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Developments In Eastern Europe.

Eastern Europe is so much in flux that it is becoming a misnomer to speak of the Soviet Bloc--what we see is a region increasingly divided by political, ideological, economic, and even long-dormant national and ethnic quarrels. [ ]

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In Poland, the non-Communist Mazowiecki (Mazo-VYET-ski) government has more public support than any Polish regime in four decades and is moving ahead with an impressive array of economic and political reforms. The problems it must face, however, make success uncertain.

- Economic reforms aimed at replacing Poland's failed command system with a market economy are already underway. They entail, however, sharp reductions in subsidies to unprofitable state enterprises--actions that will lead to unemployment and higher prices and likely trigger opposition from workers and consumers.
- The government has begun to cut back censorship, reduce the security police and ensure the independence of judges, but Communist Party members continue to occupy key positions throughout the bureaucracy and could undercut the reform process.

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In Hungary, the former Communist party, now named the Socialist Party, has virtually collapsed. It rules in name only, with a government of technocrats led by Premier Nemeth and an independent-minded National Assembly filling the power vacuum. The party's best hope in next year's open parliamentary elections is to emerge as the junior partner in a coalition government.

- The chances of its candidate for president, reformer Imre Pozsgay, have been hurt by the recent referendum that postponed the election for several months.
- The major political conflict is now between two opposition parties, the Democratic Forum and the Free Democrats, both of which hope to play the big role in guiding Hungary's transition to democracy.
- Hungary's emergence as a state committed to Western and nationalist values raises doubts about its

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continued membership over the longer term in the Warsaw Pact. [REDACTED]

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The process of change is transforming Central Europe almost beyond recognition. East Germany's Communist regime is on the verge of collapse in the wake of last weekend's resignation of the entire party leadership and the expulsion from the party and arrest of many former leaders.

- Roundtable talks between the Communists, the opposition and the Protestant Church are now underway [since 7 December] and will quickly focus on the issue of free elections; an agreement will probably be reached to hold them next Spring.
- Even if the Communist party reorganizes itself and changes its name at its December congress, its electoral prospects are extremely dim. To capitalize on his popularity, Premier Hans Modrow probably will stand as an independent. [REDACTED]

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The changes in East Germany have increased pressure for reunification within both Germanys.

- West German Chancellor Kohl recently proposed a 10 point Confederation program that has been widely endorsed in West Germany and has elicited a positive response from two of the small allied parties and one opposition group in the GDR.
- Over half of the slogans at the most recent Leipzig demonstration called for reunification, and the main GDR opposition group New Forum, which has rejected reunification, is increasingly split over the issue.
- As a last resort, the current GDR government probably will endorse a confederation that also ensures the GDR's legal existence as a separate state, but it may be unable to stay ahead of a changing public mood that apparently is swinging towards a plebiscite on German unity. [REDACTED]

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In Czechoslovakia, the party is fragmenting and losing power rapidly. Hardliners are still clinging to power, but several reform groups are trying to force leadership and policy changes.

- General Secretary Karel Urbanek (Karl OOR-bah-nek) may move up the date for the extraordinary party congress now scheduled for January, when a new reform-oriented Central Committee could be elected.

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- The Civic Forum is condemning the recently-announced government with non-Communist participation, and has announced plans to field a combined slate of candidates in free elections likely to take place by July 1990. [redacted]

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Even Bulgaria has been caught up by the revolutionary changes sweeping Eastern Europe.

- New party leader Petur Mladenov (MLAD-e-noff) has implemented some piecemeal political reforms, and probably will go further at a Central Committee session this week [week of 11-15 December].
- The long subservient Agrarian Party--which held power in pre-Communist Bulgaria--is openly challenging the Communist monopoly on power. [redacted]

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In Romania, orthodox party leader Nicolae Ceausescu (Chow-SHESS-koo), re-elected to a five-year term as General Secretary at the recent party congress, continues vehemently to reject Gorbachev-style reforms.

- Although odds favor his dying in office--he is 71 and supported by a powerful and ruthless security apparatus--it is possible that the hatred his tyranny has engendered, his regime's growing international isolation, and the example of popular uprisings elsewhere in Eastern Europe could eventually spark his overthrow; this could be violent and occur with little warning. [redacted]

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Yugoslavia--East European, but not a Bloc member--faces a severe economic and political crisis. Premier Markovic (MAR-koh-veech) is trying to implement extensive free market reforms, but progress is likely to be modest. Debate over the introduction of greater political pluralism and republican autonomy is heating up amid rising ethnic tensions. [redacted]

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