

# **SOVIET-EAST EUROPEAN RELATIONS : RECENT TRENDS AND PROSPECTS**

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## PREFACE

Relations between Soviet Union and Eastern Europe have occupied the attention of Western policy makers and scholars since the end of World War II. This interest has escalated markedly in the most recent period, stimulated by striking changes taking place within that region, which have brought the issue of interaction between Moscow and East European countries into sharp focus.

A careful assessment of Soviet-East European relations requires an examination of many aspects of Soviet behaviour, including the USSR's expectations, opportunities and vulnerabilities.

The present study is an attempt to examine how the pattern of the Soviet Union's relations with the East European countries in the Soviet bloc have changed over the years, what problems this tangled relationship has faced and continues to face and how these problems are being currently solved. Though the main purpose of the study is to evaluate the recent and prospective developments in the relations between the USSR and Eastern Europe, yet the basic thrust of

the present exercise has been to show how internal changes in the USSR have affected political developments within the East European countries and eventually changed the patterns of relations with the USSR. At the same time, domestic developments within individual Warsaw Pact countries, affecting relations with the USSR have been taken note of. The period taken up for study is the post-Brezhnev era, but no rigid time frame has been adopted for the sake of historical perspective which takes a longer view.

In the context of Gorbachev's reform campaign, it may be reasonably speculated that while the USSR may encounter further crisis of authority in Eastern Europe, on account of the impending transition in leadership, the troubles of the past are unlikely to be repeated. The promulgation of substantial economic reforms throughout Eastern Europe indicates that Moscow is more tolerant of developments in this direction. Moreover, with the deep going reforms in the USSR under Gorbachev such as elected management in factories and multi-candidate

elections to the local Soviets, it is difficult to see how relations with Poland and Hungary can get sored, where such reforms are either already enforced or there is a popular clamour for their implementation. This, however, does not rule out problems between the Soviet Union and the Orthodox leadership in some of the East European countries like Romania and Czechoslovakia.

I express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Professor Devendra Kaushik for his valuable guidance and encouragement that enabled me to complete the work.

I am thankful to all of my friends who helped me in various ways during the course of this study. I should also record my appreciation of the work of Mr. A.D. Bahuguna who typed the entire manuscript with utmost care. I am also thankful to the staff of the libraries of Jawaharlal Nehru University and the Indian Council of World Affairs, Sapru House, New Delhi.

Finally, to my parents, who have made me what I am, I owe a special debt which I affectionately acknowledge.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vinod Kumar Raturi', with a stylized, cursive script.

(VINOD KUMAR RATURI)

NEW DELHI

1 July 1987.



## CHAPTER - I

### INTRODUCTION

"Europe today is not what it was before the war. In the east and in the centre of the so-called old world there emerged a new, a socialist Europe in which half of all Europeans live. Their deeds and their struggle are a credit to our ancient continent".

- Leonid I. Brezhnev

Generally speaking the Eastern Europe consists of eight countries: Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Yugoslavia. These states are located in a well-defined geographical area of Europe and share several essential features, including political and economic structures and institutions, patterns of socio-economic changes, membership in two important regional organizations, the Warsaw Pact (WTO) and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) and of course to a great extent a common historical heritage. Except Albania and Yugoslavia, these countries share a substantial economic dependence on the Soviet Union, although the degree and dimension vary from country to country. A political dependence characterized by need to keep their international and domestic policies within the limits of scientific socialism, is also an essential feature

of the East European scene.<sup>1</sup> Hence, the USSR is without any doubt the essential ingredient of the political configuration in Eastern Europe.<sup>2</sup> The Eastern Europe thus constitutes a peculiar political, military and economic alliance of states which have multilateral linkages with the Soviet Union. For this reason it is generally referred to as the Soviet Bloc. The relationship between the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe represents an interaction of a special kind, qualitatively different from the relationship between the USSR and other countries throughout the world both communist and non-communist.

#### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: THE RISE OF PAN SLAVISM

The beginning of Soviet influence in Eastern Europe can be historically traced back to the period of the Czars. The genesis of this phenomenon can be seen in the idea of Pan-Slavism. An epic poem illustrates the relationship among these countries with Russia

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1. See: Andrej Korbonski, in Robert F. Byrnes (ed.), After Brezhnev, p. 290.
  2. V. Kubalkova and A.A. Cruickshank, "The Brezhnev Doctrine and Eastern Europe", World Review, 22 (2), January 1983, p. 22.

occupying a prominent place. In it the poet invokes the mythical patron goddess, slava, whose corporate image personifies the unity of slavdom: her head Russia; her trunk, Poland; her arms, the Czechs; and her legs, the Serbs.<sup>3</sup>

Pan-Slavism was a great national aim reinforced with sentimentalism. The slavs had a strong yearning for salvation from the yoke of the Turks and for this purpose they looked to Russia for their protection. The racial element among the slavs, all belonging to the same historic group of people, played an important role for centuries. It is this factor that created the strong feelings of unity and mutual bonds on which Pan-slavism was founded.

Among the Balkan peoples the Bulgarians suffered most from Turkish oppression and stood closest to the Russians, territorially and spiritually. There existed a constant interdependence of culture between Bulgaria and Russia. The war of 1877-78 was a war of liberation of the slavs by the Russians and an epoch when Pan-slavism

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3. Kollar's epic poem of Slav Patriotism, "Slavy Dcera" (Daughter of Slava), 1824, Kollar was poet-scholar of Cultural Pan-Slavism.

was at its high as a genuine outburst of fraternal feelings. Even today this fact is not forgotten by the Balkan peoples, who feel that they are beholden to Russia for their freedom.

Though racial history enjoys little respectability among contemporary scholars, it is an undeniable fact that the traditional idea of national communities based on kinship plays a vital role. It still remains true that the sense of modern nationhood has been greatly strengthened by the awareness of ancient hereditary bonds based on the "mother tongue", on generations of interbreeding, and hence on common biological descent. In central and East European countries, the growth and evolution of the ethnic core has always attracted much scholarly attention. But in the 19th century, scholars paid much more attention to the slavonic connection. Some philologists had established the common origin of the slavonic languages stressing that all the slavonic-speaking peoples possessed a common racial origin.<sup>4</sup> However, both Poles and Russians claimed their "natural right" to the leadership of the slavonic

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4. See: Norman Davies, Heart of Europe: A Short History of Poland, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1984.

peoples. In Russia, Pan-slavism became an integral element of Russian nationalism. As a result, Polish delegates to the various Slav congresses of the 19th century - Prague (1848), Moscow (1867), Prague (1908), Petersburg (1909), Sofia (1910) regularly took a dissenting position against that of the Russians, Ukrainian, Czech, or South Slav delegates, earning Poland the label of "the Judas of the Slavs".<sup>5</sup>

The genesis of the Slavonic culture can be found in the Great Moravian Empire, which reached the peak of its power under Svatopluk (870-894). It included the territory of Slavonic tribes in Silesia, including the cracow region (Poland) and a part what was to become Hungary (Pannonia), an area also populated by Slavs. The Great Moravian Empire was the oldest West Slavonic State, associating not only the Slavs of Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia, but also the Lusation Serbs and Poles (in little Poland) and through the Slavs in Pannonia linking up with the Southern slavs. Within the Empire arose the oldest of all Slavonic cultures. Its language, old Church Slavonic became

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5. Ibid., . . .

for a considerable period (until the end of the 11th Century) the oldest written language of all the slavs.

After the collapse of the Slavonic mission in Moravia (885), Slavonic culture spread partly to Bohemia, but specially to Bulgaria, to the Southern Slavs and to Russia. In Bulgaria there was a new growth of Slavonic literature at the beginning of the 10th century and before long a second script was created - the cyrillic, which the southern slavs still use today and which gave rise to the Russian alphabet. The growing differentiation of the Slavonic languages resulted in old slavonic becoming merely the official and, above all, the ecclesiastical language, still used in the orthodox church.<sup>6</sup>

#### THE WORLD WARS AND THE SOVIET CONCERN FOR SECURITY

From the very beginning the Eastern Europe remained a vulnerable point for the security of Russia. Most of the attacks launched by the European powers on Russia came through Eastern Europe, which was never

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6. See, Frantisek Kavka, An Outline of Czechoslovak History, Orbis, Prague, 1963.

powerful enough to prevent them. The second half of the nineteenth century was marked by Russia's efforts to gain some influence in East Europe on the basis of the existence of strong traditional ties. The Treaty of San Stefano (March 1878) which interalia provided for creation of a big autonomous Bulgaria under Russian influence was an outcome of these efforts. But Russia also had to face hostile influences from other nations, especially from England, one of the main objects of the Berlin congress of 1878 was to weaken Russia and checkmate its influence in the Balkans. Nevertheless, Russia succeeded in establishing its influence to some extent in the region, viz. in Bulgaria, Serbia, Romania, Poland etc.

After the first world war, Russia was subjected to the humiliating Treaty of Brest-Litovsk and had to face intervention at the hands of the allied powers. In order to safeguard its security interests, the USSR concluded military alliances with France and Czechoslovakia in 1935 and treaties of non-aggression with Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Finland. Despite these efforts, the USSR had to face the German invasion during the second world war. The East European countries - Hungary, Romania



and Bulgaria joined hands with the aggressor. The other countries were too weak to resist the aggression. Czechoslovakia was occupied at the very beginning of the war and so was Poland. Yugoslavia and Greece too fell victim to Nazi aggression. As there was no barrier left to check the Germans, they kept advancing towards the east into the USSR. The USSR was able to repel this invasion at a great cost in men and material. Twenty million of its people, were killed and large tracts of territory were devastated.

During the second world war the ideologically rival systems - Capitalism and Communism - joined hands in order to face the common enemy, Nazism and Fascism. The USSR signed treaties with the allied governments, especially a twenty year Treaty of alliance with Britain (26th May 1942) and the Treaty of Friendship, Mutual Assistance and Post War Cooperation with the Czechoslovakian government in exile in London (12 Dec., 1943). The Treaty with Czechoslovakia proved to be the nucleus of the Soviet system of bilateral alliances in Eastern Europe.

The second world war brought fundamental changes in the international situation, in terms of correlation of forces. For the USSR it was not merely a struggle for the defence of its own interests but above all for the gains of the October Socialist Revolution and the Socialist system.<sup>7</sup> The decisive role played by the Soviet Union in the defeat of German fascism, created favourable conditions for the overthrow of capitalist and landlord rule by the peoples in East European countries.<sup>8</sup> It paved the way for the national liberation struggle in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Yugoslavia, Albania and East Germany. As Georgi Dimitrov observed: "Had it not been for the Soviet Union, there would generally have been no free and independent nations in southeastern Europe and no flourishing People's Democracies advancing towards socialism."<sup>9</sup>

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7. Soviet Foreign Policy, volume II, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1981, p.9.

8. The Road to Communism, Moscow 1962, p. 464.

9. Georgi Dimitrov, Selected articles and speeches, Moscow, 1972, pp. 306-7 (in Russian)

Consequently, the treaties of friendship, alliance and mutual assistance were signed by the USSR and the Peoples Democracies of Eastern Europe. The treaties signed with Czechoslovakia and Poland during the second world war (on December 12, 1943 and April 21, 1945 respectively) were not only of mutual assistance in the armed struggle against Nazi Germany but they also had provisions on cooperation in all areas of economic, political and cultural life. Similarly, the USSR and Yugoslavia signed a Treaty of Friendship, Mutual Assistance and Post-war cooperation during the war on April 11, 1945. After the war the Soviet Union concluded treaties of friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance with Romania (February 4, 1948), Hungary (February 18, 1948), and Bulgaria (March 18, 1948) and also an agreement on supplies of Soviet equipment and primary materials on credit to Albania (April 10, 1949). Thus, since the end of the Second World War, Eastern Europe has occupied a prominent place in Soviet Foreign Policy.

THE SHADOW OF COLD WAR : SECURITY OR WORLD REVOLUTION?

Soon after the end of the second world war, the cold war began with the American-Soviet confrontation over political development in Eastern Europe. There has been a controversy among historians over the main motive behind the Soviet Union's policy in Eastern Europe during this period: Was Moscow looking for security or promoting the world revolution? According to some historians, the Soviet Union had already planned her policy and was following an aggressive course. But others contend that the Russians were simply responding to the western moves to claw back Eastern Europe and that accordingly it was essentially a defensive policy.<sup>10</sup> In this connection it is noteworthy to recall what Stalin wrote in his message to Churchill of April 24, 1945.

"Poland is to the security of the Soviet Union what Belgium and Greece are to the security of Great Britain.... I do not know whether a genuinely representative Government has been established in Greece, or whether the

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10. See, Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., "The Origins of the Cold War", Foreign Affairs, October 1967, p.52. For a similar view, see also: Herbert Feis, Churchill-Roosevelt-Stalin, Princeton 1957, p. 41, and Vojtech Mastny, Russia's Road to Cold War, New York 1979, p. 309.

Belgium Government is a genuinely democratic one. The Soviet Union was not consulted when those Governments were being formed, nor did it claim the right to interfere in those matters, because it realises how important Belgium and Greece are to the security of the Great Britain. I can not understand why in discussing Poland no attempt is made to consider the interests of the Soviet Union in terms of security as well."<sup>11</sup>

Stalin also apprehended that the western powers would try to prevent the rise of socialism in Eastern Europe. The developments like the American intervention in Europe - the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan - which were the instruments for subjugating many west and East European countries economically and politically to the interests of the US monopolies supported Stalin in his assumption.

It is a fact that the defeat of Hitler by the Soviet Union was the most decisive of all the factors for the emergence of the system of People's Democracy

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11. Documents on Polish-Soviet Relations 1939-1945, London 1961-1967, vol. II, p.594.

in Eastern Europe. In this sense it can be said that Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union and Central Europe played an important role in the establishment of "Socialism in one zone."<sup>12</sup>

To say this however does not mean as some western scholars have argued that socialism was forcibly imposed on Eastern Europe by the Soviet Union and that it was established within the reach of the Red Army. There are various factors which falsify this thesis, viz, (i) first, the advent of the communists to power in Yugoslavia and Albania without the Red Army, (ii) second, the non-existence of Communist regimes in Finland and Austria despite the presence of the Red Army, and (iii) thirdly, the existence of various paths and timings of the particular takeovers. Actually the causes of varied course and time-table of the Communist takeovers lie in the geographical position of each country, the strength of the communist parties, the abilities of leading local communists, western involvements in specific countries, popularity of the Soviet Union and strength of the opposition forces. Taking all

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12. Isaac Deutscher, Stalin, Middlesex, 1977, p.537.

these factors into consideration, we can reach the conclusion that Soviet policy was mainly based on the geo-political concept. As some Soviet authors have stated, "The victory allowed establishing just and secure frontiers of the Soviet Union in the West. The Soviet Union's encirclement by capitalist states, which had lasted for more than a quarter of a century, was brought to an end."<sup>13</sup>

It is thus obvious, that the security concept has been one of the main objectives of Soviet policy in Eastern Europe since the second World War. As E.H. Carr noted even before the end of the war:

"The sole interest of Russia is to assure herself that her outer defences are in sure hands, and this interest will be best served if the lands between her frontiers and those of Germany are held by governments and peoples friendly to herself ... Everything goes to show that she will be in a position after the war to shape the settlement on lines consistent with this conception of what her security demands."<sup>14</sup>

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13. A.A. Gromyko and B.N. Ponomarev (eds), Soviet Foreign Policy, volume II, Progress Publishers, Moscow.
  14. E.H. Carr, in The Times, 10 March 1943.

CHAPTER - II

MAJOR TRENDS AFTER WORLD WAR II



STALIN PERIOD - A COERCIVE COURSE:

From the start, the East Europeans were not expected to adopt the Soviet economic and political models in all respects although they were expected to follow the foreign policy line. It may be that the turning point in Stalin's attitude to the East Europeans came when, despite his obvious displeasure, Czechoslovakia and Poland wanted to accept Marshall Aid and had to be dissuaded from so doing. Thereafter, the cominform introduced a formal web of control over the bloc parties and a stalinist region of terror began in Eastern Europe.<sup>1</sup> The cominform endorsed collectivization as the only appropriate path to socialism, and Polish and East German claims to separate roads to socialism were rejected. However, Yugoslavia's defection from the Cominform and her split with the USSR in 1948 prompted a stalinist purge throughout Eastern Europe of Titoists, and those communists who owed their positions not to Stalin.

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1. Peter J. Mooney, The Soviet Super Power, The Soviet Union 1945-80, p. 151.

As a practicing Leninist, Stalin would not voluntarily part with control over a body that had been in his power and probably he also feared that if he permitted Tito to acquire control over the Yugoslav party, the leaders of the other East European parties might try to follow Tito's example.<sup>2</sup> As a result Stalin demanded that the East European leaders blindly imitate Soviet domestic policies: collectivization, and rapid industrialization. By insisting that his policies be adopted throughout the Soviet bloc, he established clear criteria by which to evaluate the submissiveness of the East European leaders.

Consequently, the Stalin period was marked by laying of socialist foundation in Eastern Europe, which was called the Stalinization of the region. The internal transformation of society was based on Stalinist pattern, including the political-economic course, which he had pursued in USSR during the

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2. Christopher D. Jones, Erik P. Hoffmann and Frederic J. Fleron, Jr's (eds.), The Conduct of Soviet Foreign Policy, Aldine Publishing Company, New York, p. 561.

thirtees. Stalin believed that in doing so he was creating the material conditions for close liaison between his socialist state and the People's Democracies while eliminating those sources of diversity which might ultimately lead to disunity.<sup>3</sup>

This new pattern applied by Stalin to form the basis for the relations between the USSR and East Europe implied:

(i) the implementation of the theory of the communist party's political supremacy;

(ii) the intensification of the class-struggle to eliminate the class-enemies and its extension to the countryside to liquidate the big landlords for the socialist transformation of agriculture.

While this formula of Stalin had the virtues of simplicity and directness, but it had the effect of so alienating the peoples of Eastern Europe that the party leaders of these countries had to become dependent on

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3. Zbigwiew K. Brzezinski, *The Soviet Bloc, Unity and Diversity*, New York 1971, p. 84.

Soviet support to stay in power. This support became all the more necessary because of contradictions between the political superstructure and the material and social base.<sup>4</sup>

#### KHRUSHCHEV'S SOCIALIST COMMONWEALTH

After Stalin, his interstate system collapsed. In 1956, Khrushchev attacked Stalin for his policy of coercion and terror. Khrushchev's secret speech at the 20th CPSU Congress<sup>5</sup> caused great confusion. Yet this act of de-Stalinization was not intended to abolish completely the Stalinist mode of interaction between the new Soviet leadership and East European leaders. The basic nature of Soviet-East European relations remained essentially the same.

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4. See, Zbigview Brzezinski, The Soviet Bloc, Unity and Diversity, New York 1971, pp. 139-151.
  5. "Secret Speech of Khrushchev concerning the cult of the individual" Delivered at the 20th Congress of CPSU, February 25, 1956, in The Anti-Stalin Campaign and International Communism, A Selection of Documents (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956), pp. 1-90.

After the death of Stalin, there was a general agreement in the Kremlin on the great potential value of Eastern Europe to the USSR. The stationing of Soviet troops in the bloc allowed the USSR to pursue a forward defence policy against NATO. But this defence could be strengthened only if the East Europeans contributed to it. So Khrushchev went in for reconciliation with Yugoslavia which was a confession of Stalin's errors and failures and the beginning of a new Soviet approach to Eastern Europe.<sup>6</sup> On 14 May 1955, the Warsaw Pact was formed, which bound all the bloc countries in a military alliance under a joint command. The Pact provided a legal basis for the USSR to keep troops in the bloc countries and to intervene if they were deemed to be subject to external threat. Of course, the Warsaw Pact was regarded as militarily necessary to counter the strengthening of NATO with the inclusion of West Germany on 9 May 1955.

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6. John C. Campbell; in Sarah Meiklejohn Terry's Edited, Soviet Policy in Eastern Europe, (Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1984) p.7.

Following Stalin's death in 1953, Workers' demonstrations took place in East Germany, Czechoslovakia and Poland. In order to normalize the situation and to overcome the bitter legacy of the Stalin period Malenkov and Khrushchev suggested the leaders of the fraternal parties adoption of a "New course". This "New course" required the East European leaders to adopt their domestic policies to suit local conditions and to satisfy demands for consumer goods.<sup>7</sup> In this process, Khrushchev resumed relations with Yugoslavia in 1955. In 1955 and 1956, Khrushchev and Tito signed statements that endorsed the right of every socialist country to determine its own method of socialist construction. It is evident from the Soviet-Yugoslav Declaration wherein stated, "The roads and conditions of socialist development are different in different countries .... any tendency to impose one's own views in determining the roads and forms of socialist development are alien to both sides".<sup>8</sup>

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7. Ibid. no.2 (pp. 562-64).

8. Soviet-Yugoslav Declaration, Moscow, June 20, 1956.



Even at the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956, it was emphasised by Khrushchev that each socialist country would follow its own road to socialism. But after the Twentieth congress of CPSU, internal power struggles developed in the Polish and Hungarian parties between the old leaders associated with Stalin and the supporters of the domestic reform initiated by Khrushchev. In July 1956, a Pravda editorial addressed to the intraparty power struggle in Hungary and Poland qualified Khrushchev's proclamation of separate roads to socialism by asserting that though the roads could be separate, the goal was the same. It declared that "the necessary consideration of national peculiarities" would not lead to the "estrangement" of socialist countries, but would contribute to their "solidarity". No one, warned Pravda, would succeed in destroying the unity of the socialist camp.<sup>9</sup>

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9. Pravda editorial, July 16, 1956; "The International Forces of Peace, Democracy and Socialism Are Growing and Gaining in Strength", reprinted in Paul E. Zinner, ed., National Communism and Popular Revolt in East Europe (New York: Columbia University Press 1956), p. 63.

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Thus, it can be said that Khrushchev's policy was innovative in Eastern Europe in the sense that he was obliged to look for a substitute for Stalinist coercion. For that purpose flexibility was shown in the Stalinist standards of conformity. As a sequel Soviet Union permitted the East European leaders considerable authority in coping with their own problems responding to domestic pressures, and stressing national interests.<sup>10</sup>

To a great extent Khrushchev succeeded in reducing the dissatisfaction in Eastern Europe. Khrushchev offered the East European parties an equation to form a balance between dependence and autonomy. Dependence formed part of loyalty to Marxism-Leninism, to proletarian internationalism and to the unity of the socialist camp. Such a framework could effectively contain the inherent pressures for diversity without the need for continuous Soviet involvement which Stalinism had demanded. As it was highlighted in Pravda, "The historical

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10. Ibid., n.5, p.9.



experience of Soviet Union and of the Peoples' Democracies shows that, given unity in the chief fundamental matter of ensuring the victory of socialism, various means and ways may be used in different countries to solve the specific problems of socialist construction, depending on historical and national features".<sup>11</sup>

The concept introduced by Khrushchev was termed "Socialist Commonwealth" (Sodruzhestvo), which concluded that national stand on the road to socialism could differ as long as essential Leninist principles were preserved. The Soviet Union never accepted the concept of multiple centres of authority on ideology and doctrine, and asserted the right to determine which policies were correct and which were revisionist.<sup>12</sup> This object to discipline institutional diversity, with ideological conformity is reflected in the discussion at the world conferences of Communist

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11. Pravda, July 16, 1955.

12. John C. Campbell, in Sarah Meiklejohn Terry (ed.) Soviet Policy in Eastern Europe, (Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1984) p.9.

parties held in Moscow in 1957 and 1960. The 1957 Declaration condemned Yugoslavia for its ideological deviations and named USSR as the leader of the socialist camp. At the same time it pointed out the dangers inherent in both the earlier approach of Soviet Union towards the East Europe. It stated, "Disregard of national peculiarities by a prolaterian party inevitably leads to its divorce from reality, from the masses, and is bound to prejudice the cause of socialism .... and, conversely, exaggeration of the role of these peculiarities .... is just as harmful to the socialist cause."<sup>13</sup>

The 1957 Declaration offered a solution to this dilemma, by urging the fraternal parties to combat both tendencies "simultaneously".<sup>14</sup> The same approach was reaffirmed by the statement of 1960 adopted at the Conference of communist parties in Moscow which directly cited the text of the 1957 Declaration and added its own elaboration.

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13. "Declaration of the Conference of the Representatives of the Communist and Workers' Parties of the Socialist Countries, November 14-15, 1957" in the Second Soviet-Yugoslav Dispute, eds, Vaclav Benes, et al (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, no date), p. 19.

14. Ibid.

"Disregard of national peculiarities by the proletarian party could lead to the latter's detachment from life and from masses and harm the cause of socialism .... Manifestations of nationalism and national narrow-mindedness do not disappear automatically with the establishment of a socialist system. Strengthening of fraternal relations and friendship among the socialist countries requires a Marxist-Leninist internationalist policy on the part of the communist and workers' parties, education of all the working people in the spirit of internationalism and patriotism, and a resolute struggle to overcome the survivals of bourgeois nationalism and chauvinism."<sup>15</sup> Further, the 1961 22nd CPSU Congress passed a resolution reaffirming the principles of the 1960 Declaration.<sup>16</sup>

During this period, the Soviet Union tried to strengthen the network of military and economic ties by

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15. "Communique of the Conference of Representatives of Communist and Workers' Parties", Pravda, December 2, 1960, p. 1.

16. See Leo Gruliow, ed., Current Soviet Policies vol. IV, The Documentary Records of the Twenty-Second Congress of the CPSU (New York: Columbia University Press 1963), p. 233.

establishing the Warsaw Pact and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) in order to reinforce the unity of the socialist bloc. The main feature of the Khrushchev period was preservation of a balance between unity and control. It was particularly remarkable for the flexibility Khrushchev had shown towards the changes in the East Europe. As John C. Campbell put it:

"Gomulka kept the gains of the Polish October, Kadar took the road of 'goulash communism' and conciliation with non-communists and Khrushchev endorsed it. Albania left the bloc, and Romania rejected Khrushchev's plan for integrated development through CMEA and embarked on a series of independent moves in foreign policy. By the time Khrushchev was ousted in 1964, these extraordinary changes had become more or less institutionalized."<sup>17</sup>

The main goal of Khrushchev appeared to be the introduction of more flexible contacts with the various communist parties, whereby common policies might be reached by means of discussion, although the USSR would still maintain the decisive voice because

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17. Ibid., n. 11, p. 10.

of its leading role in the communist movement.

A most important aspect of Khrushchev's plan was economic integration that is a supranational division of labor through the CMEA.<sup>18</sup>

BREZHNEV PERIOD - REDEFINING THE LIMITS OF  
AUTONOMY :

The transition to Brezhnev era did not give any clue to a new policy towards Eastern Europe. In the beginning, Brezhnev's primacy was not clearly established and Kosygin's prominence and encouragement of new thought on industrial management pointed to the possibility of economic reform throughout the Soviet bloc. After consolidating his hold in his address to the 1966 Congress of the CPSU, Leonid Brezhnev generally endorsed the previous position of the Soviet leadership concerning the proper norms governing relations among communist states. He declared :

"Experiences show that deviations from the Marxist-Leninist line either to the right or left become doubly dangerous when they are combined with nationalism, great-power chauvinism and hegemonic ambition.

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18. Richard F. Staar, "Communist Regimes in Eastern Europe, (Hoover Press Publication 1982), p. 296.

Communists can not help drawing the proper conclusions from this.

In the opinion of the central committee of the CPSU, there is good common Marxist-Leninist ground for closing communist ranks, namely, the general line worked out by the 1957 and 1960 meetings of the fraternal parties.

Developments since then have put it to the most exacting test and it has withstood that test. Today, there is every reason for saying that loyalty to this line is a dependable guarantee of the unity of new success in the revolutionary movements."<sup>19</sup>

The foreign policy of the Soviet Union in the 1970s was determined, above all, by the strategic decision to play the part of a global superpower, and in doing so to combine steadily increasing military and economic strength with a policy of "peaceful coexistence" with the west. In Eastern Europe, after the Czechoslovak crisis, Soviet policy was to reemphasize ideological orthodoxy, tighten discipline and strengthen the institution's for inter-bloc cooperation with the leading role of the Soviet Union. Some of the bilateral security

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19. Report of the central committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to the 23rd Congress of the CPSU (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1966), pp. 30-31.

treaties with individual East European states were renegotiated and renewed. Visits of the East European leaders to the USSR became more frequent. Khrushchev's concept of "socialist commonwealth" emerged in a new form of "socialist community" (obshchina). In 1971, Brezhnev told the delegates to the Twenty-Fourth Party congress that success in the construction of socialism in the countries of the socialist confederation depended on the "correct combination of the general and the national particular."<sup>20</sup>

In 1976, while addressing the Twenty-Fifth congress, Brezhnev observed that within the socialist confederation, "the process of a gradual drawing together of socialist countries is now quite definitely operating as an objective law". He added, "Of course, much depends on the policy of the ruling parties and their ability to safeguard unity, combat isolation and national exclusiveness, honour their common international tasks, and act jointly in performing them."<sup>21</sup>

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20. The 24th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Novosti Publishing House, 1971), p.9.

21. XXVS "ezd Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo soiuza, I The 25th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, (Politizdat, 1976), p. 29.

This concept, which facilitates the East European countries to integrate into a policy by the appropriate combination of the national and the general in their policies, is identified by the Soviet Union as socialist confederation. (Sotsialisticheskoe Sodruzhesto). The socialist confederation has three distinct but interrelated sets of members: the inner members of the confederation, consisting of the 15 union republics of the USSR; the outer members of the confederation, consisting of East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Bulgaria, Mongolia and Afghanistan, the overseas members of the confederation, consisting of Cuba, Vietnam and probably Ethiopia, Angola, Mozambique and South Yemen as well.<sup>22</sup>

The idea of Socialist confederation finds expression in the Soviet statements to the East Europeans, while emphasizing the political, military, economic and cultural mechanism, which have integrated union republics into the USSR as an equation to integrate

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22. See; Christopher D. Jones; "Soviet Influence in Eastern Europe: Political Autonomy and the Warsaw Pact, (Preager Publishers, New York, 1981) pp.12-17.



the East European states into the socialist confederation. In order to integrate the inner and outer members of the confederation, the Soviets have tried to link the cohesion of the socialist confederation to the cohesion of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. However, the Soviet leaders realize that it will be a long journey for the complete and successful integration of confederation to be effective. Brezhnev remarked at the CPSU's 25th Congress in the presence of Soviet and East European delegates, "If you please, there is not a session of the politburo which has not considered various questions connected with the development of cooperation with the fraternal countries, with the strengthening of their unity, and with the consolidation of our common international position."<sup>23</sup>

The central institution in the socialist confederation is the communist party of the Soviet Union. The CPSU relies upon the "internationalist" communist parties to execute the policies which draw

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23. Materialy XXVSS" ezd KPSS (Materials of the 25th Congress of the CPSU (Moscow: Politizdat, 1976), p. 5.

socialist nations into the socialist confederation.<sup>24</sup>

In a speech to the meeting of East European and West European Communist parties in East Berlin in 1976, Brezhnev noted :

"The deep organic and constantly growing ties of friendship between Party and state agencies, between enterprise collectives, scientific institutions and public organizations, between millions upon millions of citizens, enable us to talk about a fundamentally new phenomenon - a genuine fraternal alliance of peoples united by common convictions and aims. The confederation of Marxist-Leninist parties is its firm foundation and its cementing force."<sup>25</sup>

#### BREZHNEV DOCTRINE

The most important part of the Soviet policy towards the East European countries during Brezhnev's period has been the promulgation of a doctrine which appeared after the Czechoslovakian crisis in 1968. In the West the doctrine was ascribed to the Soviet

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24. Ibid., n.20.

25. "Speech by Comrade L.I. Brezhnev", Pravda, June 30, 1976, p.1.

leader Brezhnev and was assumed to have been laid down after the normalization of the Czechoslovak crisis in a series of articles such as the Pravda editorial of 22 August 1968, in Brezhnev's speech to the Fifth Congress of the Polish United Workers' Party in November 1968 and in an article by Kovalev in Pravda in September 1968. The action in Czechoslovakia was defended in Pravda in the following words:

".....an atmosphere was created that was absolutely unacceptable to the socialist countries. In this situation it was necessary to act, and act purposefully and resolutely, without losing time. It was precisely for this reason that the Soviet Union and other socialist states decided to satisfy the request by the CSR party and state figures to render the fraternal Czechoslovak people urgent assistance, including assistance with armed forces. The defense of socialism in Czechoslovakia is not only the internal affair of the country's people but also a problem of defending the position of World socialism. It is for this reason that we are rendering support to the peoples of Czechoslovakia in defense of our gains of socialism. In giving 'Fraternal internationalist support' to our Czechoslovak Comrades and the entire Czechoslov people, we are discharging our internationalist duty to them and to the international communist workers' and national-liberation movement. For us this duty is the highest of all."

Kovalev argued that socialism was being undermined in Czechoslovakia by counter-revolutionary forces which were gaining encouragement and support from the 'imperialists'. Regarding the question of sovereignty he stated that, "There is no doubt that the peoples of the socialist countries and the Communist parties have freedom to determine their country's path of development. However, any decision of theirs must damage neither socialism in their own country nor the fundamental interests of the other socialist countries nor the world-wide workers movement, which is waging a struggle for socialism. This means that every Communist party is responsible not only to its own people but also to all the socialist countries and to the entire communist movement. Whoever forgets this in placing sole emphasis on the autonomy and independence of communist parties lapses into one-sidedness, shirking his internationalist obligations .... The Sovereignty of individual socialist countries can not be counterposed to the interests of world socialism and the world revolutionary movement.<sup>26</sup>

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26. Pravda, 26 September 1968.

The common interests of 'world socialism' are elaborated as follows:-

"People who 'disapprove' of the actions taken by the allied socialist countries ignore the decisive fact that these countries are defending the interests of world wide socialism and the world wide revolutionary movement. The socialist system exists in concrete form in individual countries that have their own well-defined state boundaries and develops with regard for the specific attributes of each such country. And no one interferes with concrete measures to perfect the socialist system in various socialist countries. But matters change radically when a danger to socialism itself arises in a country. World socialism as a social system in the common achievement of the working people of all countries, it is indivisible and its defense is the common cause of all communists and all progressive people on earth, first and foremost the working people of the socialist countries."<sup>27</sup>

In his Warsaw speech, Brezhnev emphasized the crucial importance of the leading role of the Communist

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27. Ibid.

party in the socialist countries. He remarked:  
"Experience shows most convincingly the decisive importance for successful construction of socialism that attaches to ensuring and constantly consolidating the leadership role of the Communist Party as the most advanced leading, organizing, and directing force in all societal development under socialism ...."

It is not for nothing that the enemies of socialism have chosen precisely the communist Party as the prime target for their attacks. It is not for nothing that the revisionists of every stripe who are conductors of bourgeois influence in the workers' movement invariably seek to loosen and weaken the party and undermine its organizational basis - the Leninist Principle of democratic centralism - and that they preach relaxation of party discipline. It is not for nothing that they circulate 'theories' stating that the party should 'separate itself' from guidance over the development of society in the areas of economics, state life, culture and so forth. Such a situation, of course, would be very convenient for those who dream of turning development in all these areas backward in the direction of capitalism.<sup>28</sup>

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28. Pravda, 13 November 1968.

Events since 1968 have shown the Soviet need for the main principles underlying the Brezhnev Doctrine in East Europe. The 1970 Soviet-Czechoslovak Treaty of Friendship and the 1975 Soviet-GDR Treaty of Friendship referred to the need to take joint measures to preserve the 'achievement of socialism'.<sup>29</sup> In the Soviet-GDR Treaty, the two countries 'declare their preparedness to take necessary measures to protect and defend the historic achievements of socialism and the security and independence of both countries'. Similar Brezhnev-Doctrine language was incorporated in other bloc agreements, except with Romania, which took exception to the Doctrine. The 1977 'Brezhnev constitution' also reflected this concept by recognising the need for "comradely mutual assistance on the basis of the principles of socialist internationalism."<sup>30</sup>

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29. Peter Summerscale, in Karen Dawisha and Philip Hanson (eds), Soviet-East European Dilemmas (Holmes and Meier Publishers, New York, 1981), p. 29.

30. Article 30, of Soviet Constitution adopted on October 7, 1977. It says :

"The USSR, as part of the world system of socialism and of the socialist community, promotes and strengthens friendship, cooperation, and comradely mutual assistance with other socialist countries on the basis of the principle of socialist internationalism and takes an active part in socialist economic integration and the socialist international division of labour".

The significance of the Brezhnev Doctrine lies in the strong need felt in 1968 by the Soviet leadership to formally redefine the limits of autonomy in Eastern Europe. The circumstances of the Soviet action in Hungary in 1956 had already indicated that deviation by a member of the Warsaw Pact would not be permitted. In the Hungarian crisis, the Soviet Union acted in circumstances when the Hungarian Communist Party had disintegrated and there appeared a real threat of the reestablishment of capitalism.

Between Stalin's death in 1953 and the events of 1968, the Soviet position was not clear regarding possible variations in national approaches to the development of socialism. The 1955 Belgrade Declaration recognized 'differences of concrete forms' of socialist development. In Khrushchev's speech at the XX Party Congress, the legitimacy of 'separate roads to socialism' was recognised, but as is evident from the Yugoslav episode, the USSR did so with certain reservations.

Thus, beginning with the spring of 1968, the Soviet leadership could be seen attempting subtly at a redefinition of the limits of autonomy. The crux of



Brezhnev Doctrine lay in its insistence on the inviolability of the borders of socialist commonwealth and common interests and obligations of its members towards one another. As stated by Brezhnev in his Warsaw speech, it is the common concern of socialist countries to determine whether in any given country there exists a risk of 'deviation' from the 'common natural laws of socialist construction', when might risk the restoration of the capitalist system.<sup>31</sup>

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31. Brezhnev's speech at the 5th Congress of the Polish United Workers Party on 12 November 1968, quoted in Pravda, 13 November 1968.

CHAPTER - III

POST-BREZHNEV LEADERSHIP - EMERGENCE OF  
LIBERAL TRENDS

## THE ANDROPOV-CHERNENKO INTERREGNUM

After the death of Brezhnev, Chernenko was supposed to take the leadership of Soviet Union, as he was very close to Brezhnev. But in this power struggle, Andropov was supported because he was abler than Chernenko and seemed more likely to be strong promoter of efficiency. Of all the potential successors to Brezhnev, Yuri Andropov was the only person who best understood the crisis, the Soviet system was facing, caused by the two decades of negligency under the Brezhnev period.

Andropov had done well as head of the KGB by keeping the security services firmly under party control. He was a man of discipline in contrast to Brezhnev's easy-going manner. He had considerable experience of foreign policy and international military issues through his membership of the Politburo and the defence council.<sup>1</sup>

In 1953, Andropov joined the diplomatic service and was sent to Hungary. For three years he served as an Ambassador of Hungary including the period of Hungarian

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1. See, Jonathan Steele and Eric Abraham, Andropov in Power, (Martin Robertson, Oxford), 1983, p. 146.

crisis. Neither of his immediate predecessors, Khrushchev or Brezhnev, ever had such direct contact with the sensitivity of Soviet-East European relations.

After completing his tenure in Hungary as Ambassador, Andropov was given one of the most important foreign policy jobs. He was appointed as the head of the central committee's department for Liaison with the communist and worker's parties of the socialist countries.

This collective experience of Andropov as local party official, diplomat, central committee secretary, and police chief gave him a knowledge of the external and internal issues facing the Soviet Union.<sup>2</sup>

As early as his first speech after succeeding Brezhnev in November 1982, Andropov had signalled that his priority was to raise the Soviet Union's economic performance. Although the west naturally watched his first moves in the foreign policy and arms control field with special attention, Andropov emphasised on the domestic arena.

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2. Ibid.

Some western observer viewed Yuri Andropov as a neo-Stalinist, placed in power by the KGB, others originally saw him as a liberal with a western life-style. The first months after Brezhnev's death were marked by signs of impending policy change. In the field of disarmament, Andropov offered a striking proposal with respect to the impasse over the European deployment by the USA of intermediate-range nuclear, Pershing and cruise missiles, suggesting reduction in the number of Soviet SS-20s to the level of British and French nuclear missiles aimed at the Soviet Union.

Apart from that, with his accession to power, Andropov launched a campaign for discipline. The campaign against corruption and mismanagement, however, was only part of his dual strategy of reform, the other integral part being economic decentralization. At the November 1982, central committee plenum shortly after his election as General Secretary, Andropov noted that the level at which economic productivity had been growing in the Soviet Union "cannot satisfy us". Later in an article in the Party journal "Kommunist" he admitted that the Soviet economy was operating "not too successfully" and argued that the major cause was that "our work toward improving and reshaping the economic

mechanism ... has lagged behind.<sup>3</sup>

On both these occasions, Andropov shied away from what he called "prepared recipes" for the ills of the economy but he did suggest that the time had come to learn from the experience of other, less centralized socialist economies, in particular those of Hungary and East Germany. In July 1983, the politburo announced that it had approved "experiments" aimed at increasing the autonomy of industrial enterprises.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, Andropov's work style was marked with a sharp difference from that of Brezhnev. Addressing the central committee for the first time after Brezhnev's funeral, he admitted that "I don't have ready recipes" to solve the country's economic problems. "You cannot get things moving by slogans alone"<sup>5</sup> he added.

Eastern Europe was the area of foreign affairs that Andropov knew best because of his experiences in 1960s. Yet when he succeeded Brezhnev, there was no sign of any sudden specific change in the USSR's

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3. Kommunist, no. 3, (February 1983), p. 13.

4. Pravda, 16 July 1983.

5. Pravda, 7 July 1983.

prevailing policy towards Eastern Europe. within two months of his coming into power, Andropov got opportunities to meet the East European leaders thrice, First at Brezhnev's funeral, then at the sixtieth anniversary celebrations of the formation of the Soviet Union in December, and finally at the summit meeting of the Warsaw Pact in Prague at the end of January. In June, he met them again at a summit meeting in Moscow, called to discuss the talks on controlling medium-range missiles in Europe. He also invited the East German leader, Erich Honecker, and the Hungarian leader, Janos Kadar, to Moscow. But he dropped Brezhnev's regular summer meetings in the Crimea with the East European leaders.

When Andropov came into power, infact there was not many specific problem, which could create strains in the Soviet relations with East Europe. Only in Poland, there were some new developments. In mid-November, the banned trade union leaders lech walesa, was released and after one month martial law was withdrawn. In January 1983, the authorities gave their provisional approval for a second visit by the Polish Pope. Andropov had played a significant role in the promulgation of martial law in Poland in 1981 and he also approved of its suspension.

But when in May, the celebrations of May Day projected the renewed activeness of solidarity, the USSR had to show a tough posture. An article in the periodical New Times criticised the Polish weekly Politika for allegedly supporting 'pluralism'.<sup>6</sup> Afterwards, Soviet Party's journal Kommunist approvingly reprinted a Polish Party article that called for a firm line against 'rightist forces'.<sup>7</sup> On the eve of the Pope's visit in June Gromyko made a speech in Moscow accusing the west of practising ideological subversion against Poland. He declared, "Poland was and remains an inalienable part of the socialist community."<sup>8</sup> The Soviet Union continued its line of projecting Jaruzelski as a leading actor on the political stage of Poland. In July, the Polish leader was awarded the order of Lenin to signify Soviet approval of measures taken by him. Andropov seemed to be satisfied with the developments in Poland, and the Polish situation was no longer perceived problematic to Soviet leaders.

With Budapest Andropov had cordial relations. He had a deep personal rapport with the Hungarian leader Kadar since his days as ambassador to Hungary in 1956.

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6. See: New Times, May 1983.

7. Ibid.

8. Pravda, 17 June 1983.



Andropov had supported Kadar's economic reform programme in the 1970s. So when Kadar visited Moscow in July 1983, he was warmly welcomed by Andropov.

In the spring Kadar had shown signs of irritation, when the Western World made comments about re-introduction of capitalism in Hungary behind a socialist facade. Kadar told the central committee in April that there was to be no "reform of the reform" and that the Party would retain its decisive role in shaping economic policy. There are reasons to believe that Kadar took this posture at the instance of Andropov. In fact Andropov was not against Hungarian reform and he wanted to study it closely with a view to adopting some of its features for the Soviet Union. In February, a high-level meeting in Moscow of the council for Mutual Economic Assistance (comecon) had given a new impetus to the progress towards economic integration and coordinate national plans, for which Eastern Europe had been trying to formulate for years. All these changes indicated that reform in Eastern Europe was possible only if the Party authorities remained in control.

Andropov wanted to adopt a liberal policy towards Eastern Europe. It was perhaps because he realised after his own experience in Hungary that repressive Stalinist methods were no longer productive. After Andropov, Chernenko assumed the leadership of Soviet Union. Since he lived for a short period, he could not get the opportunity to initiate any specific policy programme. Moreover, Chernenko was a conservative Brezhnevite, it was doubtful that he would have evolved any new pattern in USSR's policy towards Eastern Europe.

GORBACHEV'S ASCENDENCE: ADVENT OF DEMOCRATIC TREND

The last years of Brezhnev had been marked by a state of inertia. The death of three successive leaders - Brezhnev, Andropov and Chernenko, was synchronized with the death of many of the veteran leaders, which paved the way for the transition of Soviet leadership from gerontocracy to youth. These developments could be seen as the outcome of serious structural weaknesses of the Soviet economy and polity as well. The central event of 1985 was the accession on March 11, of new leader - Mikhail Sergeievich Gorbachev to the leadership of the Communist Party of Soviet Union.

The two previous General Secretaries Yuri Andropov and Konstantin Chernenko, proved to be intrim leaders. Gorbachev is a full political and biological generation younger than Andropov, Chernenko and Brezhnev.

According to Andrie Gromyko, who nominated Gorbachev as General Secretary at the central committee session of March 11, 1985, Gorbachev had been acting as an official stand-in for the ailing Chernenko. Gromyko maintained that Gorbachev, had not only been directing the central committee secretariat but had been "brilliantly" chairing sessions of the policy making politburo in Chernenko's absence.<sup>9</sup> which indicates an unanimous opinion of the Soviet leaders on the selection of the new leader and the smoothness of the transition.

When Yuri Andropov took over from Brezhnev in 1982, prospect for Gorbachev seemed to be favourable. Within half a year he became Andropov's chief aide for party personnel and organizational matters, which indicated that Andropov was preparing Gorbachev to succeed him. Gorbachev was directly involved in every plan taken up by Andropov. Immediately after consolidating the power, Gorbachev expressed his will to restructure and rejuvenate the Soviet economic and political system. In foreign policy matters, he pursued a pragmatic approach without

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9. See: "Rech' tovarishcha A.A. Gromyko na Plenumе TsK KPSS 11 marta 1985 goda", Kommunist, no. 5, (March 1985), p. 6.

ideological rigidities.

The structural change in any system is generally opposed by conservative orthodox leaders. So far, Gorbachev has been successful in getting rid of many important personalities and bureaucrats belonging to the orthodox school to give new direction to the system.<sup>10</sup>

When Gorbachev assumed the Soviet leadership, it was generally speculated that his policies would be largely confined to political and economic affairs of the country. But in the last two years he has also taken many new initiatives to reshape some serious aspects of foreign and security issues. In this process, Gorbachev, in fact has liberated the Soviet foreign policy from the rigidity of the Brezhnev-Gromyko framework.<sup>11</sup>

Under his two short-lived predecessors, Yuri Andropov and Konstantim Chernenko, the Soviet policy toward Eastern Europe was still far from clear. If the short term in office prevented Andropov from taking any new initiatives towards Eastern Europe, it is very

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10. See: O.N. Mehrotra, Gorbachev's Foreign Policy in Strategic Analysis, vol. XII, no. 1, April 1987, pp. 25-38.

11. Ibid.

much doubtful that chernenko, a conservative Brezhnevite could have really desired to evolve a new pattern of relationship.

During 1985, Gorbachev met individually every East European party leader and saw all of them together on four occasions - at the funeral of Konstantin Chernenko, at Warsaw Ceremonies in April renewing the Warsaw Treaty Organization, at a meeting in Sofia in October and in Prague in November on his way back from the Geneva summit meeting. In December, the council for Mutual Economic Assistance met in Moscow to launch an ambitious programme for bloc cooperation in science and technology.<sup>12</sup>

Yet by the end of the year, there were no notable indications of Gorbachev's new policy towards Eastern Europe. Considerable speculations however, began to be made on the basis of an article published in Pravda in June which was critical of national emotions in East European countries.<sup>13</sup> At the same time an article in 'Kommunist', the CPSU's theoretical monthly appeared, accepting the national differences in the "construction

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12. See: Problems of Communism, March-April, 1986.

13. See: O. Vladimirov, Main Factor of World Revolutionary Process, Pravda, 21 June 1985.

of socialism". There was a public statement from Gorbachev himself to clarify the matters by the end of the year.

The vital importance of bloc cohesion in Soviet Policy concerns was reaffirmed by Gorbachev himself in his very first statement delivered at the plenary meeting after his election as General Secretary. "The first precept of the Party and the state", Mikhail Gorbachev told the March 1985 plenary meeting of CPSU central committee, "is to preserve and strengthen in every way fraternal friendship with our closest friends and allies - the countries of the great socialist community. We shall do everything in our power to expand cooperation with socialist states, to enhance the role and influence of socialism in world affairs."<sup>14</sup> Afterwards, a series of three Warsaw Pact summit meetings, two Comecon conferences at the Prime Ministers' level, bilateral consultations between Gorbachev and all East European leaders and various gatherings of the central committee secretaries incharge of economies, ideology and foreign affairs - all cast some reflection on the new trends in Soviet policy towards Eastern Europe.

Justifying the different paths to socialism, an article in New Times commented that "Each socialist country

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14. See: New Times, no. 35, August 1985.

has in large measure embarked on the socialist path of development in its own way. The conditions in which communists set about building socialism have differed from country to country. As a result, the socialist world today presents a diverse and varied posture, each of its countries having distinctive national characteristics and specific forms and methods of achieving its socialist objectives. This is only natural and in no way interferes with intensive cooperation across the board between socialist states."<sup>15</sup>

It further stated that, "The parties in power translate the objective requirements of social development into the language of political action. The accuracy of this translation depends on the political maturity of these communist and Worker's Parties which must firmly adhere to Marxist-Leninist teaching. This presupposes not to dogmatic, "religious" approach to theory but a creative attitude to new phenomena combined with the utmost respect for the achievements of revolutionary thought".

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15. Nikolai Shishlin, "Top-Priority Task" in New Times, no. 35, August 1985, p. 9.

Defining the socialist internationalism it stated that, "The record of the formation and development of socialist international relations goes to show that the only way to harmonious relations between the socialist countries lies in absolute respect for each country's sovereignty looking after each other's interests, combining the principle of mutual benefit with readiness for mutual assistance, even for certain sacrifices, in the name of duty to one's allies. This is what the principle of socialist internationalism is all about."

The reference to sacrifices in the name of duty to one's allies is indicative of the continued affirmation by the Soviets of the Brezhnev doctrine of limited sovereignty. Importance was attached to the close cooperation among socialist countries in the political sphere. Besides the prolongation of the Warsaw Treaty, major steps were taken to strengthen political cooperation between socialist countries on a bilateral basis. It is evident from Mikhail Gorbachev's talks with Wojciech Jaruzelski in Warsaw, the Moscow negotiations with Gustav Husak and Todor Zhivkov and intensive contacts with other socialist countries. The increased frequency of these meetings indicates an explicit trend towards active cooperation.



On October 22-23, 1985, the top leaders of Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and the Soviet Union assembled in Sofia for a meeting of the Warsaw Treaty Political consultative committee. They examined the situation in Europe and exchanged views on various international issues, emphasizing the urgent need to eliminate the nuclear danger and strengthen peace. Besides this, the leaders had elaborated discussion on current issues relating to the further expansion of cooperation between the Warsaw Treaty states. The participants expressed their determination to expand the mutual exchange of experience gained in the building of socialism and communism, and to promote in every possible way ties between the fraternal parties and contacts between the governments and parliaments, ministries and departments, public organizations and work collectives.

The unanimous decision to prolong the Warsaw Treaty by the allied states, reflects the tendency of strengthening friendship and cooperation and joint pursuit of a coordinated policy in international affairs. It was stated that, "the Warsaw Treaty states will, in

future too, consistently pursue the policy of enhancing the effectiveness of mutual cooperation in all fields on the basis of a well-balanced combination of their national and international interests. They attach much importance to a speedy implementation of measures for broader economic, scientific and technological coordination, and for deeper socialist economic integration as outlined by the economic summit conference of the CMEA countries, especially in priority areas."<sup>16</sup>

It is important to mention here about the meeting of the political consultative committee of Warsaw Treaty Member-states, which took place in Budapest on June 10-11, 1986. Alongwith the Political leaders, the work of the meeting was also attended by Commander-in-chief of the Joint Armed Forces of the Warsaw Treaty member-states. Special attention at the meeting was devoted to matters aimed at strengthening the unity and cohesion of the Warsaw Treaty member-countries and their defensive alliance, and at developing cooperation in all fields. The participants in the meeting called for a further expansion of exchange of

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16. Statement by the Warsaw Treaty States, New Times, no. 45, November 1985, p. 28.

experience in socialist construction, for a wide mutual acquaintance with the affairs and problems of one another and the importance of raising the effectiveness of economic, scientific and technical contacts, cultural exchanges and widening contacts between work collectives, public, local and tourist contacts, and deepening cooperation in other spheres was pointed out.<sup>17</sup>

27th CPSU Congress :

The 27th Congress of CPSU is an important event after Gorbachev's coming into power. The congress met in Moscow on 25 February 1986. Besides laying down the guidelines for the economic, political and social development, the congress stressed the need for a close cooperation with the fraternal socialist countries. It is evident from the report of the Congress, which stated:

"The CPSU attaches primary importance to the further development and strengthening of relations of friendship between the Soviet Union and other socialist countries.

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17. TASS, June 12, 1986.

..... All-round strengthening of relations of friendship and the development and perfection of ties between the Soviet Union and the other countries of the socialist community are a matter of special concern to the Party.

.... The CPSU will continue its policy of strengthening interstate relations between the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, of affirming them in treaties and agreements, of developing contacts between the legislative bodies and between the public organizations of these countries, and of further stepping up their political cooperation in all forms.

.... In economic relations, the CPSU stands for a further deepening of socialist economic integration as the material foundation for drawing the socialist countries closer together.

.... In the sphere of ideology, the CPSU stands for pooling the efforts of the fraternal parties aimed at studying and using the experience in building socialism.

.... The CPSU regards it as its international duty, together with the other fraternal parties, to consolidate the unity and increase the strength and influence of the socialist community."<sup>18</sup>

Thus emphasis was laid on the unity and cohesion of the bloc by all the East European leaders at the meeting of Political consultative committee of

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18. XXVII CPSU Congress, Documents and Resolutions  
Allied Publishers Private Limited, pp. 303-307.

the member-states of the Warsaw Treaty, which took place on June 10-11, 1986 in Budapest. In the meeting the leaders of all Warsaw Treaty countries participated, viz. from USSR-M.S. Gorbachev, from the People's Republic of Bulgaria - Todor Zhivkov, from the Hungarian People's Republic - Janos Kadar, from the German Democratic Republic - Erich Honecker, from the Polish People's Republic - Wojciech Jaruzelski, from the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic - Gustav Husak and from the Socialist Republic of Romania - Nicolae Ceausescu. The special attention at the meeting was devoted to the matters for a further expansion of exchanges of experiences in Socialist construction, for a wide mutual acquaintance with the affairs and problems of one another.<sup>19</sup>

It indicates that Gorbachev has not ignored the importance of Eastern Europe and his policies can be predicted for a more close cooperation with the allies.

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19. Communique of Meeting of Political Consultative Committee of Warsaw Treaty Member-states, TASS, June 12, 1986.

GORBACHEV'S MOVE TOWARDS REFORM :

Democratic Trends:

With the new steps taken by Gorbachev to revamp the Soviet system, the Soviet society is to be restructured and radically transformed. The landmark of this process of democratization is the trend towards openness (glasnost) in the Soviet Society. On January 29, 1987. Mikhail Gorbachev outlined new reform to make the communist system more democratic. He appears determined to rejuvenate Soviet society despite resistance from diehard bureaucrats.

Addressing a plenary meeting to the Communist Party central committee, Gorbachev launched his sharpest attack yet on the rule of the late leader, Brezhnev. He made it clear that officials still clinging to old values were putting up barriers against his drive for change.<sup>20</sup>

The themes of his restructuring campaign (Perestovika) are: Openness (glasnost), efficient management and the development of technology. He has

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20. See: The January 1987 Plenary meeting of CPSU.

proposed fresh ideas to extend democracy within the confines of the one-party system. Gorbachev also called for a broad educational effort to stamp out extreme nationalist tendencies in some parts of the Soviet Union.

Election System Change:

With the process of democratization, the Soviet electoral system is coming up for drastic changes with a national debate set for a change over to multi candidate elections to top party posts as well as to parliamentary seats. The proposal put for nation-wide discussion include consideration of several nominations in pre-parliament election meetings and fielding of many candidates in each parliamentary district. Soviet electorate hitherto could vote for or against a single party or non-party candidate put up by the communist leadership.

The party constitution is to be amended to provide for secret ballot in elections of the heads of district, city, regional and republican organizations.

The CPSU plenum approved the reform proposals for development of democracy and "refining" the work

of personnel. The new plan also seeks to encourage criticism which has so far been intolerable to the Kremlin.

"New Liberalism" :

The winds of change blowing in the Soviet Union since . Gorbachev launched the campaign of liberalization, have lately been confirmed by the release from internal exile of Nobel Peace Prize-winner Andrei Sakharov, who symbolises dissidence in the USSR. He is by far the most famous, outspoken and internationally recognised Soviet dissident who has had the courage to criticise the Kremlin policies. For about six years he had been confined to his town of Gorky. Evidently, social and political dissent is to be tolerated in the Soviet Union to a larger degree.

The Kremlin had also sponsored a Bill in the Supreme Soviet to legitimise and regulate individual enterprises. The Soviet leadership's liberalism is also apparent in the decision to overhaul the country's economy and foreign relations. The psychological barriers for citizens who wish to earn extra income by



honest work are to be gradually removed and the Government would help to meet the people's need of goods and services.

While initiating his reform campaign, Gorbachev criticized the Brezhnev era as a time of "disregard for law, report-padding, bribe taking and the encouragement of toadyism and adulation".

Invoking Lenin's spirit at the approach of the 70th anniversary of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, he called for a party conference apparently of the kind which used to generate lively debate under Lenin. But, he made clear that no changes were envisaged in the one-party system.

"The point at issue is certainly not only break-up of our political system. Socialist democracy has nothing in common with permissiveness, irresponsibility and anarchy", he said, which signifies that any type of reform would not effect the basic framework of existing Soviet system. As the politburo member and central committee secretary Yegor Ligachev made it clear in one speech that any changes would take place "within the framework of scientific socialism without shifts towards a market economy."

Gorbachev's Reform and Eastern Europe:

At present the Soviet-East European relations have come in the sharpest focus due to Gorbachev's reform campaign. There have been varied observations and speculations about the response of East European leaders to Gorbachev's policy of reconstruction (Perestroika) and openness (glasnost). The western observers have interpreted the issue by contending that Gorbachev's reform programme is going to cast a shadow over the Soviet-East European relations.

In this context, an overall observation of the scenario gives the impression that at present three countries - Poland, Hungary and Bulgaria accept the relevance of Reform. Only Romania has explicitly rejected reform while GDR and Czechoslovakia have some reservations. At this juncture, some of the leaders of East European countries are uncertain whether or not they should follow the Soviet reform campaign. For a departure from the existing policies and practices could raise tensions in ruling hierarchies in East Europe. This would seem to be clearly the case in Czechoslovakia and Romania. Since the shortlived "Prague spring" of 1968, Gustav Husak has ruled

Czechoslovakia with a firm hand. Czechoslovakia has not followed the path of Hungary after 1956 under Janos Kadar, where there has been a steady, liberalisation of the economy and of political life. Gorbachev's talk of multiple candidates and secret ballots within the ruling party and steps like large-scale release of dissidents have perhaps disturbed the Czech leadership. Although certain circles in the Czech leadership are prone to equate Gorbachev's reforms with the 1968 "Prague Spring", which was cut short by an orthodox section of the Czech party with the help of the Soviet leadership. There is a marked difference between the two. The 1968 Prague reforms rejected the leading role or supremacy of the Communist Party, while the Gorbachev initiative permits the reforms only when Party initiate and guide them. The emphasis is thus on the main role of the party. Nevertheless, the Czech leaders see this in the recent Soviet reforms a serious threat to their position. It is evident from the trial in Prague in February of the leaders of the popular Jazz Section of the Czech Musicians union, who are demanding reforms. There are reports of some groups in the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia favouring changes encouraged by

Gorbachev's reforms in the USSR.<sup>21</sup>

The dominant Czech leadership has however tended to view this clamour for reform negatively. Thus, Vasil Bilak, the Czech Party ideologue, warned that people who tried to take advantage of the Soviet changes to "revoke the lessons" of 1968 would be disappointed since Czechoslovakia had to "respect its own experiences" and "build on the positive things in the past". He even went to the extent of describing the present reform of communism as "a convenient cover for anti-socialist forces."<sup>22</sup>

To soften up the growing ideological differences with the hardline leadership of Czechoslovakia, the Soviet leader Gorbachev began his first official trip to Czechoslovakia on 9 April 1987. Czechoslovakia has one of the most rigidly controlled economies of the East bloc. But it is second only to East Germany in industrial output, its leaders have been reluctant to initiate Gorbachev - style reforms.

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21. See; The Statesman, March 30, 1987, New Delhi.

22. See: Text of report of the interview of Vasil Bilak in 'Rude Pravo' on changes in USSR, 21 February 1987.

The party leaders, particularly the 74-year old Husak, are in a vulnerable position. They were installed to crush the reforms initiated during 1968 "Prague Spring" and according to observers their legitimacy is based on one of the most repressive political systems in Eastern Europe.

However, many citizens would like to see some of Moscow's current liberalization reach their country. In a public letter to Gorbachev, four pre-1968 central committee members warmly welcomed his visit and demanded that his reforms should be implemented in Czechoslovakia.<sup>23</sup> A massive public display of affection stood in sharp contrast to dissatisfaction the Czechs and Slovaks have felt towards the Kremlin ever since August 1968 when the Moscow-led Warsaw Pact troops crushed a sweeping movement for economic and political reforms. The action flowed from the so-called Brezhnev doctrine which stipulated that an attempt to destabilise socialism in any Warsaw Pact country would be regarded

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23. The Statesman, 11 April 1987, New Delhi.

as a grave challenge to the socialist bloc.<sup>24</sup>  
For close to two decades the Czechoslovaks lived in a state of despair as the hard-liner leadership of Gustav Husak suppressed the voices of dissent. They began to gather some courage only after Gorbachev initiated his radical policies for greater openness and democracy in Soviet society.

In an hour-long speech in Prague, Gorbachev also spoke of his reform programme. At the same time he gave hints of a flexible approach in Moscow's relations with East European countries. He stated that no communist party "has a monopoly on truth". He also noted the need for new methods of cooperation. "we are far from calling on anyone to copy us", Gorbachev said, "Every socialist country has its special features and the fraternal parties determine their political line with a view to the national conditions",<sup>25</sup> which indicates that now Soviet Union has no objection if the reform in any socialist country takes a national form". A reluctant Gustav Husak is

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24. See; Karen Dawisha; in Karen Dawisha and Philip Hanson (eds.) Soviet-East European Dilemmas, (Holmes & Meier Publishers), New York 1983.

25. The Times of India, 11 April 1987, New Delhi.

reported to have been successfully persuaded to loosen his tight ideological grip. Some subsequent pronouncements by him confirm this.

The Jaruzelski regime in Poland is a strange hybrid - very different from the traditional communist system. Its power rests on a state administration propped up by the army and assisted by the benign tolerance of the catholic church.<sup>26</sup> Intellectuals and other sections of the public in Poland have long been pressing for greater liberalisation. The Jaruzelski regime has released most of the imprisoned dissidents but has otherwise kept a tight rein. To the extent that Moscow's new policies help to loosen this grip it will clearly be welcomed.

Now, Poland is planning to offer shares to private citizens in several state companies under major reforms to rejuvenate its socialist economy. In a news conference held in Stockholm on April 7, 1987 the Polish government spokesman, Jerzy Urban told that "the economy has to be made more responsive to market forces"

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26. See; Adam Bromke, Eastern Europe: Calm before the New Storm? in International Journal, vol. XLI, no. 1, Winter 1985-86, pp. 222-23.

and under reform "The whole leadership of the Polish economy and its management methods will be replaced."<sup>27</sup> He also pointed out that the planned Polish measures were convergent with reforms in the Soviet Union under the Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev. At the same time <sup>he</sup> /noted that this conversion to a market economy would not create any ideological setback for Poland's communist leaders, which shows that despite the liberal attitude and privatisation of economy, the supremacy of the Communist Party would not be undermined and any reform will take place under the guidance and supervision of the Party.

Romania has the most repressive regime among the communist states of Eastern Europe. The government of Nicolae Ceausescu is very much a personal one. This is the reason, he is unwilling to follow the reform campaign of Gorbachev. Ceausescu has already imposed strict censorship on views about events in the Soviet Union.<sup>28</sup> Now he has outrightly rejected the reform proposal. It is clear from the out come of the talk

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27. Indian Express, April 7, 1987, New Delhi.

28. The Times of India, February 23, 1987, New Delhi.



Between Gorbachev and Romanian leader Ceausescu in Bucharest on May 27, 1987. In his speech Gorbachev expressed the hope that the Soviet allies would also take up the Soviet reform plans, while Ceasescu emphasised the "different paths" of communism. While Gorbachev spoke of "internationalistic relations" between communist nations, Causescu referred to "national sovereignty and independence" and the principle of "non-interference" in the internal affairs of other nations."<sup>29</sup>

Hungary has long enjoyed the reputation of being the most "liberal" communist state. Its leaders have cultivated an image of relative tolerance towards dissent and accepted the existence of an opposition. Hungary has already adopted economic reforms, which were consolidated in 1983. To stem the worker's dissatisfaction, the authority of the trade unions has been expanded. The dissidents have been treated in a relatively lenient fashion. So Hungary has no objection and has quickly endorsed the Gorbachev's

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29. The Statesman, May 27, 1987, New Delhi.

reforms. But reports have come out of a certain stiffening of attitude by the Kadar regime towards the opposition in Hungary.<sup>30</sup>

East Germany has shown reluctance to accept the style of reform and has not published some of Gorbachev's speeches in its state-run media, while Bulgaria has moved to restructure economic management. Thus, Gorbachev's pursuit of reforms has touched a hornet's nest in the East Europe by raising expectations among the reform minded circles there. It has dramatically reversed the earlier situation when the yearning for reform among East Europeans was apprehended to lead to a troubled relationship with Moscow. The strong advocacy of reform by Moscow itself is in the long run bound to smoothen the USSR's relations with its East European allies even though for the present it may result in some difficulties particularly in the case of Romania. In all probability Gorbachev's reform platform will provide an impetus to replacement of old leadership in East European socialist countries

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30. See; George Schopflin, "Liberal Goulash for the Hungarian Party" in The Times, London.

by a less orthodox and more liberal one leadership. These expected leadership changes are likely to improve the ties with Moscow. Meanwhile a cautious Gorbachev is carefully avoiding picking up a row with any of the present leadership in Eastern Europe, lest it provides an opportunity to orthodox elements to prolong their sway by riding the tide of nationalism.

CHAPTER - IV

C O N C L U S I O N

The developments, that took place in Poland since August 1980 has shown the centrality of Eastern Europe in Moscow's foreign policy concerns. The Soviet response to these developments exposes the significant sophistication on the part of USSR in handling the alliance problems. Alongwith, this it reflects the emerging trends in the coordination of Soviet policy goals and requirements on several levels which is clearly visible mainly in the coordination between their domestic needs and regional interests.

On the domestic front, the Soviet leadership is facing the various problems viz. the persistent decline in the economic growth rate, agricultural stagnation, a widening technological gap and the need for massive investments in resource development etc. In the context of global challenges, these domestic problems have played a crucial role in altering Moscow's perceptions of Eastern Europe's place in its political, economic, and strategic calculations. In the context of this changed perspective, the basic factor involved here can be called a conflict between "viability" and "cohesion". This conflict appears between Moscow's desire to see in Eastern Europe stable and productive societies, that would contribute

to the collective well-being of the socialist bloc and in the other hand, the need that these systems continue to conform the universality of the Soviet model of socialism. The Soviet leaders want the East European states to be viable and productive, with the necessary minimum of cooperation and tolerance on the part of the people, at the same time they also want to be sure of maintaining control.

These two aims may be in conflict. Reforms that relax economic and political rigidities in the interest of viability can create the trouble that could threaten the structure of control. Hence, the course of Soviet policy in Eastern Europe can be seen as a quest for the appropriate balance between viability and control.

Since the death of Stalin, successive Soviet leadership have tried to find a formula for stability in Eastern Europe, that is the combination of "viability, and cohesion" that would both protect Moscow's perceived security, political and economic interests and, at the same time, ensure an adequate level of

well-being and popular acceptance of the local regimes. This is the reason, that Brezhnev's strategy was formulated on the experiences of the Prague Spring and then Poland, which gives the message that the key to stability in Eastern Europe lies in supporting leadership capable of maintaining order in their own spheres rather than to those inclined to adopt to changing perspectives.

Perhaps the economic difficulties are the main cause for the political problems in the various East European countries. Their rigid over-centralized systems have become an impediment to economic growth. The solution of the situation demands the need for economic reform: a shift from extensive to intensive economic growth. Thus the present Soviet leadership appears to encourage limited reform, largely of the economic variety, to make the East European systems more efficient and self-supporting within the context of existing bloc institutions and relationships, but somewhat greater autonomy and flexibility for member countries in setting domestic policies and priorities.

The long experience of association has made Soviet leaders to realize the relevance of polycentrism in Eastern Europe. They have accepted de facto polycentrist model of communism in East European countries. In fact, polycentrism can be advantageous in regard to the unity of the Soviet bloc. First of all, an adjustment of the Soviet type of communism to fit local conditions will not be objectionable to the dissidents in the Eastern Europe. Moreover, to cope with any crisis, would be the responsibility of the local communist governments, and USSR can refrain from the direct involvement.

At present, Gorbachev is embarking upon the path of domestic reforms, these conditions would be favourable for the continued development of polycentrism in Eastern Europe. As both Brezhnev and Andropov indicated, when they spoke approvingly of the economic reforms in Hungary, experimentation along these lines by these countries in the region could be beneficial as a testing ground for introducing similar changes in the Soviet Union.

But it is clear that any evolution there will have to remain within the limits of polycentrism, that



is, within the outer boundaries of the communist system.

Eastern Europe has increasingly become an economic liability to the USSR. The Soviet Union has been helping its allies by providing them raw materials and energy at favourable prices. But now the Soviet economy has also been under strain, she would not be able to render her help to the East European countries to that extent. As such, Moscow would like to see the East European states become more self-reliant and thus has not opposed the expansion of economic relations between several of them and the West.

Despite the long spells of quiet periods inside the bloc and the global spread of Soviet power, the East European communist states have remained the central preoccupation of Soviet leadership. The vital importance of bloc cohesion in Soviet policy concerns was reaffirmed by Gorbachev himself in his very first policy statement delivered at the plenary meeting after his election as General Secretary.

The scope and limits to the external autonomy of these states reflect the given degree of stability or instability in a particular country. Yet, ultimately

it is the changing criteria in Moscow for deciding what is essential to bloc security interests that determines how far a ruling party within the bloc can embark upon the road of economic and political experimentation, including even limited openings towards the west.

As in the mid-60s, a political change in the USSR can effect the ways, in which the policy of control and coordination is applied with the East European socialist states by Soviet Union. The Soviet leaders attempt to form an adequate balance between the optimal degree of centralization of decision-making in Moscow and the optimal degree of domestic autonomy has some times created troubles, which were solved later. But Gorbachev seems to be careful and firm in the quest of this safe balance. He is adopting a flexible approach in Moscow's relations with East Bloc allies. He is allowing East European leaders to take time to realize the need of his reform campaign.

The current reassessment of the Soviet-East European relations takes place within the context of

global strategy, economic crisis and succession problems throughout the bloc. So long as the key security interests of the bloc are adequately protected and respected, much may be tolerated in terms of autonomy and diversity in East European states. The Soviet leaders have made it clear both publicly and privately that "common interest demands a deepening of cooperation in politics, economies, ideology and by all means in such a domain as defence". This was stated by the Politburo member and central committee secretary Yegor Ligachev, which indicates that Gorbachev does not ignore the importance of Eastern Europe and his policies can be predicted on an unilateral ideal, in the unified entities of Eastern Europe.

It is obvious that from the perspective of the bloc cooperation, the Soviet relationship with Eastern Europe depends upon emphasizing issues that enhance the unity than the diversity of the alliance system. Another perspective is the problem of socio-economic instability. In the Soviet view, the

key to stability lies in the unified maintenance of the "leading role of the Party". While the Soviets approve of measures to increase productivity, to encourage labour discipline or to provide incentives, they are unlikely to allow any measure that might diminish the Party's supremacy. Reforms are possible, only when the Party initiates, directs and control them. Thus the success of any future reform in Eastern Europe can be guaranteed only if it is accompanied by the strengthening of the party's domestic position.

The final concern of Soviet-East European relations lies in the future unification of the alliance structure, in its military, economic and political manifestation. By unification or integration, the Soviets mean closer collaboration both institutionally and individually among the various components of the alliance.

Though, there is not much clear directions for policy of Moscow towards Eastern Europe. It may be because, the Gorbachev leadership is engaged in

solving its domestic problems.

But, what is the main concern of debate today, that is the future course of relationship between Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, which moves around its two aspects. The first one is the impact of leadership change in USSR on Eastern Europe against the background of historical events in general and the Gorbachev policy of openness (glasnost) in particular. It is notable to observe the happenings of past in Eastern Europe during leadership change in USSR. Although it is not necessary that the history will repeat itself but the leadership change in the USSR has always been accompanied by some sort of upheaval in Eastern Europe. Stalin's death and Khrushchev's ascendance were accompanied by the Polish October and Hungarian crisis of 1956, Brezhnev's assumption of power by the Prague Spring and his demise by the rise and fall of solidarity in Poland. But it is a notable point that the crisis have always occurred when new leader had been engaged in consolidating his power. At present, such possibility cannot be predicted, as Gorbachev has been firm and quick to consolidate his

power and there exists no any chance of such happening.

The second aspect of this phenomenon lies in the future transition of leadership generation throughout Eastern Europe. As all the leaders in Eastern Europe are between sixty-one and Seventy-six years of age, with most of the General Secretaries closer to seventy. (The Hungarian secretary Janos Kadar - 74, Bulgarian President and Party Chief Todor Zhivkov - 75, Erich Honecker in East Germany and Gustav Husak in Czechoslovakian are both 73 years old). It is certain that in near future, Eastern Europe will witness the situation of change in leadership. In the western world, the speculations are being made that the emergence of new leadership in Eastern Europe would be problematic for the Soviet Union. But before reaching such conclusion, we have much to calculate and observe, over the next few years, in Eastern Europe there will be little or no specific domestic change. There will be only a slow transition from one leadership generation to the next. That will suit Moscow's preoccupation with domestic affairs and with areas of more critical concern.

Moreover, it is likely that Gorbachev might prefer to see young (his own) people in power in Eastern Europe, just as he would like his own team within the USSR. Even in the case of the prospects for improvements in relations with Romania have not fully faded out. The Ceausescu's regime is the most repressive one and he stays in power by constantly reshuffling his aides and by appointing his relatives on top governmental posts. Although, Ceausescu has put the people under the tight control but sooner or later, and almost certainly at his departure from the political scene, the country will be in a political crisis, which will provide USSR the opportunity to restore its influence. And the people of Romania will certainly be responsive to the prospect of a more lenient and pro-Soviet government.

About the assumption that Gorbachev's liberalization and pursuit of glasnost has caused the anxiety among the long established East European leaders, as they see it a threat to their power, it is the only conservative leadership of some

countries, who is opposing the reform. Otherwise Gorbachev policy has been welcomed by the people of almost every East European state. It is clear from the warm welcome, Gorbachev received from the Czech, Hungarian, and German people during his recent visits. Moreover, if some old conservative not satisfied, it is a fact that due to their age, sooner or later they will have to depart from the political scenes of their countries and coming new leadership might be inclined towards a more harmonious relationship with the Soviet Union.

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