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WHAT IS GOING ON IN THE SOVIET UNION

INTRODUCTION

WITH THE SELECTION OF MIKHAIL GORBACHEV AS GENERAL SECRETARY IN THE SPRING OF 1985, THE POLITBURO SIGNALLED ITS RECOGNITION THAT THE SOVIET UNION WAS IN DEEP TROUBLE -- ESPECIALLY ECONOMICALLY AND SPIRITUALLY -- TROUBLE THAT THEY RECOGNIZED WOULD SOON BEGIN TO HAVE REAL EFFECT ON MILITARY POWER AND THEIR POSITION IN THE WORLD. DESPITE ENORMOUS RAW ECONOMIC POWER AND RESOURCES, INCLUDING A \$2 TRILLION A YEAR GNP, THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP BY THE MID-1980S CONFRONTED A SITUATION IN WHICH AFTER NEARLY 25 YEARS OF SLIGHTLY NARROWING THE GNP GAP WITH THE UNITED STATES, THE USSR HAD ONCE AGAIN BEGUN TO LOSE GROUND ECONOMICALLY AND CONFRONTED A STEADILY WIDENING GAP TECHNOLOGICALLY AND IN VIRTUALLY ALL AREAS OF THE QUALITY OF LIFE WITH THE WEST AND JAPAN.

THE LEADERSHIP ALSO APPEARS TO HAVE RECOGNIZED THAT THE PAST QUARTER CENTURY PRODUCED IMPORTANT CHANGES IN SOVIET SOCIETY.

-- THANKS TO MODERN COMMUNICATIONS, THE POPULATION HAD BECOME LESS ISOLATED AND THUS ABLE TO REACT TO REGIME

PROPAGANDA MORE CRITICALLY AND TO COMPARE THEIR LOT WITH THAT OF OTHER PEOPLES ENJOYING A HIGHER STANDARD OF LIVING.

- EXPANDED EDUCATION BROADENED THE HORIZONS OF MANY SOVIET CITIZENS, TRANSFORMING AT LEAST A PART OF THE TRADITIONALLY PASSIVE AND INERT MASS INTO A PUBLIC OF CITIZENS WITH DIVERSE INTERESTS AND INDIVIDUAL IDENTITIES.
- IDEOLOGY DIMINISHED AS A SOURCE OF LEGITIMACY. THERE WAS A GENERAL INCREASE IN CYNICISM ABOUT THE REGIME AND ITS POLICIES, AND SPREADING SOCIAL MALAISE.
- MORE AND MORE CITIZENS BEGAN TO DROP OUT OF PUBLIC ACTIVITIES TO PURSUE PRIVATE ACTIVITY SUCH AS TRAFFICKING ON THE BLACK MARKET. THE UNOFFICIAL ECONOMY BURGEONED.
- THERE WAS A SIGNIFICANT RISE IN THE ALIENATION OF SOVIET YOUTH AND INCREASING NUMBERS OF YOUNG PEOPLE BEGAN TO ENGAGE IN VARIOUS TYPES OF UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR.

AS A RESULT OF THESE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL TRENDS, THE POLITBURO RECOGNIZED THAT THE SOVIET UNION COULD NO LONGER RISK THE SUSPENDED ANIMATION OF THE BREZHNEV YEARS, AND COALESCED

AROUND AN IMAGINATIVE AND VIGOROUS LEADER WHO COULD REVITALIZE THE COUNTRY WITHOUT ALTERING THE BASIC STRUCTURE OF THE SOVIET STATE OR COMMUNIST PARTY.

IN GORBACHEV THEY HAVE GOTTEN MORE THAN THEY BARGAINED FOR. THE EXTRAORDINARY SCOPE OF HIS INITIATIVES, HIS ENERGY, AND HIS WILLINGNESS TO BREAK WITH PAST PRACTICES, HAS PROMPTED DEBATE NOT ONLY AT HOME BUT IN THE WEST AS TO GORBACHEV'S ULTIMATE OBJECTIVES. WITH ALL THE SPECULATION, IT IS WORTH TAKING A BRIEF LOOK AT WHAT IS GOING ON -- WHAT HE ACTUALLY HAS DONE AND WHAT IT MEANS.

STRENGTHENING THE LEADERSHIP AND HIS POSITION

A STRONG MAJORITY OF THE POLITBURO CLEARLY SUPPORTS THE NEED FOR MODERNIZATION AND GORBACHEV'S LEADERSHIP. EVEN SO, HE HAS HAD ENORMOUS DIFFICULTY MAKING CHANGES IN THE POLITBURO -- WITH HIS MOVES PROMPTING NEAR REVOLT IN THE MOSCOW PARTY STRUCTURE AND A VIOLENT RESPONSE IN KAZAKHSTAN. AT THIS POINT, ONLY THREE MEMBERS OF THE POLITBURO CAN BE REGARDED AS TRUE GORBACHEV LOYALISTS. MOST OF THE OTHERS, WHILE IN BASIC SYMPATHY WITH THE NEED TO MODERNIZE, HAVE THEIR OWN INDEPENDENT POWER BASES AND UNDOUBTEDLY DISAGREE AT ONE POINT OR ANOTHER WITH BOTH THE PACE AND THE SCOPE OF GORBACHEV'S PROPOSED REFORMS.

REJUVENATION OF THE ELITE

BELOW THE POLITBURO LEVEL GORBACHEV HAS JETTISONED THE BREZHNEV POLICY OF PROVIDING JOB SECURITY TO VIRTUALLY ALL OFFICIALS IN THE PARTY AND GOVERNMENT AND HAS SIGNIFICANTLY RAISED THE STANDARDS OF PERFORMANCE EXPECTED OF THOSE OFFICIALS. THERE HAVE BEEN LARGE SCALE PERSONNEL REPLACEMENTS.

- OF THE ELEVEN OTHER PARTY SECRETARIES, NINE ARE NEW GORBACHEV APPOINTEES.

- 59 OF 105 MEMBERS OF THE USSR COUNCIL OF MINISTERS ARE NEW SINCE GORBACHEV ASSUMED POWER.

- HE HAS APPOINTED TWELVE NEW DEPUTY CHAIRMEN OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OUT OF FOURTEEN.

- 47% OF THE OFFICIALS IN THE AGRO-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX HAVE BEEN REPLACED.

THE MOST SERIOUS OPPOSITION TO GORBACHEV APPEARS TO BE IN THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE WHERE, DESPITE CONSIDERABLE TURNOVER, MOST MEMBERS STILL ARE BREZHNEV-ERA HOLDOVERS WHO FEEL PERSONALLY THREATENED BY GORBACHEV'S CHANGES. BEYOND A SENSE OF PERSONAL JEOPARDY, HOWEVER, MANY BELIEVE HIS POLICIES ARE

INHERENTLY MISTAKEN AND BAD FOR THE COUNTRY, THAT THEY ARE NOT IDEOLOGICALLY SOUND, AND THAT THEY COULD THREATEN PARTY CONTROL. GORBACHEV HAS COMPLAINED PUBLICLY ABOUT ATTITUDES IN THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE BEING A BRAKE ON PROGRESS. HE IS ATTEMPTING IN SEVERAL WAYS TO CURB THIS OPPOSITION, INCLUDING THE CONVENING OF A PARTY CONFERENCE NEXT YEAR WITH THE POWER TO CHANGE THE COMPOSITION OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

TO SAY THE LEAST, GORBACHEV'S VIEW THAT MODERNIZATION OF THE ECONOMY CANNOT TAKE PLACE WITHOUT REVITALIZATION OF THE PARTY AND LEADERSHIP IS IMMENSELY THREATENING TO MILLIONS OF SOVIET BUREAUCRATS GROWN COMFORTABLE AND COMPLACENT IN THE BREZHNEV YEARS.

MODERNIZATION OF THE ECONOMY

ALTHOUGH BY 1985 GORBACHEV HAD BEEN ON THE POLITBURO FOR SIX YEARS AND A CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBER FOR 14 YEARS, HE NOW ADMITS THAT WHEN HE BECAME GENERAL SECRETARY HE UNDERESTIMATED THE SEVERITY OF THE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS AFFLICTING THE SOVIET UNION. ACCORDINGLY, HE SEEMS TO BE INCREASINGLY RECEPTIVE TO MORE RADICAL PROPOSALS FOR CHANGE. MANY OF HIS REMARKS OVER THE PAST YEAR SHOW INCREASING FRUSTRATION OVER THE LIMITS IMPOSED ON HIS FREEDOM OF MANEUVER BY THE STALINIST-ERA COMMAND ECONOMY DOGMA HE HAS INHERITED.

GORBACHEV'S VIEW OF ECONOMIC MODERNIZATION, IN MY OPINION,
HAS MUCH IN COMMON WITH THAT OF PETER THE GREAT:

- ECONOMIC MODERNIZATION IS VIEWED FOREMOST AS ESSENTIAL TO INCREASING RUSSIA'S MILITARY STRENGTH.
- MODERNIZATION OF OTHER ASPECTS OF SOCIETY IS SEEN AS NECESSARY TO ECONOMIC MODERNIZATION.
- TECHNOLOGY AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE ARE NEEDED FROM THE WEST.
- DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVES INTENDED TO FACILITATE MODERNIZATION ALSO SERVE TO DIMINISH THE CHANCES OF WESTERN CHALLENGES DURING A DIFFICULT TRANSITIONAL PERIOD.
- MODERNIZATION AND EVEN REFORM ARE NOT SYNONYMOUS WITH LIBERALIZATION. THE STRUCTURES OF AUTOCRACY (AND TOTALITARIANISM) ARE LEFT IN PLACE AND EVEN STRENGTHENED.
- THE WEST IS ENCOURAGED TO BELIEVE THAT INTERNAL CHANGES MEAN RUSSIA IS AT LAST EVOLVING TOWARD A EUROPEAN-STYLE SYSTEM OF GOVERNING.

UNLIKE PETER THE GREAT, LENIN OR STALIN, GORBACHEV CANNOT USE MASS TERROR AT WILL TO IMPOSE HIS PROGRAMS WITHOUT LOSING HIS JOB. HE APPEARS TO BELIEVE HE WILL BE IN POWER LONG ENOUGH THAT, OVER TIME, HE WILL BE ABLE TO OVERCOME RECALCITRANT POWER CENTERS, INDIVIDUALS AND BUREAUCRATIC OBSTRUCTIONISM TO CARRY OUT THE FULL SWEEP OF MEASURES TO MODERNIZE THE ECONOMY AND SOCIETY.

ESSENTIALLY, WE SEE A TWO STEP APPROACH. INITIALLY, GORBACHEV IS RELYING ON A COMBINATION OF MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN PARTY CONTROL, IMPROVE WORKER ATTITUDES, AND WEED OUT INCOMPETENCE -- WHAT HE REFERS TO AS "HUMAN FACTOR" GAINS. THE MOST VISIBLE AND DRAMATIC PART OF THESE EFFORTS HAS BEEN HIS CAMPAIGNS FOR DISCIPLINE AND AGAINST CORRUPTION AND ALCOHOLISM. THESE MEASURES HAVE HAD A POSITIVE IMPACT AND ARE INTENDED, ONE MIGHT SAY, TO "KICK START" THE ECONOMY -- TO INCREASE PRODUCTIVITY AND GNP SIMPLY THROUGH HARDER AND MORE DISCIPLINED WORK FOR TWO OR THREE YEARS UNTIL MOMENTUM CAN BE SUSTAINED BY THE SECOND STEP -- GENUINE IMPROVEMENTS IN INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTIVITY THROUGH MODERNIZATION OF THE COUNTRY'S PLANTS AND EQUIPMENT.

IMPROVED WORKER DISCIPLINE AND PRODUCTIVITY, AS WELL AS GOOD LUCK, MADE 1986, THE FIRST FULL YEAR OF GORBACHEV'S STEWARDSHIP, A GOOD ONE IN TERMS OF ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE. SOVIET GNP GREW BY MORE THAN 4%, THE HIGHEST RATE IN A DECADE.

update

INDUSTRY, THE FOCUS OF HIS MODERNIZATION EFFORT, ALSO RECORDED ITS BEST GROWTH IN A DECADE. THERE WAS RECORD FARM OUTPUT, INCLUDING THE LARGEST GRAIN HARVEST SINCE 1978.

AT THE SAME TIME, A NUMBER OF CONTRADICTIONS AND PROBLEMS HAVE BECOME APPARENT THAT LIKELY WILL SPELL TROUBLE FOR GORBACHEV'S ECONOMIC PROGRAM OVER THE LONGER TERM. FOR EXAMPLE, DESPITE NEW LAWS AND POLICIES THAT HAVE BEEN PASSED AND ARTICLES THAT HAVE BEEN WRITTEN, MANY OF HIS INITIATIVES HAVE NOT GONE BEYOND FLOATING IDEAS. OTHERS HAVE RECEIVED EITHER NO NEW RESOURCES TO MAKE IMPLEMENTATION POSSIBLE OR HAVE BEEN UNDERTAKEN AS EXPERIMENTS OR RESTRICTED TO A FEW NARROW CATEGORIES. FURTHERMORE, THERE IS NO VIABLE, INTEGRATED PLAN FOR MODERNIZATION. RATHER, WE SEE MANY INDIVIDUAL PROGRAMS BEING ADVANCED, EACH DEALING WITH A SINGLE ISOLATED FACET OF THE ECONOMY AND WITH LITTLE ATTEMPT TO COORDINATE THEM.

MOST IMPORTANT, SIGNIFICANT RESISTANCE TO HIS EFFORTS HAS SURFACED IN THE MASSIVE GOVERNMENT AND PARTY BUREAUCRACY, PARTICULARLY AMONG ENTERPRISE MANAGERS WHO COMPLAIN THAT THEY ARE BEING ASKED TO CARRY OUT CONFLICTING GOALS SUCH AS RAISING QUALITY STANDARDS AND PRODUCTION AT THE SAME TIME. INDEED, THE NEW QUALITY CONTROL STANDARDS ALREADY ARE PROVING ENORMOUSLY AND PERHAPS PURPOSELY DISRUPTIVE, WITH STATE INSPECTORS REJECTING AS MUCH AS 80% OF PRODUCTION AT SOME FACTORIES. THE MESSAGE TO ENTERPRISES IS THAT THE OLD STYLE OF MANAGEMENT WILL NO LONGER WORK.

GORBACHEV'S PROGRAM APPEARS TOO AMBITIOUS ON A NUMBER OF
COUNTS:

- A HIGH GROWTH RATE AND IMPROVED QUALITY ARE NOT READILY COMPATIBLE OBJECTIVES. INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION GOALS, FOR EXAMPLE, ARE TOO HIGH TO ALLOW FOR A SLOW DOWN IN PRODUCTION TO INSTALL NEW MORE TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED EQUIPMENT.
- DESPITE CONSIDERABLE RHETORIC, NONE OF THE PROPOSALS SO FAR GREATLY CHANGES THE SYSTEM OF ECONOMIC INCENTIVES THAT DISCOURAGE MANAGEMENT INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE.
- A SHARP DECLINE IN SOVIET HARD CURRENCY EARNING IN 1986 (THE RESULT OF FALLING OIL PRICES AND THE DEPRECIATION OF THE DOLLAR) WILL LIMIT MUCH NEEDED SPECIALIZED IMPORTS FROM THE WEST.
- FINALLY, FOR A MODERNIZATION DRIVE THAT DEPENDS IN SUBSTANTIAL MEASURE ON HARDER WORK, THERE WERE FEW REWARDS FOR SUCH WORK IN 1986. UNSATISFIED CONSUMER DEMAND IS REFLECTED IN CONTINUING LONG LINES IN STATE STORES AND RISING PRICES IN THE COLLECTIVE FARM MARKETS.

*Machine tool
industry*

WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS OF ALL OF THIS? GORBACHEV HAS HAD SOME ECONOMIC SUCCESS, BUT HIS ABILITY TO MOVE AHEAD AND PROMOTE SUBSTANTIAL MODERNIZATION IS HIGHLY UNCERTAIN. IN MANY WAYS HE HAS ALREADY MADE THE EASY GAINS IN ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE AND PERCEIVES THAT THE CAUTIOUS CHANGE THUS FAR UNDERTAKEN WILL BE INADEQUATE TO ACHIEVE HIS GOALS. THUS, HE IS LIKELY TO TAKE MORE AND MORE RADICAL MEASURES AND DISRUPTIVE REFORMS IN ORDER TO MAKE FURTHER PROGRESS. THIS, IN TURN, WILL GENERATE FURTHER OPPOSITION AND CONTROVERSY.

POLITICAL REFORM

THERE HAS BEEN A GOOD DEAL WRITTEN ABOUT PROPOSALS FOR DEMOCRATIZATION WITHIN THE PARTY AND CHANGES IN PROCEDURE THAT GIVE THE APPEARANCE OF GREATER DEMOCRACY. GORBACHEV HIMSELF, AT THE JANUARY CENTRAL COMMITTEE PLENUM, CALLED FOR SECRET BALLOTS AND MULTI-CANDIDATE ELECTIONS FOR PARTY OFFICES UP TO AND INCLUDING THE LEVEL OF REPUBLIC FIRST SECRETARY. BUT THERE IS NO THOUGHT OF CHANGING THE ONE PARTY SYSTEM OR OF POLITICAL PLURALISM. IN A PUBLICIZED ELECTION RUN IN ONE REGION, FOR EXAMPLE, THE CANDIDATES WERE NOT EVEN GIVEN AN OPPORTUNITY TO SET FORTH THEIR VIEWS BUT SAT MUTELY THROUGH THE PROCEEDINGS -- AS ONE SPECIALIST PUT IT, LIKE TWO PRIZE PIGS AT AN AUCTION. INDEED, ONE MAJOR MOTIVE OF SUCH MOVES IS PROBABLY TO BRING PRESSURE TO BEAR ON LOWER LEVEL OFFICIALS TO GET WITH

THE GORBACHEV PROGRAM BY THREATENING TO RUN RIVAL CANDIDATES
SELECTED BY MOSCOW AGAINST THEM.

THERE HAVE BEEN OTHER PROPOSALS AND INITIATIVES AS WELL,
BUT THEY REMAIN MOSTLY TALK. THE SYSTEM OF ELITE PRIVILEGES
AND PATRONAGE REMAIN ESSENTIALLY INTACT AND GORBACHEV HIMSELF
HAS MADE CLEAR THAT THE PRINCIPLE OF DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM --
THAT OFFICIALS AT LOWER LEVELS DO AS THEY'RE TOLD BY OFFICIALS
AT HIGHER LEVELS -- REMAINS UNCHANGED.

OPENNESS/GLASNOST

GLASNOST, OR "OPENNESS," -- THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF CANDOR AND
CRITICISM IN THE SOVIET MEDIA AND GREATER FREEDOM IN THE ARTS
-- IS ONE OF GORBACHEV'S MOST INTERESTING AND DANGEROUS
INITIATIVES. I SEE SEVERAL MOTIVES BEHIND IT.

-- IT ENABLES THE REGIME TO COMPETE WITH FOREIGN AND OTHER
UNOFFICIAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION. SINCE THE
POPULATION WILL HEAR ABOUT RIOTING IN KAZAKHSTAN AND
THE DISASTER AT CHERNOBYL ANYWAY, GORBACHEV BELIEVES IT
IS BEST TO PRINT THE NEWS AND PUT AN OFFICIAL SPIN ON
IT.

-- GLASNOST IS BEING USED TO PILLORY OFFICIALS GORBACHEV
HAS TARGETED AND TO PRESSURE THEM TO GET WITH THE
PROGRAM.

- IT IS BEING USED TO HIGHLIGHT SOCIAL PROBLEMS HE WANTS TO ATTACK -- SUCH AS ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG ABUSE -- IN ORDER TO MOBILIZE SOCIETY BEHIND HIS CAMPAIGNS.

- BY ALLOWING UNORTHODOX CULTURAL WORKS TO APPEAR, GORBACHEV IS HOPING TO REDUCE THE INCENTIVE TO BYPASS OFFICIAL ORGANS AND PUBLISH MATERIALS IN THE UNDERGROUND PRESS.

- HE HOPES TO USE THE ATMOSPHERE OF GREATER OPENNESS TO COOPT INTELLECTUALS AND PARTICULARLY ENGINEERS AND SCIENTISTS TO BE FULL PARTNERS IN THE ATTEMPT TO MODERNIZE THE ECONOMY -- TO OVERCOME THEIR CYNICISM.

- FINALLY, HE INTENDS TO LEGITIMIZE BROADER DISCUSSION OF PROBLEMS AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS THAN PERMITTED HERETOFORE IN ORDER TO BREAK THE BACK OF DOMESTIC RESISTANCE AND INCREASE HIS ROOM FOR MANEUVER AT HOME.

TO KEEP GLASNOST IN PERSPECTIVE, IT IS IMPORTANT TO OBSERVE THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO DIRECT CRITICISM OF GORBACHEV PERSONALLY, HIS LEADERSHIP, OR HIS ALLIES. SIMULTANEOUSLY, UNDER HIS AUTHORITY, THERE HAS BEEN INTENSIFIED REPRESSION OF UNOFFICIAL CHANNELS OF INFORMATION. WITH RARE EXCEPTIONS, ONLY THOSE IN AGREEMENT WITH THE CENTRAL THRUST OF GORBACHEV'S POLICIES ARE ALLOWED TO VOICE THEIR VIEWS. NONETHELESS, THE

PUBLICATION OF DIVERSE AND CRITICAL INFORMATION, AS WELL AS SOME WESTERN COMMENTARY AT VARIANCE WITH OFFICIAL SOVIET VIEWS, HAS BEEN REMARKABLE AND HAS LED TO CONTROVERSY OVER THE POLICY ITSELF. INDEED, GORBACHEV HAS SET LOOSE FORCES THAT WILL BE IMMENSELY DIFFICULT AND PAINFUL TO LEASH -- AS MUST HAPPEN AT SOME POINT.

IMPLICATIONS

LET ME CLOSE WITH SEVERAL OBSERVATIONS ABOUT GORBACHEV.

-- FIRST, IT IS CLEAR THAT HE HAS A SENSE OF DIRECTION BUT NO REAL STRATEGY. INDEED, HE HIMSELF HAS SAID THAT REFORM WILL BE CONDUCTED "ON THE MARCH, AS WE GO ALONG." HE IS FEELING HIS WAY; THERE ARE NO PRECEDENTS OR GUIDELINES TO REDUCE THE RISKS OR HELP HIM AVOID MISTAKES.

-- SECOND, IT IS EVIDENT THAT WHEN HE RUNS INTO RESISTANCE OR TROUBLE, HE TENDS TO RAISE THE STAKES. WHILE HE PICKS HIS FIGHTS CAREFULLY AND IS QUITE CALCULATING, IT IS ALSO CLEAR THAT HE IS A RISKTAKER. HE KNOWS HE IS POLARIZING THE PARTY AND IS AWARE THAT THE STAKES ARE HIGH IN HIS STRUGGLE TO SHAKE UP THE SYSTEM.

- THIRD, GORBACHEV HAS ABANDONED BREZHNEV'S POLICY OF GIVING EVERYONE A LITTLE PIECE OF THE PIE TO KEEP ALL HAPPY AND INSTEAD HAS DECIDED TO FOCUS ON SATISFYING ONLY THOSE ELEMENTS OF SOVIET SOCIETY IMPORTANT TO HIM -- IN OTHER WORDS, A WAGER ON THE STRONG, THOSE WHO PRODUCE.

- FOURTH, BY THE END OF THE DECADE, THE COMPETITION FOR RESOURCES BETWEEN THE MILITARY AND THE CIVILIAN SIDE OF THE ECONOMY WILL BECOME INTENSE AND COULD ENDANGER GORBACHEV'S ECONOMIC MODERNIZATION PLANS.

- FIFTH, WHILE THE ACTUAL DEGREE OF CHANGE IN BOTH THE ECONOMY OR POLITICAL LIFE OF THE SOVIET UNION IS MODEST AT THIS POINT, WHAT GORBACHEV ALREADY HAS SET IN MOTION REPRESENTS A POLITICAL EARTHQUAKE. HE HAS PULLED ALL OF THE LEVERS OF CHANGE IN A SOCIETY AND CULTURE THAT HISTORICALLY HAS RESISTED CHANGE -- AND WHERE CHANGE USUALLY HAS BEEN VIOLENT AND WRENCHING. THE FORCES HE HAS SET IN MOTION ARE POWERFUL BUT SO ARE THE PEOPLE AND INSTITUTIONS HE HAS ANTAGONIZED -- THUS SETTING THE STAGE EITHER FOR DILUTED AND THUS marginally EFFECTIVE CHANGE OR A TREMENDOUS POWER STRUGGLE. MY PERSONAL VIEW IS THAT JUST AS STALIN HAD TO PURGE THE PARTY TO BUILD THE EXISTING SYSTEM, SO TOO MUST GORBACHEV IF HE IS TO CHANGE IT -- BUT HE CAN ONLY FIRE, NOT KILL.

WHETHER HE WILL DO IT AND GET AWAY WITH IT IS THE BIG UNKNOWN.

WHEN YOU COME DOWN TO IT, THEN, IS IT IN OUR NATIONAL INTEREST FOR GORBACHEV TO SUCCEED OR FAIL? I BELIEVE THE ANSWER DEPENDS UPON WHAT YOU THINK ARE HIS OBJECTIVES AT HOME AND ABROAD. AND WE CAN SAY A GOOD DEAL ABOUT THOSE OBJECTIVES FROM WHAT GORBACHEV ALREADY HAS DONE.

FIRST, HIS ACTIONS ABROAD.

-- DURING A PERIOD OF CHANGE, TENSION AND SOME VULNERABILITY AT HOME, GORBACHEV CLEARLY IS TRYING TO KEEP THE INTERNATIONAL FRONT BENIGN FROM THE SOVIET STANDPOINT. IT IS A REFLECTION OF HIS PERSONALITY AND INGENUITY THAT HE IS ATTEMPTING TO DO THIS THROUGH AN AGGRESSIVE STRATEGY, WITH AN AMAZING ARRAY OF ARMS CONTROL INITIATIVES, NEW SOVIET INITIATIVES AIMED AT NEGOTIATING A BORDER SETTLEMENT WITH CHINA, SHAM WITHDRAWALS OF FORCES IN AFGHANISTAN AND THE APPEARANCE OF SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS AIMED AT FINDING A WAY OUT OF SOVIET INVOLVEMENT THERE, AND OVERTURES TO ISRAEL UNPARALLELED IN TWENTY YEARS, TO MENTION ONLY FOUR. GORBACHEV CLEARLY HAS DECIDED THAT THE BEST DEFENSE IS A GOOD OFFENSE.

-- AT A TIME OF ECONOMIC STRINGENCY AT HOME, IT IS REVEALING OF HIS PRIORITIES THAT THE SOVIET UNION IS CONTINUING TO POUR INTO ITS SURROGATES HUGE SUMS OF MONEY THAT MAKE CLEAR ITS CONTINUING COMMITMENT: LAST YEAR NICARAGUA RECEIVED OVER \$1 BILLION IN MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE; CUBA CONTINUES TO GET AROUND \$5 BILLION PER YEAR; THE SOVIETS HAVE PUT ALMOST \$4 BILLION INTO ANGOLA SINCE EARLY 1984; IN 1986 THE SOVIETS OFFERED VIETNAM NEARLY \$1 BILLION IN ECONOMIC CREDITS. HE HAS NO INTENTION TO ALLOW SOVIET ADVANCES ABROAD TURN INTO RETREAT.

-- AT THE SAME TIME, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN SEVERAL YEARS IT APPEARS THAT SOVIET MILITARY SPENDING GREW LAST YEAR AS INVESTMENTS WERE MADE IN PLANT AND EQUIPMENT FOR NEW WEAPON SYSTEMS. MOREOVER, SOVIET RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS FOR NEW WEAPON SYSTEMS AND THE PRODUCTION OF WEAPONS HAVE EXPANDED SINCE GORBACHEV TOOK POWER.

IN SUM, GORBACHEV'S PREOCCUPATION WITH ECONOMIC MODERNIZATION AND REFORM AT HOME HAS NOT LED TO A SLACKENING OF SOVIET RESOLVE TO DEFEND AND TO EXTEND ITS FORWARD OUTPOSTS AROUND THE WORLD. NOR HAS IT LED TO A SHIFT OF RESOURCES AWAY FROM THE MILITARY. WHILE WE EXPECT GORBACHEV TO BE CAUTIOUS IN TAKING ON NEW THIRD WORLD CLIENTS, THE NOTION THAT HE WOULD

FOREGO NEW OPPORTUNITIES WOULD BE INCONSISTENT WITH HIS OWN BEHAVIOR AS WELL AS WITH SOVIET HISTORY.

FURTHERMORE, WHILE ECONOMIC MODERNIZATION IS INTENDED TO MAKE THE USSR MILITARILY COMPETITIVE IN THE LONG TERM, THE SUPREME IRONY MAY BE THAT THE ONGOING PROCESS OF MODERNIZATION WILL LIKELY BENEFIT THE MILITARY ALSO IN THE SHORT TERM MORE THAN THE CIVILIAN SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY. THE DEFENSE INDUSTRIES ARE IN A BETTER POSITION TO ASSIMILATE MODERNIZATION THAN THEIR CIVILIAN COUNTERPARTS. ALSO, THE DEFENSE ESTABLISHMENT WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE TO HAVE MORE CLOUT FOR OBTAINING HIGH QUALITY RESOURCES THAN THE CIVILIAN MINISTRIES -- ESPECIALLY IF GORBACHEV CONTINUES TO WEAKEN THE LATTER.

AND WHAT OF GORBACHEV'S OBJECTIVES AT HOME? HIS MODERNIZATION OF THE ECONOMY AND OTHER MEASURES COULD BE ACCLAIMED IF GORBACHEV WERE INTENDING TO MOVE THE SOVIET UNION AWAY FROM MARXISM-LENINISM AND ITS TOTALITARIAN STRUCTURE, IF TERMS SUCH AS "DEMOCRATIZATION" AND "OPENNESS" HAD ANY REAL MEANING IN A SOVIET CONTEXT, IF PREOCCUPATION WITH DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENT MEANT THE BETTERMENT OF THE LIVES OF THE PEOPLE IN THE SOVIET UNION AND LESS FOCUS ON MILITARY FORCES. NOTHING IN SOVIET HISTORY NOR IN GORBACHEV'S BACKGROUND OR PERFORMANCE TO DATE SUGGESTS HE HAS THESE OBJECTIVES IN MIND OR COULD ACHIEVE THEM EVEN IF HE DID.

WHILE THERE ARE MANY EXAMPLES OF AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES EVOLVING TOWARD DEMOCRACY -- SUCH AS WE HAVE SEEN REPEATEDLY IN SOUTH AMERICA IN RECENT YEARS -- THERE ARE NO SUCH EXAMPLES OF THE SAME KIND OF CHANGE IN A TOTALITARIAN COMMUNIST STATE, NO MATTER HOW SMALL. INDEED, THE EFFORT TO MODERNIZE IN HUNGARY AND CHINA ARE INSTRUCTIVE. IN BOTH CASES, THE TOTALITARIAN STRUCTURE HAS REMAINED IN PLACE AND REFORM HAS GROUND TO A HALT WHEN IT REACHED THE POINT OF CHALLENGING THE COMMUNIST PARTY'S MONOPOLY ON POWER. GORBACHEV PRESENTS TOTALITARIANISM WITH SOME LIMITS AND WITH A HUMAN FACE BUT IT IS STILL ESSENTIALLY TOTALITARIANISM. WE MUST NOT MISLEAD OURSELVES OR ALLOW OURSELVES TO BE MISLED INTO BELIEVING OTHERWISE.

change from above.

THAT SAID, THERE IS MORE OPEN POLITICAL CONFLICT AND DEBATE IN THE SOVIET UNION NOW THAN AT ANY TIME IN A GENERATION. ADVOCATES OF SLOW CHANGE AND ADVOCATES OF FORCED MODERNIZATION ARE CLASHING IN A STRUGGLE FAMILIAR IN RUSSIAN HISTORY. GORBACHEV IS, IN MY JUDGMENT, CUT FROM THE HANDFUL OF RUSSIAN AND SOVIET LEADERS OVER THE CENTURIES DETERMINED TO MODERNIZE THAT VAST COUNTRY, ^{*whatever the cost human and material cost.*} THE AS YET UNANSWERABLE QUESTION IS WHETHER HE HAS THE POLITICAL SKILL, MANAGERIAL TALENT, AND ABOVE ALL, THE RUTHLESSNESS TO CHANGE THE HOUSE THAT STALIN BUILT AND HOW MUCH HE CAN CHANGE IT BEFORE THREATENING THE PARTY ITSELF.

HOW THEN DO I ANSWER WHETHER IF IT IS IN OUR INTEREST FOR GORBACHEV TO SUCCEED OR FAIL? I BELIEVE THAT TO THE DEGREE HE

IS EVEN MODESTLY SUCCESSFUL -- AND HE IS HAVING SOME SUCCESS --
THE UNITED STATES WILL FACE A FAR MORE DYNAMIC AND DANGEROUS
ADVERSARY IN THE 1990S AND BEYOND: A MILITARILY MORE POWERFUL,
DOMESTICALLY MORE VITAL AND POLITICALLY MORE ADROIT SOVIET
UNION WHOSE ^{long term} AGGRESSIVE OBJECTIVES ABROAD AND TOTALITARIANISM AT
HOME REMAIN ESSENTIALLY UNCHANGED. WE ARE IN FOR QUITE A RIDE;
SEEING REALITY CLEARLY -- THE OPPORTUNITIES AS WELL AS THE
DANGERS -- WILL BE AN EXTRAORDINARY CHALLENGE FOR THE WESTERN
DEMOCRACIES IN THE YEARS AHEAD.