraint on the Politburo, but are not likely to cause a policy crisis.

Nationalism ought not to be discounted as a factor for change. Although anti-Russification sentiment is strong in many of the national minority regions, the centrifugal political forces it generates are not likely to create a major crisis of legitimacy for the USSR. (Such a crisis could, however, occur if a war or some similar shock revealed Moscow's instruments of control to be weak.) A more significant effect of nationalism is in instances where it underpins and reinforces deviant behavior, such as corruption and bribery. Konstantin Simis's account of Mzhavanadze's Georgian circle of corruption is a case in point.⁴⁵ Ethnic and clan ties provided the social structure for cooperative efforts in corruption and proved surprisingly resilient against party, police, and KGB instruments of control; they were even able to gain a grip on Mzhavanadze, a Politburo candidate member. This form of active ethnic and national sentiment is probably more difficult for the regime to suppress than the separatist sentiments and overt hostility to Russification found in the Baltic republics.

There is a tendency to overlook *religion* as a factor for change and resistance to Soviet authority. Sectarian activities can, of course, be lumped together under the general category of the dissident movement, but they appeal to quite different and broader social strata. The dissident "democratic movement" was composed almost wholly of the intelligentsia. Baptist sects recruit from much less sophisticated social circles. The Orthodox Church also plays a highly complex role, dissident in some regards, more ambiguous in others, especially in its implicit support of Soviet foreign policy through its external relations bureau. It attracts a large number of people from the ranks of the intelligentsia, and not just from those tending toward anti-regime sentiments. A strain of neo-Slavophilism, supportive of the Russian church as well as the re-

gime, has been alleged to exist and to find sympathy among the military and the KGB.⁴⁶ To be sure, some of the intelligentsia find in Orthodoxy an alternative to the official ideology, a source of cultural and historical roots, and a haven for "internal immigration." While religion poses no serious threat to the regime's control, it does create a nuisance politically and ideologically. The impressionistic view one gains in the Soviet Union is that religion has grown both in its social and spiritual attraction as well as in institutional size. We may well misjudge both the degree and nature of religious influence. If it is true that Moscow inspired the attempt on the Pope's life, that act reflects the deep concern the leadership feels about the political strength of the Polish Catholic Church and probably about Catholics in the Soviet Union. And, of course, Muslim groups have a model in Iran that does not comfort Moscow, even if an Iranian-style upheaval is most unlikely in Central Asia or the Caucasus.

Finally, *ideology* is thought by many to be changing, that is, declining in influence. Measuring such change is difficult, and most judgments about its decline are based on impressionistic observations. Whatever the case, the language of the Soviet press shows no lack of adherence to the traditional ideological norms. Nor has the time devoted to ideological training in Soviet institutions decreased.

Two realities should be kept in mind before pronouncing Marxism-Leninism dead. First, a multinational empire like the Soviet Union requires a legitimacy principle for maintaining its rule over non-Russian peoples in an age when nationalism is the most prevalent legitimacy principle in the world. Marxist-Leninist "internationalism" provides such a theory. Also critically important for Moscow's power is the Marxist-Leninist view of property. State control of property is the cornerstone of the entire edifice of economic and police instrumentalities. It is difficult to imagine even a marginal retreat from the basic tenets of the official ideology in light of these considerations of its positive role for Soviet power.

Second, Marxism-Leninism offers a sophisticated set of categories and assumptions for political analysis. The same Soviet citizen who confides in private that he is not really a Marxist-Leninist will proceed to discuss international affairs and domestic politics of other countries in Marxist-Leninist categories, apparently having internalized them so fully that he does not recognize them for what they are. Many Soviet officials clearly believe that Marxist-Leninist categories

⁴⁴See his *Alcohol in the USSR: A Statistical Study*, Durham, NC, Duke Press Policy Studies, 1982.

⁴⁵Simis, *op. cit.*

⁴⁶Hedrick Smith, *The Russians*, New York, NY, Quadrangle, 1976, pp. 429-30; Robert G. Kaiser, *Russia*, New York, NY, Atheneum, 1976, pp. 166-63.

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Patriarch Pimen of Moscow and All-Russia celebrates Easter on April 6, 1980 at Moscow's Bogoyavlenskiy Cathedral.

—TASS from Sovfoto.

are superior tools of analysis, which provide them with a clear advantage in strategic thinking. Thus, it is too soon to accept the view that the ideology is dead. On the contrary, it may not be dying but rather becoming more fully internalized in Soviet society.

Andropov's Options

Given the heritage of Brezhnevism and the objective factors of change and continuity, what can Andropov do? What must he do? These questions have received no little speculation in the West in recent years, even before Andropov assumed power. The natural tendency has been to focus on the backlog of problems, primarily economic but also social, and to anticipate significant change. Hough has taken a view shared by many that the post-Brezhnev period presents an opportunity for marked improvements, not exactly for a "Prague Spring" but at least for a pragmatic assessment and exploitation of opportunities by a new

leader.⁴⁷ Trimming back foreign adventures and devising solutions to discrete domestic problems, including cutbacks in the military sector in favor of the civilian sector, seem to be what Hough anticipates. Bialer gives even more emphasis to the enormity of the problems facing the Politburo in the 1980's.⁴⁸ While he does not fully share Hough's optimism, he sees the regime at a crossroads. To solve many of the domestic problems, he believes, some factions will press for a reduction in the military sector and for continued access to Western economies for credits, technology, and trade. Yet he does not rule out a continued military buildup and an assertive foreign policy. Bialer's strong implication is that significant change in Soviet politics is bound to occur, although he does not venture to predict its direction.

Andropov's ascendancy, however, has not encouraged us to expect the leadership to make a clear

⁴⁷Hough, *op. cit.*

⁴⁸Bialer, *loc. cit.*

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choice between the horns of the many dilemmas. It has not weakened the Defense Council and military-industrial complex as a contending regional party leader might have done in the succession struggle. Nor has it necessarily signaled a larger military role, as is occasionally suggested. Rather, it means that the Brezhnev policymaking system is still intact.

But are the growing problems and forces of change so great that they will soon break up this system? In other words, are the dilemmas so urgent that fundamental choices cannot be avoided? Or can Brezhnevism be sustained for another decade?

The dissident intelligentsia, demographic factors, nationalism, and religion create centrifugal pressures on the regime, but neither singly nor in the aggregate will these pressures prove unmanageable in the coming decade. A major shock to the regime, such as a war, might give these forces such vent that they could become critical for political stability; but short of such a crisis, they have almost no chance of causing major changes.

They cannot, however, be ignored by the regime. They present serious problems and challenges. Co-optation of some of these forces has long been a regime practice, but only if the price was not too high.⁴⁹ Coupled with this tactic is repression. As these forces pose more serious problems for the regime, is Andropov likely to abandon the traditional two-tactic policy? Will he merely shift the mix toward more repression as co-optation proves less effective? Does he have an alternative? Genuine concessions to these forces could endanger the system. Is he willing to risk that? Could he bring off an evolutionary systemic change? These forces, if given full expression, are more likely to fragment the system than to take the gradualist road of liberal change. We are compelled, therefore, to expect that Andropov, as well as Andropov's successor, will continue the traditional policy, merely devising new variations on it.

Next, consider ideology. As a source of idealistic fervor, it offers little to the regime. But in a number of other ways its retention remains imperative. There is every reason for Andropov to cling to it. The ideological factor, therefore, works for continuity and against change. It tends to blur the sharp dilemmas Bialer describes, or at least it gives them a unique perspective in Politburo eyes.

Finally, let us consider the economy, including the military sector. Are the economic problems so critical that they demand dramatic changes in policy? Or can the symptoms be treated for another decade while the disease is allowed to persist? In fact, the Soviet economy continues to grow, although at a declining

rate. If a real decline—negative growth—occurred, would that bring the regime to dramatic, perhaps systemic, change? It certainly would create enormous domestic political pressures, but what would be the alternative to persevering with the present system? Most Western economic analysts agree that a significant relaxation of central control over resource allocations and prices would carry enormous political risks for the regime. Could the Politburo return to some form of Lenin's New Economic Policy, letting the agricultural sector de-collectivize and allowing small private enterprises to develop in the consumer goods sector? Conceivably that would not topple the regime in the short run, but what dilemmas of power would follow a few years later? Another "scissors crisis," as in 1922–23, when the peasants refused to supply products to the urban areas?⁵⁰ Would not the frightened party elite look for another Stalin to reassert central control? Would the West provide a manifold Marshall Plan to rescue the Politburo from its crisis of decentralization? Could the party's legitimacy survive such a dramatic turn of events?

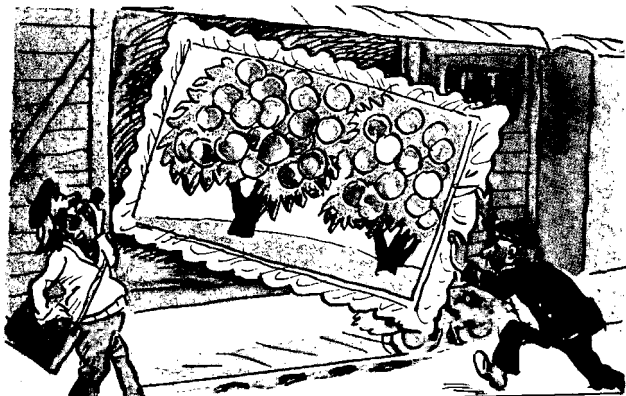
These possibilities would not appeal to Andropov. Nor is it easy to imagine a post-Andropov leadership willing to confront them. A major step in the direction of treating the fundamental ills of the economy would be a step down a very slippery slope. The next step would be difficult to avoid, yet returning up the slope could cause complete loss of footing. Any Politburo will struggle to avoid that course even if it means a lengthy period of economic stagnation and a return to more repressive measures against poor labor discipline, bribery, corruption, and other disorders in the system. Andropov's early moves against corruption, of course, are precisely what should have been expected. The next gambit may be the appearance of "reform," that is, organizational change in the economic apparatus based on new ideas about how to make the old system work. Some shifts in economic policy and organization may provide a moderate arrest of certain economic disorders. Recent investment emphasis on energy and transportation may reduce bottlenecks sufficiently to sustain overall growth, even if only at a declining rate. Measures of this sort may continue for several years before their ultimate failure is demonstrated beyond dispute. In a word, crisis is not as imminent as has sometimes been anticipated.

Agriculture may be an exception. Failure to meet industrial growth plans would not have the immediate

⁴⁹See Amalrik, *op. cit.*, for an account of the KGB effort to co-opt him that lasted until his final days in the USSR.

⁵⁰Dobbs, *op. cit.*, pp. 149–76.

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ПОГРУЗИЛИ...



ДОСТАВИЛИ!

Рисунок Ю. УЗБЯКОВА.

Soviet humor magazine *Krokodil* highlights problems of crime and corruption in the USSR. The two scenes bear the captions "Loaded" and "Unloaded."

—*Krokodil* (Moscow), Sept. 3, 1982.

social consequences that a crop failure would. The seriousness of the agricultural failures is indicated by Soviet willingness to continue to import large quantities of grain even though Soviet hard-currency reserves are declining. Among reform efforts, we should expect the greatest emphasis in agriculture.

The Soviet military-industrial complex cannot remain unaffected by the overall economic situation. But can it, as is frequently suggested, provide a source of relief for other ailing sectors? The answer is some but not much. Unfortunately, economists have not explored extensively the relationship between defense spending and overall economic performance, not just in the USSR but elsewhere as well. The absence of such scholarly work leaves not only pundits but also many Western specialists on the Soviet Union leaning toward assumptions that what goes to defense is a loss to the rest of the economy; that defense spending is an unambiguous "burden"; and that changing the mix of "guns and butter" is a simple and easy policy choice. Yet, while examples can be found of polities where large defense spending correlates with slower economic growth, examples of the contrary correlation can also be found. Most of the history of the Soviet economy presents a case of rapid economic growth coupled with large military spending. In the last two decades, military spending has increased while growth has slowed, but it is not at all clear that the military sector is the major cause of the decline. It is a contributing cause, however, if one assumes that the centrally planned economic system is essential for the military sector. Such an assumption is compelling. The military product is clearly the preferred choice of the planners. And it is doubtful that military growth could have been sustained at its historical rate had

the preferences of Soviet consumers determined resource allocations.

Here we have a bit of a puzzle. Why should we argue that Soviet defense spending has been a "burden" if planners prefer it? Is not the Soviet military buildup a real measure of Soviet economic success? Could one not argue with equal cogency that social costs (environmental, health, etc.) of some sectors of American industry are a "burden"? Of course, but would it follow that the output of those sectors should be considered a "burden" to the gross national product? Certainly not. To understand how the Politburo looks at the Soviet defense "burden," we must keep this analogy in mind. As long as consumers in the United States desire the products of the socially costly industries, these industries are likely to survive. To be sure, interest groups could bring political pressure to bear to reduce those social costs. They would try to make the industries pay for "clean up" or reduction of the social costs. Does not the same thing hold for the Soviet guns and butter relationship?

In part it does, but only in part. First, the Soviet Union does not have—as does the West—institutions for interest articulation that could make the military pay for social costs. Planners can assert their preferences until things become quite bad for the remainder of the economy. Among the elite, those most likely to press the planners for a corrective action are the Defense Council members and military leaders in a position to recognize the danger to future military power arising from too much present neglect of the social costs. Even then, it is not easy in the short run to shift sufficient resources from the military sector to solve problems in another sector. To be sure, there are exceptions. Some military industries could shift production

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A poster in Naberezhnyye Chelny (renamed Brezhnevsk) states: "... the years will pass, but all Soviet people will remember the labor exploits on the Kama." The city is the site of the Kama Truck Plant, a major project constructed with large infusions of Western technology and capable of producing civilian and military vehicles.

—Serge Schmeman/The New York Times.

to civilian goods. Tank factories could begin producing more tractors on fairly short notice. When the size and character of Soviet economic problems are considered, however, it is clear that such redirection of production capacity would ameliorate only a few of the problems. For example, radar factories might produce more TV sets, but that would do very little for critical problems of labor discipline and factor productivity in the civilian sector.

Second, military factories are apparently more modern and efficient than other factories. Does it make sense to shift large amounts of capital from the efficient to the inefficient sectors? That would be a bit like selling stocks that are rising in price, to buy ailing stocks in order to force up their price. The analogy is not perfect, but it may reveal something about the dilemmas faced by Soviet planners in making capital allocations.

We can probably expect some shifts of the produc-

tion mix in the military sector, but such shifts promise only modest relief for the overall economy. A large shift of industrial infrastructure could not take place overnight. It would require years. And, it would not necessarily solve many of the structural problems of the economy. We can also expect that senior military leaders will accept minor shifts, perhaps even large cuts in equipment production. They will do so willingly if they see it as the necessary price for the long-term health of the system that has given them the forces they now have.

On balance, these factors seem less likely to beget major policy changes than to elicit a series of efforts to hold the line in defense of the basic system. In other words, the incentives are strong for Andropov to try to muddle through. Whether he sticks to a "muddle-through" policy, or tries significant initiatives to mitigate or reverse some of the adverse trends within the system, one problem cannot be easily avoided: the

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declining vitality and responsiveness of the party apparatus.

There are signs that Andropov understands this and intends to deal aggressively with entrenched bureaucrats—party and non-party. Anticorruption campaigns clearly have the aim of restoring greater administrative efficacy in the state and party apparatus. If they are to achieve notable results, they will have to be sweeping and sustained, and they will create resistance in many party circles. Should they prove ineffective and half-hearted, then “Brezhnevism” will persist under Andropov. Yet, to allow it to persist indefinitely is to risk eventually greater dangers for the system—dangers of a kind that developed for the Polish party.

In Poland, when the party proved no longer able to defeat dissident activity or keep it from large-scale organizational expression, the military had to supply the civilian sector with cadres, that is, with personnel responsive to central party direction. In other words, the Polish leadership turned to its last remaining source of reliable party workers: the officer corps and the police. It remains to be seen if this policy can rebuild a more effective Polish party apparatus.

The Soviet Union does not yet appear to be near the point where such a dramatic move is required. Still, the comparison is instructive in that it tends to sharpen our appreciation of what Andropov is up against. Stalin relied on blood purges to deal with problems of “localism,” “careerism,” and “drift” in party work. Khrushchev promised the party ranks no more blood purges, but he tried to develop a surrogate through reorganizations and formal requirements for frequent turnover of party and state cadres. Brezhnev was willing to spare the party apparatus even such bloodless purges. Thus, the lower and middle ranks of the party have achieved considerable success in limiting “true Leninist norms” of “democratic centralism”—the principle that made the Bolsheviks a powerful instrument of control and dictatorial policy execution.

Western analysts, by taking the “group approach” to Soviet politics in order to explain the post-Stalin diffusion of power, have tended to miss its key dynamic feature. Conflict is less severe between institutions and incipient groups than it is between higher and lower strata in the hierarchical Soviet system. In the early years of the regime, the narrow top stratum held the initiative. In the Brezhnev years, the middle and lower strata gained significant ground against the party center.⁵¹ The greatest change in Soviet politics

has come from this loss of control by the party’s Secretariat. It can appoint whom it chooses to *nomenklatura* posts, but soon small face-to-face cliques or “family circles,” as the Soviet press calls them, develop to get around the impossible output goals demanded by party direction. These cliques do not aggregate into “groups” in the Western political sense; rather, they thrive within the hierarchical bureaucratic system, reinforcing it.

If Andropov (or his successor) fails to restore party discipline, will he eventually be forced—as were the Poles—to turn to the military and the KGB? We cannot rule out this possibility, although it does not look imminent. If this did occur, it would not be a military takeover in the sense usually meant by a coup. Instead it would be, as in Poland, a shift of party cadres within the system. If this did not lead to an effective purge and rebuilding of the party in a short time, the effects on the military would be severe. The officer corps has a momentous task in simply managing a large and modern military establishment. It does not have cadres to spare. And how long would it be before the officers were trapped in the same “family circles” that they had been sent to eradicate from the party apparatus? This dilemma is so sharp and unpleasant for any Soviet leader that it is difficult to believe he would not use neo-Stalinist methods on the party apparatus before such a crisis arose.

In any event, the central focus for Soviet domestic policy has to be the party cadre problem, that is, the lack of cadre responsiveness to the party center. In the short run, a crisis can be avoided. Andropov can try and fail to reassert effective discipline for a number of years. So can his successor. Yet, unless dealt with, the problem will remain a threat to the very stability of the system.

If that is the outlook for Soviet domestic policy, what must Andropov do in foreign policy? The brief answer is “more of the same,” that is, continue Brezhnev’s foreign policy “mobilism.” Can Andropov do this? Does not domestic stagnation place a drag on Soviet foreign policy? Will not concern with sorting out domestic problems cause the Andropov regime to look for ways to cut back on foreign policy commitments, to reduce costly and dangerous ventures abroad in order to make resources available for dealing with domestic bottlenecks? It is not clear that cutting foreign commitments would create resources that would alleviate some of the domestic resource problems. The sale of Soviet arms, for example, generates hard-currency earnings that would be lost if some commitments were reduced. The fungibility of other foreign policy resources may also not be great. Could hun-

⁵¹William E. Odom, *The Soviet Volunteers*, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1973, pp. 264–328.

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A May Day 1980 display in Moscow's Red Square proclaims: "We are with you, the revolutionary people of Afghanistan."

—TASS from Sevfoto.

dreds and thousands of military advisers and KGB operatives be easily shifted to industrial problem-solving on the domestic front? The key point here is that there is no way to establish a predictable causal relationship between Moscow's situation at home and its degree of assertiveness abroad.⁵² To the extent one were to establish a correlation between the two from Russian and Soviet history, the data are likely to favor the proposition that internal weakness correlates with external assertiveness.

Andropov's views on foreign policy are probably driven less by domestic concerns than by the changing dynamics of Soviet détente policy. That policy should be

put in the larger context of the long-standing Soviet concept of "peaceful coexistence," which had its origins in the early 1920's. Finding himself clearly without the power to precipitate a revolution in Western Europe—where he had expected it—Lenin designed a new strategy. In dealing with the advanced industrial states, he would seek correct state-to-state relations, trade and aid, and construction of a Soviet industrial base. Stalin, of course, gave this policy the label of "socialism in one country." But peaceful coexistence had another component that is sometimes forgotten: continued revolutionary struggle in what is now called the Third World and what Lenin called the "weak link" in "imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism." That policy was pursued in various forms until the start of World War II.

By the mid-1950's, Moscow returned to the original thrust of the "peaceful coexistence" policy, although initially this policy excluded West Germany. Only after the Czech crisis of 1968 and the coming to power of

⁵²In a larger sense we can establish connections between historically rooted domestic structural dynamics in the USSR and the likelihood of the USSR becoming a nonassertive status quo power. I have outlined the dynamics elsewhere and conclude that without fundamental structural change, the USSR cannot become a status quo power. See "Whither the Soviet Union?" *Washington Quarterly*, No. 4, Spring 1981. It is another question to determine at specific times whether domestic difficulties will temporarily reduce assertiveness in Soviet foreign policy behavior.

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the SPD in Bonn was Moscow able to reestablish the former broad-based approach to "peaceful coexistence" in Europe. Furthermore, the United States was drawn in as well. For a decade this alternative form of the "international class struggle" (the official definition of "peaceful coexistence") yielded considerable benefits to the USSR. The disenchantment in the United States, however, and the debt problems in East Europe have raised serious questions as to whether the policy can continue to bring Moscow the profits necessary to make it worthwhile.

To date there is no significant evidence of a fundamental Soviet review of the current form of "peaceful coexistence." Andropov is pursuing, although somewhat more aggressively, the Brezhnev policy of trying to split Europe from the United States. The German elections of 1983, bringing a Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union coalition to power, were a setback; but the deployment of Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) in Europe has not yet been accomplished and, to all appearances, Andropov will do what he can to prevent or delay it. If the missiles are deployed, then the Politburo might well begin a basic review. The inclination to do so will be all the greater if economic interaction with the West is stymied or declining, due either to Western trade policies or Soviet lack of credits. The outcome of a basic review of strategy would not be apparent for several months, or even a year or two.

What could it yield? Continuation of détente is not to be discounted. Although détente's "high-yield" years may be past, severe tensions in central Europe would not offer greater yields and modest economic gains at the present level of trade are not to be lightly thrown away. In the Third World, there are no good reasons for Moscow to draw back, except here and there for tactical purposes. The re-arming of Syria and the greater Soviet military involvement there indicate a willingness to run quite high risks of an East-West confrontation. The Iraq-Iran war grinds on, supplied largely by the USSR and its surrogates, creating what

Moscow may see as long-term "progressive developments" in Iraq and especially in Iran—the real strategic prize.

In Central America, the Soviets and Cubans seem committed to exploiting the large opening created by the Sandinist victory in Nicaragua. The danger in these two regions—the Middle East and Central America—is that Soviet success might create a backlash in the United States and a policy consensus that Soviet power projection is indeed endangering the Western international order. Thus far, however, Moscow has been able to prevent that, in part by working hard to keep the nuclear weapon and arms control issues at the center of public attention.

On the whole, the Brezhnev variant of "peaceful coexistence" still has much to offer, and its tactical and strategic "mobilism" probably will retain its appeal for Andropov. It has been an offensive strategy, and its gambits are still far from played out. The odds, therefore, seem to be on the side of a continuation of this policy, with many tactical shifts and changes as different situations require. The major worry Andropov must have is the possibility of a reemergence (in the United States in particular, but also in Europe) of a broad-based public and media reaction against Soviet policy. If the attentive public and the media became convinced that assertive projection of Soviet power, rather than the nuclear issue, is the most pressing danger to peace and stability, then NATO might well be able to offset some of the Soviet conventional military advantage, and the United States would probably allocate much larger resources to competition with the Soviet Union in the Third World. That indeed would prompt a fundamental review of foreign policy in the Kremlin.

In sum, the prospects for the post-Brezhnev era seem to be sound and fury about domestic reform accompanied by little actual change. In external policy, we can expect threats to end détente while Moscow hangs on to its economic access to the industrial West and competes more aggressively in the Third World.

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