

**United States Policy Towards Eastern Europe  
Under Reagan Administration,  
1981—1988**

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**VISMITA TEJ**

**CENTRE FOR AMERICAN AND WEST EUROPEAN STUDIES  
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES  
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY  
NEW DELHI-110067, INDIA**

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जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय  
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY  
NEW DELHI - 110067

CERTIFICATE

Certified that the dissertation entitled  
"UNITED STATES POLICY TOWARDS EASTERN EUROPE UNDER  
REAGAN ADMINISTRATION, 1981-1988" by Miss Vismita Tej  
in partial fulfilment for the award of the Degree of  
Master of Philosophy has not been previously submitted  
for any other degree of this or any other university.  
To the best of our knowledge this is a bonafide work.

We recommend that this dissertation be placed  
before the examiner for evaluation.

  
Prof. R.P. Kaushik  
Supervisor

  
Prof. R. Narayanan  
Chairman  
Centre for American and  
West European Studies,  
School of International  
Studies.

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PREFACE

## PREFACE

The United States policy towards Eastern Europe has largely been viewed against the backdrop of the extension of the Soviet influence and its paramount interest in the region. The occupation by the Soviet forces of most East European countries during the Second World War and its subsequent turnover towards communist regimes has been the focal point of the US policy.

American policy planners have shown considerable interest in preserving the security of Western Europe in the post World War-II period. Likewise the Soviets showed their strategic and geopolitical interest in East Europe. Consequently, both the superpowers have made their periodic attempts towards undermining each other's influence in their respective domains.

No doubt the East European problem received considerable attention during the Carter Administration. But it was during the Reagan Administration that a concrete shape was given to its policy of 'differentiation' towards the East bloc. There was a decoupling of Eastern European policy from the Soviet policy of the United States.

America's prime intent has been to promote greater autonomy for the East European regimes from Moscow and to enhance a more cooperative relationship with the West.

The present dissertation starts with a historical sketch of the cold war setting, the emergence of the two superpowers, the formation of the two blocs - the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (1949) and the Warsaw Treaty Organization (1955) as a response to NATO. The first chapter highlights the United States reluctance to accept the Sovietization of Eastern Europe.

The second chapter brings out the efforts that the U.S. policy makers made to dismantle the Soviet influence in Eastern Europe.

The third chapter concentrates on the extension of the "differentiation" policy towards Eastern Europe during the Reagan Administration. It has been a modest attempt to highlight the fact that the Administration was a major turning point in the U.S. policy towards these countries.

The balance sheet deals with the policy outcomes especially in relation to two key areas in the U.S.-East

Europe relations - trade and emigration. The conclusion stresses that Washington policy makers during the Reagan era, were considerably influenced by their posture towards the Soviet Union in formulating their East European policy. The method in this dissertation is descriptive and analytical.

While preparing this dissertation, I am grateful to many whose experience and knowledge have helped me tremendously.

I owe my heartiest gratitude to my Supervisor, Professor R.P.Kaushik. His constant support, critical analyses and constructive suggestions have helped me a great deal. He has been my source of inspiration and my association with him has made me a wiser person.

I thank all those eminent academicians whose books and articles have provided me with a perspective on the subject and a deep insight into the problem. I heartily thank the staff of the JNU Library, the IDSA library and the IIFT Library. My very special thanks goes to the staff of the USIS Library without whose help it would have been difficult for me to get the primary source materials that I have utilised.



I express my warm thanks to Deba, Poonka, Abani, Pinky, Sanghamitra and Anita, but for whose help this dissertation would have been found wanting in many more respects.

I thank my friends, Sibbu, Amulya, Rumi, Bapi, Sumana, Rashmi, Bhaijaan and Aveen who have served me in many ways by just standing beside me.

My sincere thanks are also due to Mr. Malhotra, the typist, for giving me this neat and presentable type scripts.

I take this opportunity to express my love and gratitude to my Maa, Baba, my brother Bapi and sister Kunu whose constant encouragement and support has made me what I am. My special thanks to Satya who stood by me and inculcated confidence in me.

NEW DELHI  
20<sup>th</sup> July, 1990.

Vismila Tej  
(VISMILA TEJ)

CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION : GENESIS OF THE COLD WAR : U.S. AND  
WARSAW PACT

During the peace negotiations with Great Britain (1782), John Adams wrote in his diary regarding the future relationship of the American Republic with the European political system thus:

'You are afraid', says Mr. Otis today, 'of being made the tool of the powers of Europe' 'Indeed I am', says I 'what powers?' said he. 'All of them', said I. 'It is obvious that all the powers of Europe will be continually maneuvering with us, to work us into their real or imaginary balances of powers. They will all wish to make of us a make weight candle, when they are weighing out their powers. Indeed, it is not surprising, for we shall very often, if not always, be able to turn the scale. But I think it ought to be our rule not to meddle.(1)

This was the traditional isolationist policy of the US. But something quite 'different' began to appear in the American diplomacy about 1890. The 'something' that happened in the nineties was a major shift in the manner of thinking about and executing American foreign policy, the old isolationist policy was replaced by the making of a "real" policy in international affairs.<sup>2</sup>

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1 John Adams as quoted in Gordon A. Craig, "United States and the European Balance", in William P. Bundy, ed., Two Hundred Years of American Foreign Policy (New York: New York University Press, 1977), p. 67.

2 Robert L. Beisner, "A Shift in Paradigm", in Thomas G. Paterson, ed., Major Problems in American Foreign Policy, Vol. I to 1914, (Massachusetts: D.C. Heath and Company, 1989), p. 354.

The developments visible in these directions were a growing American domination over the Caribbean, the beginning of a continuous US interest and presence in East Asia, the acquisition of an extra-territorial empire, and the emergence of the US as a world power.<sup>3</sup>

The first imperialistic thrust of the US was in 1898 when US and Spain went to war over Cuba. The US demanded and achieved from Spain the cession of the Philippines, Guam and Puerto Rico and independence for Cuba. At about the sametime the US annexed Hawaii and Wake Island. By the Treaty of Peace signed in Paris on December 10, 1898, the US acquired not "territories" but possessions or "dependencies" and became in that sense "a colonial power".<sup>4</sup>

Next, the US aimed its policy towards the creation of protectorates in the Caribbean, Cuba, Panama, the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua and Haiti became the special

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3 Ibidem.

4 Julius W. Pratt, Vincent P. De Santis, Joseph M. Siracusa, A History of United States Foreign Policy (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1980), p. 184. What made the US a colonial power was that, for the first time, in a treaty, acquiring territory for the United States, there was no promise of citizenship. As in the case of Alaska, there was no promise of statehood.

recipients of American 'protection'. The establishment of protectorates took the guise of "preventive intervention" which Theodore Roosevelt, in his celebrated "corollary" message of December 1904, sought to justify merely as an application of the Monroe Doctrine.<sup>5</sup>

Besides the Caribbean and the Far East (Roosevelt's 'Opendoor' policy towards China), the US was also considerably interested in the developments in Europe. In particular it was lending its support to efforts for the peaceful settlement of international disputes. When the World War I broke out, Wilson issued a formal proclamation of neutrality, but he could not control and compel neutrality in the American opinion. Public opinion tended to be pro-Ally. But when in 1915 the German submarines attacked American ships and American lives were in danger, the US was brought almost to the verge of intervention. After the World War I, America intervened, not militarily, but to bring about peace in the war shattered Europe, US played a leading role in bringing about the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. Wilson's most conspicuous success at the Conference was the adoption of the covenant of the

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5 Ibid., p. 195.

League of Nations. But the American Senate rejected the Treaty of Versailles - it was as if the United States had renounced the war but spurned the peace machinery.<sup>6</sup>

All these developments are a pointer to the fact that though America was not indifferent to the developments in Europe, yet it never did commit itself. But with the advent of the second world war, situation so warranted that the US was forced to take up a definite stance, that eventually led to the division of the whole world into two rival blocs.

#### Second World War and its aftermath

As distinct from its participation in the World War I (the US had described itself as an "associated power" and not one of the Allies), the United States played a leading role as a part of the "grand alliance". The US involvement in the second world war was clear and total.

Japan's attack on Pearl Harbour, concretised the US policy of interventionism. In his fireside chat to the American people on December 9, 1941, President Franklin

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6 Ibidem.

D. Roosevelt asserted that isolationism had been a mistake, there could be no security from attack in a world ruled by gangsters.<sup>7</sup>

Keenly aware of the realities of power, Roosevelt knew that the United States and the Soviet Union would emerge from the war as the world's two most powerful nations. If they could stay together, no third power could prevail against them. If they could not, the world would be divided into two armed camps, a prospect too horrible to contemplate. But the negative alternatives became a reality in the post-war years.

It was the aftermath of the war and the subsequent disagreement in regard to various agreements between the powers, led to the cold war. But the roots of the cold war, the inherent dislike and hatred between the two divergent ideologies lies way back during the Bolshevik revolution. The United States had applauded the overthrow of the Czar in 1917. But her enthusiasm turned into dislike and suspicion when the Bolsheviks, led by Lenin

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7 J.L. Gaddis, The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941-47 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), p.1.

and Trotsky, seized power in November and made a separate treaty with Germany<sup>8</sup>. Their adoption of a formal program of world revolution was also unpalatable to the Americans. Thus the US had withheld its recognition of Communist Russia. Russia was granted recognition only in 1933. Stalin's slogan of "Socialism in one country" helped eradicate the fear of a "world revolution" as propounded by Trotsky.

Till 1939, Russian-American relations were not so bitter. But events in that and the following year turned American sentiments violently against the Soviets. Stalin's pact with Hitler, Russia's occupation of eastern Poland and the Baltic states of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia as well as its attack against Finland, alienated the Soviets from the Americans. But in Russia's war against Nazi Germany, it was the United States and Great Britain who came to Russia's help. Following this, there were endless friction between the two powers - like the delay in opening of the second front in Europe, over the use of bases in Soviet territory, over the liberated prisoners of war and such like matters.

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8 Pratt, n. 4, p. 364.



During the war American policies centered around the belief that post war cooperation was possible between the Soviet Union and the United States. Therefore, in his public declarations, President Roosevelt consistently underlined his confidence in Stalin and the Soviet leaders.<sup>9</sup> Roosevelt was also prepared to accept the fact that it would be a fundamental error to put too much pressure on Russia over other regions vital to her security. Thus in September and October 1944, and early January 1945 he entered into armistice agreements with Britain and Russia which gave Soviet military almost complete control of internal politics in each Eastern Europe ex-nazi Satellite.<sup>10</sup> Even before the war was over, it became apparent that Western and Soviet conceptions of the future of Eastern Europe and Germany tended to diverge significantly.

Even today, many commentators are convinced that the problems of Germany and Eastern Europe remain the principal obstacles to a Soviet-American detente and

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9 Geir Lundestad, The American Non-Policy Towards Eastern Europe, 1943-47 (New York : Humanities Press, 1975), p. 108.

10 W.Lafeber, ed., The Origins of the Cold War 1941-1947: A Historical Problems with Interpretations and Documents (New York : John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1971), p. 18.

were the principle causes of the cold war.<sup>11</sup>

Eastern Europe was the area of dispute which placed most strain on Soviet - American cooperation during the war time period.<sup>12</sup> After the war Poland constituted the most controversial problem which was detrimental to the Allied Unity. Apart from the value attached to this single country by all the three Great powers, to American policy-makers it had essential symbolic functions. Poland symbolized both the extent to which the Soviet Union would tolerate independent governments in all of Eastern Europe and how far the Soviet leaders were prepared to cooperate with the United States and Britain in international affairs in general.<sup>13</sup>

It is difficult to assess the role of Eastern Europe in regard to the development of the cold war. Washington had given priority to other areas over Eastern Europe. With this background it would be difficult

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11 Cecil V. Crabb, Jr, American Foreign Policy in the Nuclear Age (New York: Harper and Row, 1983), p.295.

12 Lundestad, n. 9, p. 107.

13 For Poland's Symbolic Functions see U.S. Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States: Annual Volume, 1945 (Washington, D.C : GPO, 1946), pp. 232-33, 235-36, 240, 252-55, 302.

indeed to assess as to how Eastern Europe figured as a basis for the post-war Soviet - American conflict. The Soviet - American conflict over Eastern Europe area was because of the relevance of this area to the development of the Soviet - American dispute rather than to the general importance of that area for US policy-makers.<sup>14</sup>

The Warsaw uprising in 1944 led to marginal changes in the American policy towards Poland, but at the same time it served as a massive influence on the evaluations of Soviet policies. Besides Poland, events in Romania (1945) in particular, but also in Bulgaria and Hungary played an increasingly important role in Soviet American relations. The Kremlin's attitude towards the Warsaw uprising as well as its attitude towards the events taking place in Romania and Bulgaria, reactivated dormant fears of Soviet expansionism.

But at this juncture the Yalta Conference dispelled for a while some of the increasing scepticism.

#### The Yalta Conference:

The 1940 'Katyn Forest Massacre', the August 1944

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14 Lundestad, n.9, p. 107.

'Warsaw uprising' became the main items of the Big Three Conference at Yalta in the Crimea in February 1945.<sup>15</sup> Washington officials knew what they wanted in Eastern Europe: maximum possible self-determination for the people of that region without impairing the unity of the Grand Alliance. Unfortunately these two goals - both fundamental elements in the American program for preventing future wars - conflicted with each other. Confronted with the actual or impending occupation of Eastern Europe by the Soviet Red Army, Churchill and Roosevelt endeavoured to secure guarantees from Stalin concerning respect for the political freedom of the countries in that region. In a "Declaration on Liberated Europe", the Big Three pledged to "support interim governmental authorities broadly representative of all democratic elements in the population".<sup>16</sup>

At the Yalta conference four principal subjects occupied the time of the conference:

1. details of the proposed United Nations Organization;
2. the treatment of defeated Germany
3. restoration of self-government in the countries of Eastern Europe, now occupied in whole or in part by Russian armies.

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15 Lundestad, n.9, p. 296.

16 Ibidem.

4. the terms of Russia's entry into the war against Japan.<sup>17</sup>

Hardly had the heads of state left Yalta than controversies erupted among them over the meaning of the agreements reached at this conference and more specifically over Soviet behaviour in Eastern Europe. As always, American officials were especially concerned about Moscow's political moves in Poland. The new President, Harry Truman, said in his 'Memoirs' that shortly after he entered the White House, the 'full picture' of what was happening in Eastern Europe became clear:

'The plain story is this: we and the British wanted to see the establishment in Poland of a government truly representative of all the people. The tragic fact was that, though we were allies of Russia, we had not been permitted to send one observer into Poland. Russia was in full military occupation of the country at the time and had given her full support to the so-called Lublin government - a puppet regime of Russia's own making.'<sup>18)</sup>

No single act of President Roosevelt had been so severely criticized than this agreement. William Henry

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17 Pratt, n.4, p. 377.

18 Cited in Lundestad, n.9, p. 299.

Chamberlain criticized the Yalta agreement which he thought "grossly violated the Atlantic Charter by assigning Polish territory to the Soviet Union and German territory to Poland without plebiscites."<sup>19</sup>

#### Post Yalta Years : the Cold War Phenomenon

As we have seen, post-war developments in Eastern Europe undermined the Allied Unity. This was more particularly so with the US position vis-a-vis the Soviet Union. The long perceived notion that Eastern Europe could be preserved as a suitable model for western democracy, could not be realised. There had been indigenous communist movements in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Yugoslavia, but external thrust of the Soviet Union in these States became a main point of suspicion and distrust on the part of the United States.

The Soviets on the other hand, could not leave the adjacent territory of Eastern Europe - termed as 'soft belly', totally unattended. Stalin had no misgivings on that account. From the available records of Yalta Conference and subsequent memoirs of important diplomats

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19 W.H. Chamberlain, America's Second Crusade (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1950), p.220.

it became clear that Soviet Union would maintain a strong position in these states.

The rapidity of unfolding events abroad in the wake of the surrender of Germany in April and Japan in August 1945, forced the American policy planners to reconsider their position in International affairs with particular and arguably unaccustomed urgency.

The fact that the United States and the Soviet Union emerged dominant in the post-war world provided one way of interpreting the origins of the cold war. The logic of political realism suggests that conflict between the emergent superpowers would inevitably result in a cold war confrontation vis-a-vis each other. Every ideological movement breeds its antithesis - thus US foreign policy became ideological - it pursued the ideology of anti-communism. The results were a seemingly unending series of situation defined as cold war incidents.

With the growing Russian imposition of totalitarian regimes upon areas under its control, the Washington officials were convinced that a change in American policy

towards the Soviet Union was imperative. On the basis of this analysis of Soviet policy motivation, early in 1947, the Truman Administration committed the United States to a strategy of "containment" for countering Soviet expansionism moves. Regarded as the formulator of America's policy of containment, George F. Kennan became one of the State Department's leading Kremlinologist. In his *Memoirs*, Kennan is of the opinion that Moscow saw an opportunity to complete what it had begun with the Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939: the establishment of its power in Eastern Europe. By the end of 1944, it was clear to Kennan that Moscow was committed to the goal "of becoming the dominant power of Eastern and central Europe". In another essay written in May 1945, Kennan analyzed Soviet policy in this region in terms of two objectives: gaining western "recognition" of Soviet control over the region and obtaining American aid for Russian rehabilitation and economic progress.<sup>20</sup>

In order to bolster the security of the non-communist world, the United States sponsored and joined a number

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20 George F. Kennan, *Memoirs, 1925-1950* (New York: Bantam, 1967), p. 531-32.



of alliance systems. American policy planners have shown considerable interest in preserving the Security of Western Europe in the post world war-II period. Thus the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was formed in 1949.

Hence the United States developed, after 1945, policies towards East Central Europe which tended to be based not on the inherent worth of the region as an American interest, but on American opposition to Soviet power in the international system. American policy toward East Central Europe has, thus, tended to be a function of American policy toward the Soviet Union.<sup>21</sup>

A succinct encapsulation of American policy can be found in the partially declassified N.S.C. 58/2 of December, 1949. The memorandum, entitled "United States Policy toward the Soviet Satellite states in Eastern Europe", declares:

These states are in themselves of secondary importance on the European scene. Eventually

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21 Scott McElwain, "The United States and East Central Europe: Differentiation or Detente?", East European Quarterly (Boulder, Colorado), vol. 21, no.4, January 1988, p. 452.

they must play an important role in a free and integrated Europe, but in the current two world struggle they have meaning primarily because they are in varying degree politico-military adjuncts of Soviet power and extend that power into the heart of Europe. They are part of the Soviet monolith. It is assumed that there is general agreement that, so long as the USSR represents the only major threat to our security and to world stability, our objective with respect to the USSR's European Satellites must be the elimination of Soviet control from those countries and the reduction of Soviet influence to something like normal dimensions (22)

This N.S.C. 58/2 made official the abandonment of the American "Non-policy" and led to a more assertive application of measures to counter Soviet influence in East Central Europe. But contemporary historians differed in their assessment of American policy towards Eastern Europe. Some were of the view that the United States, "by its forthright challenge of the practices of people's democracy might have given Eastern Europe's peoples some needed moral encouragement", another expressed the fear that "repeated ineffectual protests may weaken the position of the United States".<sup>23</sup>

Another group of writers, prominent among them being

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22. Cited in *ibid.*, pl 452.

23 Cited in Bennett Kovrig, The Myth of Liberation, East Central Europe in U.S. Diplomacy and Politics, Since 1941 (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1983), pp. 87-88.

James A. Huston, have attributed the origins of the cold war to the mistakes committed by the United States. In his article "Fifteen Great Mistakes of the Cold War", Huston brings forth some such mistakes.<sup>24</sup>

The Cold War incidents taking the shape of the American involvement in and growing commitment to the cold war, the establishment of NATO, a formal alliance aimed at containing perceived Soviet aggression and the subsequent creation of the strategy of encirclement through such organizations as NATO, CENTO, SEATO and eventually ANZUS, contributed towards the growing Eastern European fears regarding a threat from the West. In view of this the Soviet Union tried its best to maintain its position in Eastern Europe and commit all its efforts to this effect. Thus came into being the Warsaw Treaty Organization(WTO)

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24 For details see - J.A. Huston, 'Fifteen Great Mistakes of the Cold War', World Affairs (Washington, D.C.) Summer 1988, vol 151, no.1, pp. 35-47, Yalta has been frequently blamed for the loss of Poland, but it was more the failure to implement the provisions. American troops hastily pulled back before the free Polish elections were held. The position of Berlin was another trouble spot. The division of Berlin simply put into the hands of a potential adversary, a hostage. Whenever the Russians wanted some concession they just had to "heat up Berlin". The US and its allies compounded the mistake by not insisting upon guaranteed access. Similarly during the Budapest uprising of 1956, United States did not do anything serious about it. At least, it should have been possible for the US to have sent significant material assistance. Military and economic aid to Greece in 1947-1948 had enabled the Greeks to turn back the treat of communist domination there.

in 1955.

Politically, the Warsaw Pact was deliberately modelled on NATO. The Pact was signed in the capital of Poland on May 14, 1955. This multilateral military alliance system in Eastern Europe was announced by Moscow as a response to West Germany membership in NATO.<sup>25</sup> The true reason for the Warsaw Pact which brought this system into being more probably was the desire of the USSR to obtain legal justification for stationing its troops in East-Central Europe. The Pact also provided an additional legal basis for the continued presence of Soviet troops in Poland and in the so called German Democratic Republic. The Warsaw Pact is characterized as a necessary instrument for legitimizing Soviet influence in Eastern Europe and for providing an institutional mechanism through which the Soviet Union restrains its allies and prevents domestic changes.<sup>26</sup>

The status of the Soviet Union as a superpower depends on military force and that preservation of the buffer zone is essential, hence, the importance of preserving the Warsaw

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25 Richard F. Starr, 'The Warsaw Treaty Organization,' in Francis. A. Beer. Alliances: Latent War Communities in the Contemporary World ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., New York, 1970) p. 159.

26 Arlene Idol Broadhurst, The Future of European Alliance Systems: NATO and the Warsaw Pact ed., (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1982), p. xiv.

Pact as a means of organizing the zone.

The concept of coercion had often been applied to the formation of the Warsaw Pact, thus implying that the Eastern Europeans had no fear of attack from the west and that they became allies of the Soviet Union only in response to the threat of invasion by Soviet armed forces. But Ivan Volgyes in his article, 'The Warsaw Pact: A Study of vulnerabilities, Tension and Reliability', is of the view, that the system that exists in Eastern Europe is an alliance based on two contradictory elements: (1) imposed rule by a great power that determines both the political context of the domestic environment and the limits of its change on the one hand, and (2) a system of mutualities and mutual benefits of military - economic relations on the other. The stress and tension existing between these contradictions is the dynamics upon which the alliance system must operate.<sup>27</sup>

Since 1945 the overriding Soviet foreign policy objective in Europe had been to protect the Western

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27 Ivan Volgyes, "The Warsaw Pact: A Study of vulnerabilities, Tension, and Reliability" in Arlene Idol Broadhurst, (ed.), The Future of European Alliance Systems: NATO and the Warsaw Pact (Boulder, Colorado : Westview, 1982), p. 155.

approaches to the USSR. Soviet leaders have pursued this objective in two complementary ways: by dominating Eastern Europe and by attempting to keep western Europe - especially Germany weak, divided and covered by Soviet power. Though unsuccessfully Moscow had elicited some degree of American support for this policy. It also relied upon the domestic clout of the Western European communist parties to prevent the pursuit of anti-Soviet policies. The Warsaw Pact was brought into being primarily with these policy intentions serving as a backdrop. It was said that the Pact existed only on paper. But with the gradual decrease in the Soviet influence in Western Europe, the tone of the Pact changed from one of defence to one of offense: Moscow was increasingly forced to rely upon the military instrument as its principal means of influence.

The Warsaw Treaty Organization was at first devised and regarded by the USSR as a defensive alliance, the forward area of which would provide a buffer and absorb the anticipated NATO attack. This attitude, however, had undergone a drastic transformation in the course of the qualitative build up of the East European armed forces.<sup>28</sup>

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28 Broadhurst, n. 27, p. 164.

The United States response to the Warsaw Pact was marked in the subtle change of strategy during the Eisenhower regime. Containment came to be defined also as preventing extension of Soviet influence which might occur without armed aggression. After 1950, it became increasingly the overt policy of the United States to contain the Soviet Union by preventing any extension of Communist influence.<sup>29</sup> John Foster Dulles, as Eisenhower's Secretary of State called upon the Organization of American States(OAS), to adopt a resolution which declared the international communist movement as a threat to the security of the United States of America.

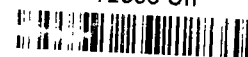
Before the formation of the Warsaw Pact, United States policy of containment seemed to centre around an effort to create barriers to the spread of communism which were mainly of an economic, social and political nature. But after the formation of the Warsaw Pact, the policy of United States underwent a change in the sense that it concentrated on preserving the military frontiers behind which conditions not favourable to subversion would develop.

29 For an excellent analysis of this see E.R. May, "The Cold War" in J.S. Nye, Jr., The Making of America's Soviet Policy (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), pp. 209-31.

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Eastern Europe is one area in the international politics system where the United States has experimented with various contradictory strategies in order to bring forth changes in the Soviet system. The United States was very much aware of the realities of Soviet power and the existence of the Warsaw Pact. After the Warsaw Pact, there was a subtle change in the United States policy of "roll-back" towards Eastern Europe. John Foster Dulles, once a staunch advocate of this policy, took up something like Kennan's 'selective containment' once he became the Secretary of State. As opposed to his "massive retaliation" policy, this policy was "the adroit and vigilant application of counterforce at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points, corresponding to the shifts and maneuvers of Soviet policy."<sup>30</sup> It was the United States policy to help the cause of liberating the "captive nations" of Eastern Europe. But in reality it was unable to do so. After the Soviet Union was successful in nipping the Budapest uprising in its bud in 1956, United States became more convinced as to the policy it should follow.

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30 Strobe Talbott, "Social Issue" in J.S. Nye, Jr., The Making of America's Soviet Policy (New Haven : Yale University Press, 1984), p. 191.



The best possible way that the United States could help the people of Eastern European countries was to avoid provocative policies in regard to these countries which would give the Soviet Union an opportunity to assert itself. By its policy of "benign neglect" United States was convinced that it could help the East European countries to distance themselves substantially from the Soviet Union.

Thus, the core of the cold war in Europe was Soviet domination of Eastern Europe. Moscow had imposed unwanted and illegitimate communist regimes on countries that, if free to choose would have governments much more like those in Western Europe. More important, Soviet domination of Eastern Europe threatened American Security. The American military commitment to Western Europe was based on the fear that without it the Soviet Union would do to France, Italy, the Benelux countries what it had already done to Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and East Germany.

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CHAPTER - II

THE U.S. EFFORTS TO DISMANTLE THE SOVIET  
INFLUENCE

## EARLY YEARS

The paramount influence of Soviet Union on Eastern Europe has been a well acknowledged fact. U.S policy makers took it as a challenge to "American values" that the Soviet Union had imposed communist regimes on these countries.

More important, the United States policy makers perceived the Soviet domination of Eastern Europe as a source of potential threat to American security. This perception had justified American military commitment to Western Europe. The United States felt that ending the cold war required ending the Soviet threat to Western Europe. This would require ending Soviet domination of Eastern Europe, which meant allowing the people of that part of the world to decide freely how to govern themselves.<sup>1</sup> It had been the U.S constant efforts for several years to promote greater autonomy for the countries of East Europe and to bring about a more cooperative relationship with the Western bloc.

Stephen Larrabee, The Director, Centre of East

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1 Michael Mandelbaum, "Ending the Cold War" Foreign Affairs (New York), vol.68, no.2, Spring 1989, p. 21.

West Studies, New York, pointed out that the postwar US policy towards Eastern Europe could be divided into distinct phases, many of which coincided with the advent of different Administrations.

The Truman Doctrine firmly established the United States policy of containment, but at the same time it had implicitly recognized Eastern Europe as the Soviet 'sphere of influence'. It was left up to the Eisenhower administration to think in terms of 'liberating Eastern Europe with a "rollback" of Soviet power.'<sup>2</sup> It was during the administration of President Eisenhower, that his Secretary of State John Foster Dulles raised new hopes that the "captive peoples" of Eastern Europe would be liberated. It was during this administration that Eastern Europe, the cold war and fighting communism became synonymous with each other.

But the Eisenhower administration's policy stance of "rolling back" the 'iron curtain' was more of a rhetoric than a concrete policy. The Eisenhower

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2 Larrabee, "'Roll back' in East Europe", Contemporary Review (London), vol. 253, no. 1475, December 1988, p. 282.

administration never really addressed the problem of how Eastern Europe was to be liberated short of employing force.<sup>3</sup> A concrete proof of this was the American stance during the Hungarian crisis of 1956.

### Hungarian Crisis

In order to trace the roots of the Hungarian uprising, one has to fall back on the changes generated after the death of Stalin. Immediately after Stalin's death in 1953, his successors channeled their policies towards realizing East West relations and redirecting it towards uncommitted nations. At the same time they attempted to have a rapprochement with Yugoslavia and to govern the countries of the communist bloc more through consent than through sheer force. Khrushchev's famous "de-Stalinization" speech to the 20th Party Congress in February, 1956, was an integral part of this new policy.<sup>4</sup> Khrushchev's speech triggered off a

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3 F.S. Larrabee, "Eastern Europe: A Generational Change" Foreign Policy (Washington, D.C.), no.70, Spring 1988, p. 43.

4 For details regarding his speech, refer to Walter Lafeber, "Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union" in Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., ed., The Dynamics of World Power: A Documentary History of United States Foreign Policy, 1945-1973 vol.II, (New York: Chelsea House Publishers and McGraw Hills, 1973), pp. 529-50.

chain reaction in the East European bloc. These reactions generated violent conditions that were fast deteriorating. It had reached such a climax that Khrushchev was relying upon Tito and even some communist Chinese diplomats to contain the ferment in the bloc. Violent riots in Poland were suppressed by the armed forces. Wladislaw Gomulka, a former Secretary general of the Communist Party of Poland, who had earlier been thrown out of the party for professing the ideology of liberalism, was brought back within the folds of the party to placate the dissenters. But the force with which Gomulka's de-Stalinization program catapulted into prominence, forced Khrushchev to travel to Warsaw in order to slow down the process. But the Soviet leader was rebuffed and as an immediate result of this defeat, a reaction triggered off in the neighbouring country of Hungary. Hungarian students led demonstrations out in the streets with demands to establish a more liberal Hungarian government. This demonstration which started off in an orderly fashion, later on took the ugly complexion of a riot.

Initially, the Soviet policy maker hesitated to react to this situation in Hungary. But precisely at this moment an incident took place which gave the Soviet

policy makers ample opportunity to react to the crisis. On October 29, 1956, war flared in the middle East between Israel, France and Great Britain on the one side and Egypt on the other. This war was an immediate crisis that confronted the United States policy makers. So the United States devoted only a marginal interest to the developments in the East European bloc in general and Hungary in particular.<sup>5</sup> This was the opportunity that the Soviet Union was waiting for. The Soviet army moved quickly into Hungary and crushed the budding uprising with military might.

The United States failure to react to the situation more concretely generated heavy criticisms from all fronts. The United States probably took no military action for fear of precipitating a nuclear war with the Soviet Union. There was even a general impression that the United States was responsible for sponsoring the Hungarian revolt and this impression was enhanced by an appeal to Marshall Bulganin from President Eisenhower

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5 Ibid., p. 551.

who urged the Russian Premier to withdraw the Soviet forces from Hungary and permit the people to exercise their rights in freedom. In a letter to Premier Nikolai A. Bulganin, President Eisenhower stated:

"The declaration of the Soviet Government of October 30, 1956, which re-stated the policy of non-intervention in internal affairs of the states was generally understood as promising the early withdrawal of Soviet forces from Hungary. Indeed in that statement the Soviet Union said that 'it considered the further presence of the Soviet army units in Hungary can serve as a cause for an even greater deterioration of the situation'. This pronouncement was regarded by the U.S. Government as an act of high statesmanship. But an apparent reversal of this policy took place. It is ironical that this renewed application of force against the Hungarian government and people took place while the negotiations were on between the representatives of the Soviet Union and the Hungarian Government regarding the withdrawal of the Soviet forces<sup>(6)</sup>

That the United States was not completely aloof from the developments taking place in Hungary is clear from the statement issued by President Eisenhower.

It has been consistent United States policy, without regard to political party, to seek to end this situation (of using military force

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6 Letter from President Eisenhower to Premier Nikolai A. Bulganin. Cited in *ibid.*, p.564



to impose on the nations of East European governments) and to fulfill the wartime pledge of United Nations that these countries, overrun by wartime armies, would once again know sovereignty and self-government.(7)

But the passive reaction underscored both the hollowness of the rollback idea and the dangers of any efforts directly to dislodge the Soviets from Eastern Europe.

The Policy of bridge-building:

The so-called 'failure' of the United States policy of 'roll-back', had brought about widespread dissent. After the Hungarian crisis, a complete reorientation of the United States' policy towards Eastern Europe was called for. As a result of 'de-stalinization' it was felt in Washington during the 1960s that U.S. government should adhere to the policy that would establish individual equation with countries of Eastern Europe.

This policy, which was firmly established during the Johnson administration, had its roots in the period of the Kennedy administration. As compared to the Presidency of Eisenhower, President Kennedy's policy

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7 Cited in *ibid.*, p. 558-59.

towards Eastern Europe was less confrontational and less rhetorical.<sup>8</sup> Kennedy relied more on economic and cultural agreements rather than on military confrontation to weaken the Soviet hold over the East European bloc. With a backdrop of de-Stalinization and the impact of Kennedy coming to power, seemed to be just the ingredients for preparing for a break in the cold war.

During the initial phase of his administration America's relations with Eastern Europe began to normalize as the crises in Cuba, Berlin and Laos began to fade away. But the administration's attempt to take positive initiatives in Eastern Europe were stalled by the Congressional restrictions on US and trade policies in the region.<sup>9</sup>

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8 A.Paul Kubricht, "United States - Czechoslovak Relations during the Kennedy Administration" in Eastern European Quarterly (Boulder, Colorado), vol. 23, no.3, September, 1989, p. 355.

9 For the Administration's response to Congressional attempts to cut off aid to Eastern Europe see, "Letter from McGeorge Bundy, Special Presidential Assistant for National Security Affairs, to Senator Mike Mansfield", June 6th 1962, In Richard P. Stebbens, ed., Documents on American Foreign Relations 1962 (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, Harper, 1963), pp. 205-6.

In 1964, President Johnson spoke of 'building bridges' of understanding across "the gulf which had separated us from Eastern Europe" and in 1966 he proposed the expansion of peaceful trade between the United States and Eastern Europe.<sup>10</sup> Zbigniew Brzezinski, who was then a member of the Policy Planning Staff of the State Department, was the most articulate spokesman of this policy of 'bridge-building'.

The policy of bridge-building encouraged a rethinking of America's European policy. This policy was sought to provide a solution to the German problem, the problem of the post war division of Germany. This policy had produced the conviction that the division of Germany could only be overcome within a broader canopy of East-West reconciliation. It was established that the East-West reconciliation would lead to the reunification of Germany and not the other way round. The United States policy thus became compatible with that of the West Germany to develop "openings to the East".<sup>11</sup> Stephen

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10 Department of State (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1981) Statement by Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, p. 549.

11 M.H. Armacost, The Foreign Relations of the United States (California: Dickenson Publishing Company, 1969), p. 186.

Larrabee in his article criticized this policy of the United States and pointed out that this arrangement had 'excluded' the German Democratic Republic and 'bypassed' the Soviet Union. Consequently Moscow felt that its hegemony in Eastern Europe was being threatened. So the policy makers in the Soviet Union had vehemently opposed this stance.<sup>12</sup>

The Prague spring of 1968, highlighted the limitations of the 'bridge - building' policy of the United States. A new government in Czechoslovakia formed by Alexander Dubcek had attempted to reorganize the nation's economy, intellectual life and politics on more liberal lines. This was during the early months of 1968.

The process of liberalization brought about by Dubcek was flagrant to the interests of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union felt it was a threat to its hegemony that the Czechoslovakian government began negotiating with the West (especially the United States and West Germany) for massive economic aid. The

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<sup>12</sup> Larrabee, n. 2, p. 283.

possibility of bringing forth a multiparty system was also discussed.

It was at this point that the Soviet policy makers thought it crucial for its own national interest to put an end to fuller liberalization and westernization of Czechoslovakia. With an aim to crush the upsurge, the Soviet troops including the troops of the Warsaw Pact countries (with the only exception of Romania) moved into Prague and other Czechoslovakian cities.<sup>13</sup>

That the United States and its Western allies were willing to offer economic aid to Czechoslovakia, was regarded by the Soviet Union as subversive action by the 'imperialists' to counter socialism with different and more 'insidious tactics'. This was stressed by Leonid Brezhnev in his speech to the Polish United Workers Party at Warsaw in December, 1968. Consequently this came to be stated as the Brezhnev Doctrine (or doctrine of 'limited sovereignty') which stated,

...the Soviet Communist Party would take upon itself the obligation to

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13 Tass Communique on the Soviet - Czechoslovak agreement after the Invasion of Czechoslovakia in New York Times, 5 October 1968.

protect other parties from deviation  
which could lead to deviation from  
socialism as such... (14)

The immediate impact of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia were two fold:

1. The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia prevented a possible trip by President Lyndon Johnson to the Soviet Union and postponed discussions on the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks.
2. Besides the above tension between the two superpowers, the invasion of Czechoslovakia resulted in tightened Soviet control over other countries belonging to the East European bloc.

It was made perfectly clear to the policy planners in the U.S. that there existed a complete fiasco on the policy of 'bridge-building'. It firmly led to the belief that the Soviet Union was a determining factor in evolving the US relations with the countries of the Eastern bloc. This implied that any form of detente the US hoped to

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14 For details regarding Brezhnev's speech, see Current Digest of the Soviet Press, (Columbus, Ohio) vol. 20, December 4, 1968, pp. 3-5.

achieve with Eastern Europe would be preceded by a detente with the Soviet Union. The only positive development that was in favour of the US was the rich propaganda harvest that it reaped in the international condemnation of Moscow's decisions.

The futility of the 'bridge-building' policy contributed to a major shift in the American policy towards Eastern Europe. When Richard Nixon took up the mantle of Presidentship he firmly established the fact that it was not possible to try to improve relations with the Soviet government, while at the same time trying to encourage the nationalistic upsurges of its allies.<sup>15</sup> So general efforts at detente were made by the two super-powers. A congenial atmosphere made it possible for initiating the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). It was a process which culminated in the Helsinki Final Act of 1975.

The Helsinki Final Act of 1975:

The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe

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15 Stephen S. Rosenfeld, "The Captive Nation" in International Herald Tribune (Paris), 8 August 1974.

played a key role in establishing guidelines for US relations with Eastern Europe particularly in the area of humanrights.<sup>16</sup> Viewed in a broader perspective, the Helsinki Declaration marked the progress of 'detente' between the United States and the Soviet Union as well as between West Europe and East Europe. The era of detente had managed to achieve something that had been thought of as next to impossible. The notable achievement was that the Communist and the non-communist blocs ceased to emphasize ideological differences. It thus paved the way for following pragmatic policies.

Thus the Helsinki Act, signed by 35 countries, on 1st August, 1975, outlined the basis on which detente rested and provided a yardstick to assess each country's commitment to it.

The text of the Act was divided into sections or 'baskets'. 'Basket one' of the Final Act signed in 1975, established a voluntary code of conduct which was acceded to by all the participants. It was hereby

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16 U.S. House of Representative, 99th Congress, 1st Session, Hearings, "U.S. Interests, Issues and Policies in Eastern Europe", October 28, 1985 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1986), p. 551.



established that human rights remained a primary issue affecting United States - East European relations. 'Basket two' stressed on cooperation in the field of economics, science and technology and the environment. 'Basket three' was a record of various countries with regard to movement across borders including emigration and family visits - which remained a major bone of contention in the US - Eastern Europe relations.<sup>17</sup> Besides this, another section dealt completely with follow-up procedures, whereby each country could make its own assessment. It was through the meeting that followed that a necessary mandate for reviewing implementation as well as discussing ways in which relations could be improved, were assessed. As a result of this, the Helsinki Review Group was set up in 1977 under the auspices of the David Davies Memorial Institute.<sup>18</sup>

The draft of the document called the "Final Act", which already had been approved by the officials of the participating governments, endorsed excellent principles.

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17 For details regarding the different sections refer to *ibid.*, p. 552.

18 Times (London), 19th November, 1980.

The principles included sovereign equality of nations, respect of human rights and other related issues. Since all the principles had already been incorporated in the UN Charter, the need to reiterate them in the Summit became a key point. The objective of the Summit hence enfolded itself in terms of the inviolability of frontiers and territorial integrity of the states. The objective had clearly been to obtain a kind of ratification by the Western powers (especially the United States), of the accords (the one between East and West Germany and the other between the Soviet Union and West Germany) which accepted the existence of the two German states.<sup>19</sup> This, in effect, crystallized the division of Europe. It was because of the frontier question that this conference had been called the substitute peace conference for the Second World War. It was because of this that Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, the exiled Soviet novelist, charged President Ford in going to Helsinki to join Brezhnev in the "betrayal of Eastern Europe". He further said that President Ford "in signing this European Security Charter would be acknowledging the slavery of Eastern Europe forever".<sup>20</sup>

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19 International Herald Tribune (Paris), 26th Feb, 1975.

20 New York Times, July 22, 1975.

Viewing it from the American perspective, the trip of President Ford to Europe, which came thirty years after the Potsdam Conference at which the political geography of Europe was decided, was a symbol of hopes and risks inherent in the United States efforts to part the "iron curtain".<sup>21</sup> President Ford in his inaugural address to the European Security Conference, held that this conference would be judged "not by the promises we make but by those we keep".<sup>22</sup> He further called detente an 'evolutinary' process that must produce "better life for those on opposite sides of the line frozen across Europe in cold war".<sup>23</sup>

The implication of the Helsinki meet was phenomenal as far as it reflected a very sincere effort by the superpowers to remove the confrontational character of the cold war, even though the document was not a treaty and provisions enshrined in it were not binding. In regard to the crucial issue of bringing about a relaxation of Soviet control over Eastern Europe, it could only make a very marginal progress. Interestingly,

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21 New York Times, July 27, 1975.

22 New York Times, August 2, 1975.

23 Ibidem.

the provision pledging respect for the territorial integrity of the signatory states could be interpreted to mean that the Soviet Union had implicitly renounced the Brezhnev Doctrine of United sovereignty. But in the review of the Helsinki Pact, both in 1978 at Belgrade and in 1980 at Madrid, the Soviet Union came under heavy criticism.<sup>24</sup>

The Final Act had an unexpected impact in Eastern Europe. The Soviet Union's main aim at the CSCE had been to secure the Western recognition of its claim on Eastern Europe. But the outcome was the linkage of security with economic and humanitarian issues. The domestic repercussions were problematic for the East European governments. The governments were not prepared to meet the popular expectations raised by their signatures on the Final Act, pledging them, among other things, to allow greater freedom of expression, religion and travel to the West.<sup>25</sup> In the aftermath of the conference, a

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24 Times (London), 19 November 1980.

25 For details refer to U.S. House of Representatives, 96th Congress, 1st Session, Committee Report, U.S. Relations With the Countries of Central and Eastern Europe, prepared for the subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, U.S. House of Rep., Dec. 1979 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1980).

number of private groups were formed in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe to press for the implementation of those provisions enshrined in the Final Act . Amongst the mushrooming growth of groups the most prominent was the Charter 77 group of Czechoslovakia in 1977. Similar groups were formed in Poland, German Democratic Republic and Romania.<sup>26</sup>

The Soviet Union, above all, was reluctant to loosen its hold over its allies. With the prevailing spirit of detente, the United States was also trading carefully in its relations with the Soviet Union. Thus the policy makers in Washington felt that it was not possible to improve relations with the Soviet Union while trying openly to cultivate the nationalistic and even secessionist impulses of Moscow's allies. President Nixon was quick to grasp the implications of this.<sup>27</sup> From the United States perspective it was made clear that the road to Eastern Europe lay through Moscow and the detente with Moscow had to precede a detente with the Eastern Europe. AS

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26 See Ibid., for details regarding the various groups.

27 Rosenfeld, n. 15.

Strobe Talbott pointed out, that the best the United States could do to help the people of Eastern Europe achieve some mitigation of their captivity was to avoid any provocative policy that might give the policy makers in the Soviet Union a pretext for suppressing Eastern Europe. By subjecting Eastern Europe to a kind of "benign neglect", American policy makers thought they could subtly help the Eastern European regimes in distancing themselves from Moscow.<sup>28</sup>

One of Henry Kissinger's Chief associates Helmut Sonnenfeldt ventured a version of this idea what later on came to be known as the 'Sonnenfeldt doctrine'. Sonnenfeldt had inadvertently considered the East European bloc as an "organic" part of the Soviet Union. In his view it would be better for the United States to avoid encouraging rebellion by the East European countries to the predominance of Moscow. It was feared that such an act would lead to the Soviet intervention.<sup>29</sup>

The policy suggested that the East European countries

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28 Strobe Talbott's "Social Issues" in Joseph S. Nye, Jr., ed., The Making of America's Soviet Policy (New York: Yale University Press, 1984), p. 191.

29 International Herald Tribune (Paris), 13th April, 1976.

would strive for maintaining their identities within the Soviet orbit. Any "unnatural" relationships between the Soviet Union and the countries of the East European bloc, had the risk of leading to another global war. As Sonnenfeldt himself had said:

"We seek to influence the emergence of the Soviet imperial power by making the base more natural and organic so that it will not remain founded in sheer power alone."<sup>30</sup>

Because of this statement that Sonnenfeldt made he was accused of accepting the Soviet 'dominion'. Ronald Reagan, then an undaunted Republican, accused the Ford Administration for having endorsed the 'enslavement' of the captive people of Eastern Europe.

#### Carter's Policy:

A major turning point of the American policy towards the Eastern Europe came during the Carter regime. His policy of differentiation questioned the validity of the Sonnenfeldt doctrine. Jimmy Carter's election to the

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30 "US Policy documents on Eastern Europe leaked to the Press" in Times (London), 7th April, 1976.

Presidency in 1976 presented Zbigniew Brzezinski with an opportunity to shape American policy towards Eastern Europe. In his Memoirs in a section titled "Courting Eastern Europe", Brzezinski clearly pointed out that -

....the political diversity of Eastern Europe and our emphasis on human rights required that the broad range of policy issues be carefully reviewed and that our choices be made more explicit than they had in the past.(31)

Brzezinski stressed on a policy of giving preference to countries which were relatively more liberal and more independent of the Soviet Union. Differentiation was meant to challenge Soviet hegemony and to show that the road to Eastern Europe did not necessarily lie through the Soviet Union.

Thus, the Carter regime came to establish four priorities in its policy towards Eastern Europe:

1. Recognition and support for the individuality of each East European country in its approach to domestic and foreign policy.
2. Treatment of each nation as a sovereign country while taking into account the political and geographical realities in the area.

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31 Zbigniew Brzezinski, Power and Principle: Memoirs of the National Security Advisor, 1977-81 (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1983), p. 296.



3. Improvement of relations through the expansion of human contacts, trade, institutional cooperation and the free flow of information.
4. Recognition of the limits of US influence in the region and the need to pursue an Eastern European policy in ways that contribute to the Security of all Europe.<sup>(32)</sup>

In following this policy of differentiation, two distinct groups of states emerged within the Eastern bloc. They were distinct as far as their relation with United States were concerned. The US relations with Hungary, Romania and Poland developed rapidly while ties with East Germany, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria remained clearly more remote.<sup>33</sup>

Following the formal adoption of the policy of differentiation, many changes were clearly visible in the United States policy towards Eastern Europe. Carter visited Poland in December 1977. Relations with Hungary were normalized with the return of the Crown of St. Stephen

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- 32 US Congress, House Committee on International Relations, Sub-Committee on Europe and Middle East, 95th Congress, 2nd session, "U.S. Policy Towards Eastern Europe", September 1978(Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1979), pp. 35-39.
  - 33 "Carter Administration is Pursuing a 2-Tiered Policy Towards Eastern Europe", in International Herald Tribune (Paris), 16th Jan, 1978.

which was captured, from the Germans and retained by the United States during the Second World War. Besides, Hungary was granted Most Favoured Nations status in 1978, because of the fact that the country was undergoing a liberalization process initiated by its leader Janos Kadar. In order to advance Romania's independent foreign policy - Romania received high level attention, which was highlighted by President Nicolai Ceaucescu's visit to Washington in April 1978. Relations with Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and East Germany hardly developed. But bilateral relations with the Eastern Europe continued to increase.<sup>34</sup>

The trade relations of the United States with the countries of Eastern Europe during Carter Presidency tended to increase (See Table 1.1 enclosed). It appeared that Carter's policy towards Eastern Europe developed in a positive direction in the midst of a rapidly worsening relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union. The policy of differentiation was in a disguised form a reactivation of the containment policy so vociferously eulogised by George Kennan during the Truman Administration.

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34 "US Policy and Eastern Europe", U.S. Department of State Current Policy No. 169, April 22, 1980 (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1981), p. 2.

TABLE - 1.1 : US - TRADE WITH COUNTRIES OF EASTERN EUROPE

(In Millions of US Dollars)

COUNTRY	1977	1978	Jan - June 1979
<u>Exports:</u>			
Albania	2.2	4.5	4.2
Bulgaria	23.9	48.1	31.1
Czechoslovakia	74.0	105.4	83.2
German Democratic Republic	36.1	170.1	138.3
Hungary	79.7	97.7	41.7
Poland	436.6	677.0	274.9
Romania	259.4	317.4	259.7
Yugoslavia	357.0	474.9	379.8
<b>Total Exports</b>	<b>1,268.9</b>	<b>1,895.1</b>	<b>1,212.9</b>
<u>Imports:</u>			
Albania	3.4	3.5	5.1
Bulgaria	18.0	19.1	23.1
Czechoslovakia	36.6	58.0	24.5
German Democratic Republic	16.8	35.3	19.2
Hungary	46.6	68.5	48.4
Poland	329.1	438.9	211.6
Romania	233.3	346.6	167.5
Yugoslavia	333.0	394.6	210.2
<b>Total Imports</b>	<b>1,046.3</b>	<b>1,335.3</b>	<b>801.8</b>

SOURCE = U.S. Department of Commerce.

Cited in : U.S. House of Representatives, 96th Congress, 1st Session, Committee Report on U.S. Relations with the Countries of Central and Eastern Europe, Subcommittee on Europe and The Middle East of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, U.S. House of Rep., Dec. 1979 (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1980).

During the last year of Carter's Administration, events took place in Poland, that acted as a Litmus test to limits and wisdom of the US policy towards Eastern Europe.<sup>35</sup> The creation of Solidarity in the summer of 1980 attracted a great deal of attention from President Carter. When the Soviets deployed forces along Poland's borders in December 1980, President Carter warned that although the United States had no desire, whatsoever, to exploit the situation, yet an invasion of Poland would have the most drastic repercussion on US - Soviet relations. This stance of the American policy makers was applauded by the Poles.<sup>36</sup> The Carter administration had also gone ahead to propose a plan for a "mini Marshall aid" to Poland in order to help liberalize developments in that country.

Thus the developments that took place during the Carter Administration acted as spring board for the later developments that took place in subsequent years.

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35 J. Milewski, "Poland Four Years After", Foreign Affairs (New York), vol. 64, no.2, Winter 1985/86, pp. 337-59. Refer to this article for details regarding Poland and US policy.

36 Ibid., p. 352.

CHAPTER - III

THE UNEASY CALM : US PERCEPTIONS AND REAGAN  
ADMINISTRATION

In the aftermath of the Polish crisis of 1980-81, the Reagan Administration became a turning point in the U.S. policy towards Eastern Europe. Some analysts believed that with the departure of the Carter Administration and the exist of the National Security Advisor, Brzezinski, a wide vacuum arose in articulating American policy towards Eastern Europe. Stephen Larrabee, Director of Institute of East-West Security Studies, New York, on the other hand, suggested that the Reagan Administration had most definitely adhered to the past policy of America towards Eastern Europe.<sup>1</sup>

If differentiation continued to be the guiding concept of the US policy towards Eastern Europe, the Reagan administration had in its overall policy towards the Soviet Union, been even more willing than its predecessor to make East Europe an anti-Soviet issue.<sup>2</sup>

Ronald Reagan assumed the office at the most crucial moment in the history of East-West relations. The entire

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1. Refer to an interview with Stephen Larrabee in US News and World Report (Washington D.C.): vol. 99, no.26, December 23, 1985, p. 24.
  2. Scott McElwain, "The United States and East Central Europe: Differentiation or Detente?" East European Quarterly (Boulder, Colorado) vol. 21, no.4, January 1988, pp. 460-61.

communist bloc was poised for a massive restructuring. A complete re-thinking of United States policy was called for. Europe had changed drastically since those days when Churchill gave his famous "iron curtain" speech in 1946. In the era of detente and particularly in the aftermath of the Helsinki process, the hemispherical division of Europe was not as prominent as had existed earlier.

Reagan's first term:

Despite the fact that the Reagan administration continued the policy of differentiation towards Eastern Europe, <sup>its</sup> policy was generally based on hostile posture towards the Soviet Union.

The comprehensive aim of American policy under Ronald Reagan had been to restore the US to a position of global dominance in the economic, military, political and ideological spheres. What the Reagan administration believed was that once the "margin of safety" - as referred to by Reagan himself, was restored, the US would be in a better position to defend its interests around the world.<sup>3</sup>

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3 Jeff McMohan, Reagan and the World: Imperial Policy in the New Cold War (London: Pluto Press, 1984), p.3.

It would then be able to extend its own interest and push back that of the Soviet Union. The Reagan administration in its first term committed itself to become severely anti-Soviet. US policy towards Eastern Europe at this critical juncture, was coloured by this starkly anti-Soviet sentiment. Reagan proclaimed the Soviet Union as "an evil empire" and denounced "all those who live in totalitarian darkness" as the focus of evil in the modern world.<sup>4</sup>

As Dallek, one of the experts pointed out, the organizing principle of Ronald Reagan's defense and foreign policies was anti-Sovietism - the need to confront and overcome the Soviet communist danger in every part of the globe.<sup>5</sup> In the United Nations special session on Disarmament held in June, 1982, President Ronald Reagan made his views clear while he said:

The history of Soviet foreign policy since World War II was a record of tyranny that included violation of the Yalta agreements, leading to domination of Eastern Europe, symbolized by the Berlin wall, a grim gray monument to repression....It includes the takeovers of Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Afghanistan and the ruthless repression

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4 Ibid., p. 169.

5 Robert Dallek, Ronald Reagan - The Politics of Symbolism (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1984), p. 129.



of the proud people of Poland.<sup>(6)</sup>

The Crisis - 1981:

It was with the Polish crisis of 1981, as mentioned earlier, that a major shift took place in the United States policy towards Eastern Europe. When Ronald Reagan came to office, a tense situation prevailed in East Europe - especially in Poland. Alexander Haig, Reagan's first Secretary of State, recognized that Poland was a 'casus belli', as he had put it, for the Soviet Union.

When the Solidarity movement gained momentum in 1980, the United States had made clear its objectives to keep the Soviet troops out of Poland, and to preserve the reforms achieved by Solidarity. Alexander Haig had emphatically maintained that intervention in Poland would severely damage American Soviet relations and imperil the prospects of agreements on questions vital to Moscow.<sup>7</sup>

But the irony of the fact was that instead of a Soviet 'interference' in Poland an "internal suppression

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6 New York Times, June 18, 1982.

7 McElwain, n.2., p. 461.

took place by the declaration of martial law during December 1981!"<sup>8</sup> Whether the possibility of the imposition of martial law occurred to the United States or not, hardly mattered. But the fact was that Alexander Haig, the Secretary of State, insisted that the United States was taken aback and caught off guard by the action and did not have a plan of response. The anti-Soviet policy of Reagan had reached such heights that Haig asserted that the United States "knew" the action had been planned in minute detail in the USSR.<sup>9</sup>

Reagan administration's dealing with the Soviet Union and East Europe during the initial years were destructive to the national interest. As a high official had pointed out, that after two years in office Reagan's conduct towards Soviet Union was guided less by a comprehensive and consistent long range policy than by a general ideological orientation. The result of this approach had been a sharp worsening of US - Soviet relations to a level of serious new confrontation and mutual suspicion.<sup>10</sup>

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8 In March 1981 the possibility of a Martial Law Declaration did seem to occur to Haig as it did in October. For details see, American Foreign Policy Current Documents 1981, U.S. Department of State (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1982), p. 603.

9 McElwain, n.2, p. 461.

10 Dallek, n.5, p. 182.

The focus of Reagan's anti-Sovietism, was the Administration's policy outcomes in regard to Poland.

The suppression of the Solidarity movement and the imposition of martial law in Poland was a pointer to the fact that the spirit of the Helsinki Pact (1975) was violated. Vice President, George Bush, remarked while in conversation with the Deputy Prime Minister of Poland, Mieczyslaw Jagielski:

All of this is in gross violation of the Helsinki Pact to which Poland is a signatory. It has even broken the Gdansk Agreement of August 1980, by which the Polish Government recognized the basic right of its people to form free trade unions and to strike.(11)

As has been mentioned earlier the Reagan Administration was quick to rise to the occasion. It implicated the Soviet Union in the Martial Law Declaration in Poland. But it took ten days for the United States to take any concrete action against the Polish Government. Hard liners in the administration, led by Defense Secretary

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11 Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States 1981 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Govt. Printing Office, 1982), p. 320.

Casper Weinberger, urged Reagan to adopt economic sanctions against Warsaw and Moscow and to threaten to foreclose on the Polish debt unless America's allies joined in punishing the Poles and the Russians. But the White House, following State Department advice limited itself to unilateral sanctions.<sup>12</sup>

The sanctions included:

- suspension of government shipments of agricultural and dairy products;
- halting the Export-Import Bank's line of export credit insurance.
- withdrawal of Polish civil aviation privileges and
- withdrawal of the right of Polish fishing vessels to operate in American waters.<sup>13</sup>

As the Administration put the major share of the blame on the Soviet Union, on December 29, the American President announced sanctions against the Soviet Union including

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12 Seweryn Bialer and J. Afrerica, "Reagan and Russia", Foreign Affairs (New York), vol.61, no.2, Winter 1982-83, p. 249.

13 McElwain, n.2, p. 461 For details regarding the sanctions refer to American Foreign Policy: Current Documents, 1981, Deptt of State (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1982), pp. 623-24.

bans on high technology exports and the postponement of negotiations on new grain agreements.<sup>14</sup>

An American Foreign Service officer, who was in Poland at the time of the Martial Law declaration, described this situation as a "rare situation" for the United States. He observed:

An increasingly free Poland, influenced by Solidarity, would mean a probable lessening of Polish ties with the Soviet Union and the emergence of an increasingly independent power within central Europe. The continued imposition of martial law, on the other hand, not only made for excellent examples to the world of Soviet/Communist repression, but created a permanent security problem at the doorstep of USSR... (15)

The relations with Poland worsened after the imposition of Martial Law. The United States gathered together all of its political and diplomatic acumen to rally against the Polish and Soviet governments, publicly at every opportunity. Some hardlines were of the view that this particular behaviour on the part of the Reagan

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14 McElwain, n.2, p. 461.

15 Harry E. Jones, "Poland and the Western Alliance", Atlantic Community Quarterly, (Washington D.C.), vol. 20, no.4, Winter 1982-83, p. 371.

administration actually worsened Solidarity's prospects. The logical conclusions that these authors would draw were that, just as disarmament movements in the West were not helped by expressions of support from the Soviet government, so also in the same way Solidarity was not helped by being visibly linked to the West, especially within the framework of the cold war. Besides, the Reagan Administration's policy of publicly indicting the Polish and the Soviet governments, gave these governments a reason to respond with defiance, because they felt that a more permissive stance towards Solidarity would be seen as giving into Western pressure.<sup>16</sup>

The United States' actions were against the Polish government and not against the people of Poland, had been made clear time and again by the policy makers. In a statement made in May 1982, President Reagan had made it clear that these sanctions were reversible depending on the Polish authorities restoring the human rights of the Polish people. The President further maintained that while denying financial assistance to the oppressive Polish regime, America would continue to provide the

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16 McMohan, n. 3, p. 169.

Polish people with as much food and commodity support as possible through Church and other private organizations.<sup>17</sup>

But the steps taken against Poland failed to have the desired effect. The United States stance on Poland backfired. Instead of backing down, the Polish Government outlawed Solidarity on October 1982. President Reagan consequently suspended the most favoured nation tariff status of Poland.<sup>18</sup>

The United States' policy in dealing with the Polish crisis of 1981 was a litmus test for President Ronald Reagan. It was alleged that the area demarcated as 'East Europe' in the post World War period received only marginal interest from the United States. The United States did not have a "policy" towards Eastern Europe, it had instead been termed as the 'non-policy' of the United States. The Reagan administration marked a turning point in the American policy towards Eastern Europe. The seeds of dissent in these East European countries were already sprouting when Reagan took up

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17 Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States 1982 (Washington D.C.: U.S. Govt. Printing Office, 1983), p. 541.

18 Ibidem.

the mantle of presidency. In order to reap the benefits of this shift towards liberalization in these Communist satellites, Reagan's policy towards them should have been based more on rationality rather than on empty rhetorics.

But United States' policy towards Poland during the crisis of 1981-82 had been criticized vehemently by many authors. J. Milewski had written that after the 1981 Polish crisis, Washington no doubt imposed economic sanctions on Poland, but did not develop any comprehensive program of American participation in overcoming the Polish crisis. In consequence, American policy stimulated the repressive policy of General Jaruzelski.<sup>19</sup>

Besides, the sanctions far outlived their usefulness. In December 1983, Lech Walesa, the Solidarity leader, called for an end to American sanctions indicating that serious economic harm could result from their continuation. The United States had chosen to maintain the sanctions

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19 J. Milewski, 'Poland: Four Years After' Foreign Affairs (New York), vol. 64, no.2, Winter 1985/1986, p. 352.

20 New York Times, Dec. 6, 1983.



despite the lifting of martial law in July 1983 and the subsequent release of political prisoners including Lech Walesa. The United States still continued to withhold MFN. Status, refused technology and credits. The severe hostility of the Reagan Administration's position shattered the State to State relations between United States and Poland. This hostile attitude had also had an adverse effect on Polish public opinion. The Polish people felt that these economic sanctions gave the Jaruzelski government an excuse for poor economic performance.<sup>21</sup>

Some critics are of the view that Reagan administration's insipid attitude towards the crisis made it worse. That the Administration took up a tough anti-Soviet interpretation of events was clear. But this stance of the administration resulted in alienating United States' Western European allies without ameliorating Poland's plight. The very basis of the policy of differentiation was questioned. The policy itself suggested that the United States was to accord preferential treatment to those countries of the East European bloc, who had distanced themselves from the Soviet Union. The policy

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21 McElwain, n.2, p. 463.

of differentiation had a positive connotation-it was conceived more as a form of encouragement rather than as a form of punishment. But with this worsening of state-to-state relations with Poland, America reverted back to treating the region as adjuncts of Soviet Union.

It was thus clear that the crisis in Poland forced the Reagan administration to focus considerable attention on Eastern Europe. Looking ahead in US-East European relations, a number of questions arose under the then prevailing conditions. What policy towards Poland would best serve the US interests in the region? How far could the U.S. - East European relations progress in the prevailing climate of US - Soviet relations and as long as Poland remained a major source of tension?

One thing was clear and that was the West needed a new policy towards Poland for Solidarity's sake and for the benefit of the Western alliance. A policy of quiet diplomacy was the need and not a pursuit of any crude anti-Sovietism. The Reagan administration committed the mistake of defining the Polish crisis in exclusively anti-Soviet terms. It was clear that Jaruzelski's advisers were pushing for a vision of a Polish society

modeled on the liberal reformist regime of Hungarian Party First Secretary Janos Kadar. It was in the interest of both the United States and Western Europe to regard this goal positively for intrinsic and tactical reasons.<sup>22</sup>

The proponents of such a policy argued that while Solidarity was unacceptable to the Soviets, the Kadar model did at least give East European countries a chance to attain the degree of independence which the Soviets found acceptable. For some observers it followed that the West could seek the "Kadarization" rather than the 'neutralization' of Eastern Europe.<sup>23</sup> Thus, the Reagan's task in regard to Poland would be to concentrate on rebuilding Poland's economy - the United States should help sustain Polish access to Western trade and goods.

Detente is the most effective political strategy the West ever used for advancing Western interests and democratic processes in the Soviet bloc. Solidarity's

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22 Marlow Reddeman, ed., U.S. Foreign Policy, vol. 55, no.3, (New York: The M.W. Wilson Company, 1983), p. 67.

23 For details see, Charles Gati "Polish Futures, Western Options," Foreign Affairs, vol.61, no.2, Winter 1982-83, pp.292-308.

emergence was the best proof of this claim, for without detente the trade Union's creation would have been inconceivable. A new US strategy toward Poland could begin with an evaluation of detente.

Reagan and the Other East European Countries:

It could be, however, stressed that the Polish crisis had little impact on the United States' relations with other East European countries. A brief analysis of each country and United States interest in it would be a worth-while study in that regard.

Taking up the case of Czechoslovakia, since the Soviet invasion of 1968, which ended a period of democratization and reform, domestic political and economic controls had been tightened and the economy had stagnated. Since 1968, the Husak regime had also closely adhered to the Soviet line in domestic and foreign policy, acting as a principal spokesman for closer integration among the Communist regimes and for limiting ties with the West.<sup>24</sup> United States relations with Czechoslovakia

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24 U.S. Senate, 100th Congress, 1st Session, Hearings, Trip Report - A Visit to Eastern Europe in the wake of the 27th Soviet Party Congress and the Chernoby Nuclear Accident by Larry Pressle, Senator, Feb. 1987 (Washington D.C.: U.S. Govt Printing Office, 1988), p. 13.

had thus been poor for sometime due to the Czech Government's harsh repression of dissent and its close adherence to Soviet positions on foreign policy.<sup>25</sup>

Two major obstacles were present in the way of improvement of relations between United States and Czechoslovakia. They were the controversy over retention of looted Czechoslovak monetary gold recovered from Germany at the end of the Second World War and the controversy over compensation to American citizens and corporations for property nationalized by the Czechoslovaks.<sup>26</sup> But these two obstacles were successfully overcome by negotiations during the Reagan administration in 1982. Since then the two countries had taken small steps, such as an extension of the bilateral civil aviation agreement, the negotiation of voluntary Czechoslovak restraints on steel exports to the US, and the signing of a new cultural and scientific cooperation agreement in 1986.

But inspite of all these achievements, the two

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25 Lawrence S. Eagleburger, "U.S. Policy towards the USSR, Eastern Europe and Yugoslavia", Department of State Bulletin, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Govt. Printing Office), vol. 81, no. 2053, August 1981, p. 77.

26 Pressle, n. 24, p. 13.

countries did not negotiate a trade agreement that would allow the reciprocal granting of Most Favoured Nation Status. This was primarily because Czechoslovakia was unwilling to accept the terms of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment to the US Trade Act of 1974 linking MFN status and trade credits to emigration. As a result of this and despite the efforts of the Reagan Administration the US - Czechoslovakia trade remained at a very modest level.

As regards Hungary, the United States' relations with this country had improved significantly since 1976, ending decades of difficulty. Hungary had very diligently carried out the provisions enshrined in the 'CSCE' process and had used it consistently as a bridge in building up relations with Western Europe and United States. Two important events marked the turning point in the United States policy towards Hungary. In Jan, 1978, the United States returned to the people of Hungary the historic crown of St. Stephen and other Hungarian coronation regalia that had been safeguarded by the United States since the Second World War. Besides this, in 1978 there was an agreement on reciprocal grant of MFN status. The Jackson-Vanik amendment was waived subsequently.

Romania continued to pursue an independent foreign policy, as exemplified by its positions on Afghanistan and the Middle East and its constructive role in the CSCE context. Romania carried out more than 50% of its trade with non-communist countries.<sup>27</sup> The Reagan administration had seized this golden opportunity and had looked to Romania's relatively independent foreign policy as a significant factor in the evolution of East European relations with the Soviets. Consequently, the US became Romania's third largest trading partner.

The granting of Romania's MFN status was a part of US policy of "differentiation". The very essence of the policy of differentiation was that United States would accord preferential treatment to those countries of the East European bloc - which would not be completely aligned with the Soviet Union. The Americans used their MFN leverage to secure a distinct improvement in Romanian emigration performance. The 1974 Jackson-Vanik amendment links extension of MFN status to emigration performance and the leverage afforded by annual review had been

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<sup>27</sup> Eagleburger, n. 25, p. 77.

effective in producing a greater rate of emigration from Romania as compared to the emigration from the other Warsaw Pact countries.<sup>28</sup> The Reagan administration, in continuing the policy of differentiation towards Eastern Europe, was therefore, justified in continuing Romania's MFN policy. More so, as Romania had consistently dissented from the Soviet line on significant Warsaw Pact and COMECON issues. Besides, Romania's military participation in the Warsaw Pact was limited.

The justification of this policy of the United States had been made by the Asstt. Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs. He said:

Responsibility for our own national security heads the list of our interests in Eastern Europe, as everywhere. The artificial division of Europe since world War II is inimical to our security interest as well as our ideals, because it imposes instability on Eastern Europe and creates potential for serious threats to the stability of the European continent.<sup>(29)</sup>

In the same statement, the Asstt Secretary pointed out

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28 American Foreign Policy Documents, 1986,  
Department of State (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1987), p, 305.

29 American Foreign Policy Current Documents 1986,  
Department of State (Washington D.C.: GPO, 1987)  
'MFN Status for Romania', prepared Statement by  
the Asstt. Secy. of State for European and Canadian  
Affairs (Ridway), February 26, 1986, p. 303.



that the force for evolutionary change were still at work in the East European countries. The set of circumstances and the challenges that it posed to Soviet hegemony were different for each country. The concept of nationalism was a potent force in each country. He stressed, "we believe that the best way to advance US interests in the area is to recognize the diversity of each country's situation.... The kinds of diversity important to us include adoption of distinct and more independent foreign policies."<sup>30</sup>

The March 1985 visit to Romania by General Vessers, the then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, was a unique contact between military leaderships of the U.S. and a Warsaw Pact country.

But one thing must be pointed out at this juncture. The Most-Favoured-Nations status enjoyed by Romania since 1975 was significant in economic as well as political terms. The MFN policy required to be renewed every year and the threat of non-renewal of MFN could have had concrete results. The Reagan administration used this

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30 Ibid.

as a gentle arm twisting tactics. In 1983, the Reagan administration had successfully used the threat denying MFN to get Bucharest to revoke a burdensome education tax on emigrants.<sup>31</sup>

The Reagan administration did not have much headway with either Bulgaria - the staunchest of the Soviet allies, or with East Germany. A very minimal trade and cultural exchanges between the United States and these two countries, marked the extent of US relations with them. Reagan administration's treatment of the various countries of the East European bloc, highlighted the continuation of the 'differentiation' policy. The Reagan administration successfully utilized a variety of "tools" to carry out its policy of differentiation. Some of these "tools" could be stated as - high-levels diplomatic contacts, MFN. Status, Ex-Im Bank credit eligibility, cultural and scientific agreements.

The Administration based its policy of 'differentiation' on the following considerations:

1. Evidence of reciprocity - individual countries must have the desire and ability to reciprocate in its relations and show sensitivity to US interests.

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31 Hearings, n. 24, *ibid.*, p. 51.

2. Indications of a constructive policy in Europe, through the CSCE process and in bilateral relations with other European countries.
3. Indications that individual governments are sensitive to the traditions and aspirations of the people.
4. Willingness by governments to fulfill their obligations under humanrights, economics and other provisions of the CSCE Final Act.<sup>(32)</sup>

But some critics were of the view that the policy of differentiation as followed by Ronald Reagan and his administration included several deviation that would limit the U.S. effectiveness in the region.<sup>33</sup> As had already been pointed out, the policy of sanctions against Poland disrupted United States' posture towards the freest, most religious, most anti-Soviet and most open nation in Eastern Europe.

Another irony is the policy of encouraging the independent foreign policy actions of Romania, the most

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32 U.S Senate, 99th Congress, 1st Session, Report, East European Economics: Slow Growth in the 1980s, vol. I, Eco. Performance and Policy, Oct 28, 1985 (Washington) D.C.: GPO, 1986), p. 558.

33 William H. Luers, "The US and Eastern Europe", Foreign Affairs (New York), vol. 65, no.5, Summer, 1987, p. 980.

oppressive dictator in Eastern Europe, It is indeed questionable how United States policy of 'differentiation' allowed it to side with the most oppressive regime in the entire East European bloc.

Apart from this, the Jackson - Vanik Amendment as it applied in Eastern Europe, linked trade to emigration and, to human rights performance throughout the region. Only Hungary and Romania were encouraged to trade with the United States by being granted MFN. Status (and recently after the lifting of the sanctions against Poland, it has been restored to this status). But the irony was that emigration was not a profoundly important issue for the United States in most of Eastern Europe. Jackson-Vanik forced the United States to influence the trading practices of the key countries of Eastern Europe at a moment when each was being subjected to increasing Soviet economic demands.

An analysis of the policy of the Reagan administration in its first term showed the stark anti-Soviet tendency of the United States. Until very recently, that is, during his second term, the Reagan administration turned the policy of differentiation into a rigid straitjacket.

The advent of Gorbachev Era and Reagan's Second term:

With the changes in the Soviet Union and in its relationship with East European bloc, with the assumption of power by Mihail Gorbachev, U.S. was required to recast its own policy for Eastern Europe.<sup>34</sup> Larrabee was correct in analysing when he said that the need was less of a grand design and more of a clear sense of purpose plus practical guidelines. The beginning of the Gorbachev regime coincided with the high tide of the Reagan administration.<sup>35</sup>

This subtle change in the US policy towards the Eastern European countries was marked even before the advent of the Gorbachev era when the Reagan Administration sent Asst. Secretary of State Richard Burt on a trip to three Soviet Satellites with new messages of conciliation. Burt's mission was complex. His visit was to East Germany, Bulgaria and Hungary and to convince the governments in these countries of the continuation of the policy of differentiation and that the Reagan administration

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34 F. Stephen Larrabee, International Herald Tribune (Paris), 12th March, 1986.

35 William G. Hyland, "Reagan - Gorbachev-III", Foreign Affairs (New York), vol. 66, no.1, Fall 1987, p. 7.

did not 'lump' them with the Soviet Union. Since the failure of the Geneva talks regarding START (Strategic Arms Reduction Talks) and the talks regarding an Intermediary Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, some of the countries of East Europe had begun faulting the Soviet Union's policy of handling East-West relations. It was here that the visit of Burt was justified to explore any diplomatic possibilities opened by the schism.<sup>36</sup>

The accension of Mikhail Gorbachev reinvigorated the US approach and Moscow's search for reforms and its assertiveness in economic relations with its allies compounded the mounting economic pressures on Eastern Europe.

As Milan Svec in his article pointed out, the Soviet Communist Party was speaking through Pravda about needed changes in its neighbour's inefficient economies, but the East Europeans were not sure how to proceed.<sup>37</sup> There was a basic contradiction between

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36 F. Willey, "Reagan Sends Some Friendly Signals", Newsweek (New York), no. 53, March 5, 1984, p. 14.

37 Milan Svec, 'Forging a Closer Relationship with Eastern Europe', International Herald Tribune (Paris), 28th January, 1987.

the reformers and the conservatives. The former wanted new opportunities. The latter preferred to have firm guidelines which would enable them to continue to "govern" and at the same time, ensure that Moscow took the ultimate responsibility.

Eastern Europe was undergoing a process of ferment likely to necessitate some restructuring of its relationships with Moscow. The primary problems were economic - except for East Germany all the East European countries had a decade of serious decline in growth rates and economic efficiency. This had forced the governments to introduce austerity programmes. Moscow's constraint on its resources

forced it to reduce energy supplies to Eastern Europe, especially oil. This multiplied East Europe's difficulties and made expanded relations with the West a more urgent priority.<sup>38</sup> Many of the Eastern European countries in their efforts in bringing about reform came to rely increasingly on what the Hungarian leader Janos Kadar called "...their own traditions and their own peculiarities."<sup>39</sup> As a result, the Eastern bloc countries

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38 The initial East European Energy Crisis has been dealt with in detail in William. E. Griffith, ed., The Super Powers and Regional Tensions: The USSR The United States and Europe (Toronto: D.C. Heath and Co, 1982), pp. 63-66.

39 Ibid.

were caught in a web of contradictions - economic uncertainty and, in some cases even doubts regarding the continuity of the authorities. Needless to say, this sort of confusion provided a considerable opportunity for the United States. It was at this juncture that the idea of 'differentiation' was pursued with a sense of determination.

It was with this in mind that the Reagan administration made a timely appointment of a high level official, Deputy Secretary of State, John. C. Whitehead. He gave him the special responsibility for working out feasible policy objectives. In the month of January 1987, John Whitehead's visit to Hungary, Romania, Yugoslavia and the rest of the countries of the Eastern European bloc demonstrated that the Reagan administration was giving due importance to the East European question.

Even prior to the visit of Whitehead, the Secretary of State, George Shultz's visit to the East Bloc was welcomed in Europe. Western allies opined that the nine day visit of Shultz indicated that the Reagan administration was softening its "hawkish" attitude



towards the Eastern block.<sup>40</sup> Although Shultz's visit yielded no concrete results, the policy makers in most of the countries of the Western alliance system were quick to predict that this was a first step eventually leading to a closer alignment of U.S. and Western European strategies towards the Soviet allies of the Warsaw Pact.

The dramatic change in the American - Soviet relationship after the successful agreement on the INF treaty (December 1987) was the development that dominated U.S. foreign policy in the last year of the Reagan administration. That the changes taking place within the Eastern European bloc would have the full support of the Reagan administration during the tapering end of its term, was clear from the Reagan doctrine. The doctrine in simpler terms proclaimed a new international order in which the legitimacy of governments would no longer rest simply on their effectiveness, but on conformity with the democratic process.<sup>41</sup>

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40 In James H. Markham's Article in International Herald Tribune (Paris), 21st December, 1985, the views of the Western Allies has been pointed out.

41 Steny H. Hoyer, "United States and Eastern Europe in the next four years", Washington Quarterly (Washington, D.C.), vol.12, no.2, Spring 1989, p.13. The Reagan Doctrine was enunciated specially for eliminating the Communist insurgencies especially outside the Soviet Sphere of influence' like in Nicaragua, Angola etc. The doctrine also stated that those governments that have come to power without fulfilling the requirements of the democratic process are to be regarded as illegitimate. Against such illegitimate governments and particularly against Marxist Leninist Governments, there is a right of intervention.

The Mutual Recognition Agreement signed in June 1988 between the European Economic Community (EEC) and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) was a pointer to the fact that Mikhail Gorbachev favoured East-West economic collaboration that could help East European regimes improve their economic performances and serve as a conduit for Western technology and management techniques needed to modernize the Soviet economy.<sup>42</sup> But how far would the Soviet Union allow a close collaboration between the East European bloc and the West, especially the United States, was a matter of great concern. At any cost, the Soviet Union would never allow the West to undermine Warsaw Pact cohesion so was widely believed.

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42 Ibid., p. 176.

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CHAPTER - IV

THE BALANCE SHEET

The developments that took place in the US policy towards Eastern Europe, during the Reagan administration deserve close scrutiny. During the eight years of the Presidency there did not develop a steady, all-round relationship with the countries of the East European bloc. There had been a gradual change from a "confrontationist" approach to an "accomodative" one-with a characteristic Reagan insigniā on it.

The present chapter is an attempt to analyse the policy stance of Reagan's administration and their impact on the US-Eastern Europe relations, in terms of trade commercial activities and the policy of emigration. The Trade coupled with commercial activities and emigration were the central points on which US-Eastern Europe relations evolved. As mentioned in the earlier chapter, the Jackson-Vanik Amendment (1975) to the Trade Act 1974, linked trade relations to emigration. Some authors were of the view that this seriously hampered America's trade relations with the countries of Eastern Europe. Some even suggested that the Jackson Vanik Amendment should be repealed.<sup>1</sup>

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1 William.H. Luers, 'The US and Eastern Europe' in Foreign Affairs (New York), vol, 65, no.5, Summer 1987, p. 990.

Trade and Commercial Activities:

The policy of differentiation followed by the Reagan administration necessarily concluded that the more viable the East European nations became in an economic and social sense, the more indifferent they would become with the Soviet Union. As a result, the policy of differentiation, by the US towards each of the countries in the East bloc was different than the other. Each country posed a unique problem, which called for an altogether different policy stance.

POLAND:

The U.S. relation with Poland stood as a concrete example of its well known differentiation policy. This was clearly evident in the trade relations between the two countries.

The advent of Solidarity in August 1980 raised the hope that progress would be made in Poland's external relations as well as its domestic developments. US policy throughout the Solidarity period had two goals: to encourage greater respect for human rights and individual freedom, while at the sametime carefully avoiding interference in Poland's internal affairs. A point worth

mentioning is that the US Government provided a total of 765 million dollars in agricultural assistance during 1981.<sup>2</sup> This showed that during the initial years of the Reagan Administration, the policy was more sympathetic towards Poland.

With the declaration of martial law by General Jaruzelski on December 13, 1981, the mutual relations between US and Poland were hampered considerably. The US government reacted swiftly and decisively in the wake of the declaration of martial law. President Reagan was determined to show that the United States was not prepared to conduct normal relations. The President:

1. Suspended consideration of any new credits for Poland, including the 100 million dollars just approved;
2. Suspended Polish civil aviation privileges in the United States;
3. Revoked Polish fishing rights in US waters;
4. Allowed the Export-Import Bank's line of export credit insurance for Poland to lapse;

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2 POLAND, Department of State Publication 8020, Background Notes Series, US Department of State (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1987), September 1987, p. 7.

5. Suspended delivery of the remaining unshipped amounts of government-to-government agricultural aid;
6. Restricted the export of high technology to Poland; and
7. Refused to negotiate rescheduling of Poland's official debt.<sup>3</sup>

Besides these, the US Government also refused to support consideration of Poland's membership application in the International Monetary Fund (IMF). When the Polish government delegalized Solidarity, the US suspended the Most-Favoured-Nation (MFN) status.

After martial law was lifted in 1983, the United States removed some sanctions from the package of restrictions imposed to protest the military crackdown. But still then, it continued to deny Poland new financial credits and preferential tariff rates for Polish exports.<sup>4</sup> Washington hesitated to commit itself to end the sanctions entirely

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3 Ibid., p. 7.

4 International Herald Tribune (Paris), February 4, 1987.

without assurances that General Jaruzelski would not reverse his policies.

The situation began to relax in response to the Polish political prisoner amnesty in September 1986. The US began a process of "reengagement" with Poland which was based on a gradual expansion of official dialogue through cultural, commercial and scientific exchanges. Steps were taken towards a renewed Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement and a revised Joint Trade Commission.<sup>5</sup>

This process of "reengagement" resulted in the US lifting the sanctions against Poland and consequently Poland was granted MFN status.<sup>6</sup> President Reagan described the decision as a "first step", a "big step" towards normalizing relations with Poland. However, he also said that the US relations with Poland could only be developed in the manner "that encouraged genuine progress towards national reconciliation in the country". There had been a considerable fluctuation in the volume of trade between the two countries. As was clear (see

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5 Poland, n.2, p.8

6 Banladesh Times (Dacca), February 21, 1987.



enclosed Table 4.1), the Polish exports to the US dropped from 416 million dollars in 1980 to 220 million dollars in 1985. With the partial lifting of sanctions the exports gradually increased upto 233 million dollars in 1986 and 296 million dollars in 1987. Similarly, the US imports to Poland which was 714 million dollars in 1980, took a sharp dip in 1985 and it was lowest in 1986 when it was only a mere 151 million dollars (see table enclosed - 4.1).

With the gradual lifting of sanctions, the President also made it clear that human rights progress and national reconciliation in Poland would be the key to advancing US - Polish dialogue.<sup>7</sup>

But many commentators are of the view that the social and political climate in Poland did not improve so radically that the sanctions imposed by the US could be judged a complete success. The ending of the sanction did not mean that the west, especially the United States, abandoned its quest for greater freedom and democracy in Poland. It simply meant that the same objective

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7 Times (London), 23 February 1987

would be pursued by means more appropriate to the prevailing circumstances.<sup>8</sup>

The US aim, in regard to Poland was clear - by fostering an efficient economy it could help Poland to repay its massive foreign debt. Hence, the Reagan Administration had concentrated on helping Poland expand its export sector. But as a Congressional Research Service Report, had pointed out, promoting exports would not be sufficient to overcome Poland's financial difficulties.<sup>9</sup>

Thus, to conclude with Stephen Larrabee, the Reagan policy of "re-engagement" with Poland was guided by three objectives - to foster national reconciliation and an institutionalization of political pluralism, to promote economic reform, and to encourage the government to become more independent in foreign affairs.<sup>10</sup>

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8 Ibidem.

9 U.S. House of Representative, 100th Congress, 1st Session, CRS Report, prepared for the Sub Committee on Europe and the Middle East, 'Polands' Renewal and US Options: A Policy Reconnaissance, 5 March 1987 (Washington, D.C. GPO, 1988), p. 33.

10 F.S. Larrabee, "Eastern Europe: A Generational Change," Foreign Policy (Washington, D.C. ),

ROMANIA:

As far as Romania was concerned, Reagan's foreign policy established a marked deviation from the past as a result of which it contributed towards limiting US effectiveness in that region.

From the beginning the US policy planners had encouraged the independent foreign policy actions of Romania. America applauded the Romanian government when Bucharest refused to hold Warsaw Pact exercises in Romania and when it established diplomatic relations with Israel, permitting thousands of Romanian Jews to emigrate.<sup>11</sup>

The US reacted favourably to these independent foreign policy stances of Romania. By waiving the Jackson-Vanik Amendment (1975), the US granted Most Favoured Nations (MFN) status to Romania (1978). This had subsequently been renewed each year.

Initially, this US approach seemed justified, despite Ceaucescu's repressive domestic policies. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Romania played a useful

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11 Luers, n.1, p. 980.

role as an intermediary in the Middle East and as a link for establishing diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China. However, as a result of US establishing diplomatic ties with China and the improvement of relations with several Arab countries, notably Egypt, Romania's worth as an intermediary declined considerably.

When President Reagan took possession of the White House, the relations between US and Romania had become comparatively insipid. In addition, Bucharest's human rights record tarnished Ceaucescu's image and led to increasing pressure in the Congress to suspend or revoke Romania's MFN status.

Things were bleak in Romania's domestic policies also. Romania's adoption of the Stalinist-style of economic management backfired. In an effort to repay its massive foreign debt, Ceaucescu imposed a drastic austerity program in June 1981 including the rationing of food and electricity.<sup>12</sup>

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12 Larrabee, n. 8, p. 52.

Nevertheless, during the initial years, the Reagan administration maintained its trade relations with Romania. The Trade sub-committee of the US House of Representative approved the trade benefits for Romania despite growing concern that Bucharest Government had been violating human rights of its citizens.<sup>13</sup>

But the US always made it clear that despite the waiver in the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, its trade would depend on Romania's emigration performance. In November 1982, the US State Department made it clear that the new Education Tax that Romania had imposed on applicant for visas to emigrate could 'gravely jeopardize' the preferential tariff treatment that Romania received on exports to the US.<sup>14</sup>

The twin factors of the declining Romanian economy and the trade tiffs with United States contributed to some extent, in curbing Romanian independence in regard to its foreign policy. The economic decline, especially the fall in domestic oil production, forced Ceaucescu to increase his economic reliance on Moscow. Such

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13 New York Times, August 11, 1982.

14 New York Times, November 10, 1982.

instability could tempt Moscow to step up pressure on Bucharest to stifle its independent foreign policy and realign its policies towards the U.S.S.R. A weak and uncertain Romanian leadership facing major economic difficulties would find Soviet pressure difficult to resist.

The American policy makers could perceive this possibility. The Reagan administration committed itself to make Romania's economic weakness more amenable to American initiatives. There was an offer of increased trade and credit. In 1986 the total trade between the two countries amounted to a massive figure totalling 1.08 billion dollars.<sup>15</sup>

President Reagan thus put in his efforts to help Romania maintain its independent foreign policy. But in early 1988, Romania renounced MFN treatment under Jackson-Vanik conditions. Consequently, Romania's MFN status expired in July, 1988.<sup>16</sup> The US-Romanian relation.

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15 Romania, Department of State Publication 7890, Background Notes Series, Department of State (Washington, D.C: Government Printing Office, 1988), June 1988, p. 8.

16 Ibidem.

during the Reagan administration was chequered. Though initially there was no great achievement in the US-Romanian trade relations, by the end of Reagan's career, any special trade relations petered off into insignificance.

HUNGARY:

After Romania, Hungary was the second European country which was granted Most-Favoured-Nations (MFN) tariff status with the US. Since Hungary happened to be the most liberal country in the East European bloc, there had been a steady increase in the positive direction of trade relations with America. This had been a typical feature of the Reagan administration. The Jackson-Vanik Amendment which was added to the Trade Act of 1974 to make human rights conditions a factor in granting trade benefits, did not pose any problems. This was due to the fact that Hungary had a relatively tolerant attitude towards dissent and emigration.

During the Reagan Administration there had been a steady increase in US-Hungarian trade.<sup>17</sup> In 1987

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17 HUNGARY, Department of State Publications 7915, Background Notes Series, Department of State (Washington, D.C: Government Printing Office, 1989), May 1989, p. 8.

US exports to Hungary totalled 95 million dollars and imports from Hungary amounted to 279 million dollars (See table enclosed 4.1).

German Democratic Republic:

US contacts with the GDR have remained relatively circumscribed. There was a change in US policy during the Reagan Administration, when GDR came to play an increasingly important role in the East bloc.

Beginning in early 1984, the US cautiously expanded diplomatic contacts with GDR in an effort to resolve a number of thorny bilateral issues. The Administration realized that despite fundamental disagreements on some political issues, the US had significant interests in the GDR - Security, human rights, protection of US citizen's interests and the promotion of trade.

In fact, during Reagan's second term U.S. extended its trade relations with GDR. This sudden warming of relations been triggered off with the German reunification in the offing. Any major initiatives towards the GDR, that the US perceived should be carefully coordinated with the Federal Republic to ensure that they do not



run counter to West Germany policy.<sup>18</sup>

But as is evident from the Table (4.1), the US exports to GDR fell from 479 million dollars in 1980 to a minimal amount of 73 million dollars in 1985. Economically speaking, this decline had been the result of a reduced GDR demand for imported grain and of the GDR's efforts to diversify the sources of its agricultural imports.<sup>19</sup> Politically speaking, during Reagan's first term, the Administration had given marginal interest to GDR to develop any concrete relationship with it.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA:

Along with GDR and Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia did not enjoy MFN status with the US. This was because Czechoslovakia had time and again refused to accept the 'emigration' clause of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment. Besides, the US trade with Czechoslovakia had stagnated during the Reagan Administration largely due to

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18 Larrabee, n. 10, p. 60.

19 GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC, Department of State Publication 7957 Background Notes Series, Department of State (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1987), June, 1987, p. 7.

Czechoslovakia's trade orientation towards the Soviet Union and other CMEA countries. In 1987 the total US exports to Czechoslovakia amounted to a mere 47 million dollars and imports around 78 million dollars (See Table 4.1)

It was in 1986, that the Administration signed its first exchanges agreement with Czechoslovakia. The agreement provided for exchanges in culture, education, science and Technology and other related fields.<sup>20</sup>

BULGARIA:

Sofia's reputation as Moscow's most orthodox ally, resulted in US giving it a marginal importance. During the Reagan Administration trade relation with Bulgaria never accounted for more than a small fraction of either country's trade. The US did not extend MFN status to Bulgaria since 1951.<sup>21</sup>

A report on the Trade Mission to central and Eastern Europe in 1983, had pointed out that although US trade with the countries of Eastern Europe remained extremely

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20 CZECHOSLOVAKIA, Department of State Publications 7758 Background Notes Series, Department of State (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1987), June 1987, p.8.

21 BULGARIA, Department of State Publications 7882 Background Notes Series, Department of State, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1986), October 1986, p. 6.

small in volume, yet bilateral trade became one of the most important components of US overall relations with Eastern Europe during the Reagan Administration.<sup>22</sup>

Criticising the Administration's policy, the report said that by focusing primarily on the appearance of foreign policy independence from the U.S.S.R, and "capitalistic" efforts at domestic liberalization in economic reforms in Hungary and Bulgaria posed problems. It sometimes adversely affected those countries that it praised, while sometimes rewarding those countries less deserving of American support.<sup>23</sup> The US criticism of Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and the GDR, based on their pro-Soviet position, had been a source of special irritation to those countries.

#### Emigration and Immigration:

Two dominant trends were apparent in the development of US immigration law and policy. First, the focus of immigration law had been on the Eastern rather than

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22 US House of Representative, 98th Congress, Second Session, Report on "Trade Mission to Central and Eastern Europe", March 29, 1984. (Washington, D.C: Government Printing Office, 1985), p. 1.

23 Ibid., p. 5.

TABLE - 4.1 : U.S. EXPORTS, IMPORTS, AND MERCHANDISE TRADE BALANCE, BY CONTINENT, AREA, AND COUNTRY: 1980 TO 1987

(in millions of dollars)

CONTINENT, AREA AND COUNTRY	EXPORTS, DOMESTIC & FOREIGN					GENERAL IMPORTS <sup>1</sup>					MERCHANDISE TRADE BALANCE				
	1980	1984	1985	1986	1987	1980	1984	1985	1986	1987	1980	1984	1985	1986	1987
Communist areas in Europe	3660	4188	3215	1989	2200	1437	2154	1936	2001	1923	+2423	+2034	+1279	- 12	+ 277
Bulgaria	161	44	104	97	89	25	29	36	57	42	+ 136	+ 15	+ 68	+ 40	+ 47
Czechoslovakia	185	58	63	72	47	69	86	76	85	78	+ 116	- 28	- 13	- 13	- 31
East Germany	479	137	73	68	54	44	149	92	87	85	+ 435	- 12	- 19	- 19	- 31
Hungary	80	88	94	98	95	107	221	218	225	279	- 27	- 133	- 124	- 127	- 184
Poland	714	318	238	151	239	416	220	220	233	296	+ 298	+ 98	+ 18	- 82	- 57
Romania	722	249	208	251	193	312	893	882	754	715	+ 410	- 644	- 674	- 503	- 522
Soviet Union	1513	3284	2423	1248	1480	454	554	409	558	425	+1059	+2730	+2014	+ 690	+1055
Other	7	10	12	4	3	10	2	3	2	3	- 3	+ 8	+ 9	+ 2	-

SOURCE = National Data Book and Guide to Statistical Abstract of the United States, Commerce, Bureau of the Census. (Washington, D.C: GPO, 1989)

on the Western Hemisphere. Secondly, the US immigration law had been shaped primarily by domestic rather than by foreign policy consideration.<sup>24</sup> But in the long run the domestic policy coloured the foreign policy and foreign policy acted as a cover.

It would be an interesting analysis to show how far the different countries of the Eastern bloc have satisfied the United States by their emigration performance.

The Administration found itself faced with a Bulgarian record on human contacts which fell far short of its Helsinki commitments. Emigration, although provided for by law, was rarely permitted.

The Czechoslovak record on human contact both within Czechoslovak and outside the country remained mixed. Neither the regulation governing freedom of movement nor the authorities' practices changed significantly during this particular period.

Many human rights advocates contended that emigration

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24 U.S. Congress, Joint Committee, 97th Congress, 1st Session, Report, U.S. Immigration Policy, September, 18, 1981 (Washington, D.C: Government Printing Office, 1982), p. 209.

was the most pressing human rights issue in GDR. It was because that GDR did not qualify in the 'emigration' clause of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment that the Administration did not grant it MFN status.

Hungary continued to have a positive record in terms of human contacts.<sup>25</sup> The U.S. immigrant visas issued to Hungarian citizens had been almost steady during the Reagan Administration. In 1980 it was 145 and in 1985 it came down to 103.<sup>26</sup> The US used its Jackson-Vanik leverage to influence Hungary's emigration performance in its favour. Besides, although the US share of Hungary's trade was small, the US hoped to encourage its growth and MFN was an important tool for that purpose.

As regards Romania, despite it violating all Human Rights condition, the administration continued to extend it MFN status(it expired only in July 1988). This had been justified by President Reagan in his Report to the Congress when he said:

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25 U.S. House of Representative, 99th Congress, 2nd Session. Hearings, "Most-Favoured-Nation Trading Status for the Socialist Republic of Romania, The Hungarian Peoples Republic and the Peoples Republic of China, June 10, 1986. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1987), p. 14.

26 Ibid., p. 16.

Extension of MFN to Romania still continues not only substantially to promote the objectives of the Act concerning emigration, but also to enable us to have an impact on Human Rights concerns and to help to strengthen the extent of religious observance in Romania.<sup>27</sup>

But America continued to use its leverage to influence the emigration performance of Romania. In June 1982, President Reagan and the member of the Congress warned Romania that it could lose its preferential trade status if it did not expand Jewish emigration to Israel.<sup>28</sup>

Many in Romania protested against the U.S. move. The Chief Rabbi of Romania, Moses Rosen said that the status of the Jews in Romania could not be linked with the US renewal of MFN status. He also said that the Romanian Jews were free to emigrate and over 93% had already left Romania.<sup>29</sup>

Thus both Hungary and Romania were unique cases to the Administration. Through the stimulus of the

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27 Cited in *ibid.*, p. 54.

28 New York Times, June 4, 1982.

29 New York Times, August 9, 1982.

Jackson-Vanik Amendment, both countries showed relative tolerance of emigration.

Poland's record of compliance with the Final Act's Human contacts continued to be uneven. The Jaruzelski government continued to restrict the citizen's "right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country."<sup>30</sup>

Thus it appeared that Reagan's measures in pursuit of a policy towards the East bloc brought about some concrete results, if not altogether a big success.

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30 n.25, p. 19.



C\_ON\_CLUSION

The analysis of the American policy towards Eastern Europe during President Ronald Reagan's Administration clearly showed how the United States was particularly concerned regarding a changed stance of its policy towards the countries of the Eastern bloc. The policy of the Administrations had considerably been influenced by its posture towards the Soviet Union. The institutionalization of the U.S. perception of the Soviet Union as an expansionist power continued to haunt the American policy planners in determining its policy towards the Eastern bloc.

The American policy planners took it as a challenge to "American values" vis-a-vis the Soviet Union, which in their estimate had "imposed" communist regimes on these countries.

The Reagan Administration proclaimed an overt American support for anti-communist revolution in these countries. This formed the basis of his policy. Reagan declared that the U.S. would work at the periphery of the bloc to reverse the Soviet trend of domination.<sup>1</sup> In

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1 Refer to an article by C. Krauthammer, 'The Reagan Doctrine, TIME (Chicago), vol. 125, no.13 April 1, 1985, p. 28.

order to pursue this objective, Reagan Administration adhered to concrete measures in order to dismantle the Soviet hegemony.

Needless to say, the East European countries constituted always a priority zone for the Soviet Union. While for the United States and the West, with the exception of West Germany, it remained a secondary issue, though not unimportant. A series of developments however, highlighted the American dilemma. The Hungarian crisis in 1956, the crises in Czechoslovakia in 1968 and in Poland in 1981 put the United States in a state of constant review of their policy objectives - so that they could maximize their gains in case Eastern Europe showed signs of cracks. The U.S. economic stakes in the region were small. As a result, the primacy of interest remained mostly in political and diplomatic spheres.<sup>2</sup> Hence, economic leverage was used as a 'tool' to enhance the political interests of the United States.

The Polish crisis of 1981 was instrumental in formulating a well-defined policy towards Eastern Europe. The focus of Reagan's anti-Sovietism, was the Administration's policy outcomes in regard to Poland. With the

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<sup>2</sup> M. Mandelboun, 'How America can seize the moment in Eastern Europe', U.S. News & World Report (Washington, D.C.), vol.104, no.19, May16,1988, p.31.

imposition of martial law and the subsequent banning of Solidarity, Washington imposed economic sanctions on Poland. But the sanctions far outlived their usefulness. The crisis forced Ronald Reagan to focus considerable attention on Eastern Europe. It was then that the policy changed towards one of the quiet diplomacy rather than a pursuit of any crude anti-Sovietism.

The Administration based its policy of 'differentiation' taking into account certain factors. It favoured those countries that were reciprocal in their relations with the U.S. and showed sensitivity to American interests. This general outline formed the basis of the Reagan policy. This policy influenced the two central points in the U.S. - Eastern Europe relations namely, trade and emigration. The United States made an effective use of the Jackson-Vanik leverage to link trade with emigration. The East European countries needed economic help from the West, especially when the U.S. wanted to rebuild their shattered economies. But emigration lay in the national interest of America. So the Jackson-Vanik Amendment was a perfect tool that the policy planners utilized.

While the Reagan Administration reaffirmed its commitment to the policy of differentiation, its emphasis

on anti-Soviet rhetoric and capitalistic tendencies in the various economies was less productive. The explicit goal of differentiation had been to expand the options available to the East European countries by rewarding those governments that moved towards domestic liberalization and foreign policy autonomy from Moscow.

It may however, be emphasized that the Administration was faced with certain limitations in regard to its overall policy towards Eastern Europe. Foremost was the attitude of the East European leadership towards reform and liberalization. Besides, the East European regimes desire for contact with the West, especially with the United States, was not uniform amongst all the countries of the East-bloc. However, the biggest obstacle was Soviet skittishness about ties between East European countries and the West.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to these underlying limitations the American policy had been subject to both internal as well as external constraints. The internal constraints

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3 For details regarding this refer to - Steny.H.Hoyer, 'United States and Eastern Europe in the Next Four years', Washington Quarterly, vol.12, no.2, Spring 1989, pp. 171-181.

were its own budget deficit and rising indebtedness. Externally, in the context of the overall world debt crisis the US had a natural interest in some of its immediate neighbours whose combined debts dwarfed that of the East European countries. Another external constraint came up with the advent of the Gorbachev era. His vision of a revitalized and restructured socialist bloc in which the network of political and economic linkages would be expanded and strengthened leaving the East Europeans with diminished scope for domestic or foreign policy autonomy.<sup>4</sup>

One reason as to why the American policy and influence had not been predominant in Eastern Europe was that the Security component of the relationship was less central than in relations with the Soviet Union. But there was a marked change in Reagan's second term. The advent of the dynamic and imaginative new leadership in the Soviet Union under Mikhail Gorbachev made a great difference in the U.S. policy.

The Soviet Union's motives in Eastern Europe are still subject to much discussion. The long-run Soviet

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4 U.S. Senate, 100th Congress, 1st Session, Hearings, Trip Report: A visit to Eastern Europe in the wake of the 27th Soviet Party Congress and the Chernobyl Nuclear accident by Larry Pressle, Senator, February 1987( Washington, D.C: GPO, 1988), p.55.

interest in maintaining a hegemonic relationship with Eastern Europe has not changed. But Eastern Europe has been in a flux. Its political elites have cast adrift in terms of 'role models' and 'reference points' to the Soviet Union - thus proving the Administration with a unique chance to influence change in the East bloc in the direction of political and economic liberalization.<sup>5</sup>

Improved US - Soviet Union relations and the INF Treaty that is one tangible result of that improvement, have eased tensions in Europe, East and West. This acted as a catalyst in bringing about changed policy stances in the United States vis-a-vis the Eastern bloc.

Concluding the dissertation, one finds that while the U.S. policy towards Eastern Europe ranged variously from 'roll back' to 'bridge-building' to 'benign neglect' to 'differentiation', it could best be capsulized as 'constructive engagement' during the Reagan era. More so at the tapering end of his career rather than towards the beginning, when aggressive anti-sovietism had influenced his policy postures.

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5 J.C. Whitehead, 'The U.S. approach to Eastern Europe: a Fresh Look, Department of State Bulletin, (Washington, D.C: GPO, 1988), vol.88, no.2133, April 1988, p. 66.

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