

**ROLE OF PERSONALITIES IN SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY:
A CASE STUDY OF ANDREI GROMYKO**

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C E R T I F I C A T E

This dissertation entitled "ROLE OF
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PERSONALITY IN SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY: A CASE
STUDY OF ANDREI GROMYKO" submitted by ASHUTOSH
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the degree of MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY, is an
original work and has not been submitted so
far, in part or full, for any other degree
or diploma of any University.

This may be placed before the examiners
for evaluation for the award of the degree of
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY.


(PROF. ZAFAR IMAM)
SUPERVISOR & CHAIRMAN

July 1990

PREFACE

This is a study of an aspect of the Soviet foreign policy which largely remains unexplored, namely the role of a personality in making and articulating the foreign policy of the USSR. The reason is not that scholars and experts have ignored this subject matter knowingly. On the other hand, it is the self-imposed image of the Soviet foreign policy as a product of collective wisdom of the Soviet Communist Party and the government which apparently has not only overshadowed the role of an individual but rendered it insignificant.

However, in recent years a realisation is creeping through the Soviet Union and elsewhere that the role of personality in the conduct of affairs of nations cannot be entirely ignored. This study essentially seeks to explore the role of an important personality and administrator and of not simply the leaders of the party and the government in the affairs of the Soviet society.

With a view to investigate this issue further, we have taken up a specific case study of A.A. Gromyko who has held the office of foreign minister for an unusually long period,

from 1957 to 1985; it may perhaps have been the world record of serving as a foreign minister of a country for the longest period.

The study is divided into five chapters. We begin by attempting to identify a framework of our study.

The second chapter deals with the investigation of the personality of Andrei Gromyko.

How was Gromyko as a foreign minister and what were his views on different contemporary problems and significant trends in international politics, is discussed in the third chapter.

The fourth chapter explores Gromyko's style and conduct as a foreign minister and his performances at the negotiating table.

And, finally there is a conclusion, making an overall assessment of Gromyko as a foreign minister and the role played by him in conducting the Soviet foreign policy.

This study has relied heavily on the memoirs and writings and speeches of A.A. Gromyko himself as well as those of the leading personalities of other countries who

have come in contact with Gromyko. Further, this is supplemented with relevant published materials on the Soviet foreign policy and personalities involved.

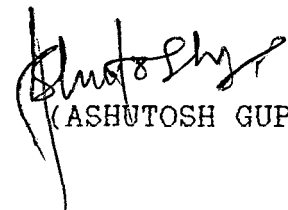
This study would not have reached its destination without fatherly treatment given to me and to the study by my supervisor, Professor Zafar Imam. I am too small a person to comment on his incisive criticism, in-depth analysis and wider knowledge of the subject.

It will be embarrassing to Dr Pushpesh Pant and Mrs Marinal Pandey if I give the name of gratitude for their moral and emotional support.

I am greatly indebted to former Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr Natwar Singh, for taking pain to talk to me and enlighten me on the subject.

I am also thankful to Dr S.K. Jha for his valuable suggestions and encouragement.

And finally, I want to remember my all friends and members of my family for making me what I am today.


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CONTENTS

		Page Nos.
CHAPTER - I	The Framework	1-20
CHAPTER - II	The Personality of A.A. Gromyko	21-37
CHAPTER - III	Gromyko as a Foreign Minister	38-55
CHAPTER - IV	Gromyko's Style and Conduct of Foreign Policy	56-89
CHAPTER - V	Assessment of Gromyko as a Foreign Minister	90-101
	Select Bibliography	102-112

CHAPTER - I

THE FRAMEWORK

How nations conduct their affairs? Who makes policies and executes them? Does an individual play a role in the affairs of a nation? These are the questions which have always been debated. Generally speaking it is conceded that a dominating personality or charismatic leader certainly plays a crucial role in shaping the destiny of a nation.

However it was the Russian Revolution and the new Soviet State which contested this wide-spread belief. In spite of the charismatic character of Lenin, all policies and programmes of state were set to have emanated from the collective wisdom of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. This was considered to be more true of the Soviet foreign policy. However, the fact of the matter is that the Soviet experience itself undermines the crucial role of personality in shaping the Soviet society. Not to speak of Lenin, but even Stalin can be seen and understood in this light. More specifically even the historical growth and development of the Soviet foreign policy does put into sharp focus the role of individual, the leader of the party and the foreign minister.

But the characteristic view of the collective wisdom of party which in its operational form essentially merged in the over-centralisation has a concrete background. It is therefore worthwhile for us to probe into this background. We must begin here by examining the views of Marx. better Lenin on the question of role of individual in history.

Marx repeatedly stressed that the issue of personality could only be analysed in terms of the specific historical circumstances, and personalities were actually produced by history itself. In ~~the~~^{his} view, "the people are represented as dull-witted mob, ordained by their own nature to submit to the will of others,"¹ specific ideas were propagated in history in order to justify the right of an insignificant minority to oppress the majority. Such people project the masses merely as passive factor in historical process.² According to classical Marxists such a subjectivist theory justify a system in which a handful of exploiters suppress the majority population.³

1.Marxism-Leninism (Moscow, 1956), p.215

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

In contrast to this view, Marxism shows that historical necessity finds its main expression through the masses that play the determining role in social development.⁴ The production activity of the masses alone would suffice for them to be acknowledged the real creators of history. In this context Marx has said that the only genuine revolutions are made without leaders, so much so that he has denounced any personality cult.⁵ Marx has concluded that the proletariat has no need for leaders.⁶ In his view they often hamper real action instead of inspiring it.

Engels later modified this view. He maintained that even in the supposedly leaderless communist society a number of organisations, such as industrial enterprises, would still require persons to coordinate planning and other activities.⁷

Georgy Plekhanov modified more. He has asserted that although leaders are powerless to alter the course of

4. Ibid.

5. B.H. Hazan, From Brezhnev to Gorbachev: Infighting in Kremlin, (London, 1987), p.1

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

history, influential leaders can change the individual features of events and some of their particular consequences.⁸ He adds that by virtue of particular trait of their character, individuals can influence the fate of society....but it is determined by the form of organisation of society.⁹

Lenin did not share Marx and his predecessors contempt for leadership. Lenin believed that leaders were to provide the spark to ignite the combustible social material and set-off a general explosion.¹⁰ He doubted the abilities of the proletariat and its tendencies to act spontaneously. That is why he evolved the concept of leadership of the party, whose function is to educate the proletariat, to raise the land of their consciousness through agitation and propaganda and to lead it toward victory by acting as mobilizers, organisers and strategist.

After the Russian Revolution and establishment of the communist regime in the USSR, Lenin developed the theory of

8. G. Plekhanov, The Role of Individual in History (New York, 1940), p.41

9. Ibid., p. 34

10. A.G. Meyer, "Historical Developments of Communist Theory of Leadership" in R.B. Farrell, ed. Political Leadership in E. Europe and Soviet Union (Chicago, 1970), p.14-5

'Dictatorship of Proletariat'. This theory when implemented soon developed into a system in which the leadership was not limited by legal or constitutional constrictions, neither in domestic affairs nor in foreign matters. But still theoretically, this system did not give a sanction to any personality or individual to affect the course of development significantly. At the best it was a collective leadership.

Later on among Marxist intellectuals, it was only E.P. Thomson who could dare say that human beings make their own history¹¹ and accepted the autonomy of human consciousness.¹² But such views were hardly noticed in the USSR. Thus it can be concluded that the Marxian theory does not permit an individual to act in a way so as to make an impact on the process of social development. It is this theoretical reality which forced Andrei Gromyko to say that Soviet foreign policy is not so strongly susceptible to subjective factors.¹³

11. Anthony Giddens, Social Theory and Modern Sociology (London, 1987), p.204

12. Ibid., p. 209

13. A.A. Gromyko, Lenin and the Soviet Peace Policy, Articles and Speeches (1944-90) (Moscow, 1980), p.485

However, the history of the Soviet Union is a witness, that personality does play a role in foreign policy decision making. There can be no better example of this than Lenin himself during the formative phase of the Soviet foreign policy.

The basis of Soviet foreign policy, i.e. peaceful-coexistence and proletariat internationalism are synonymous with Lenin. Lenin himself derived the inspiration from Marx who argued for a transnational perspective concentrating specially on increasingly internationalist character of the forces of production.¹⁴ For Marx international politics was an extension of the class struggle on the international level.¹⁵ He believed that struggle between two forces in the world - the capitalist and proletariat - determines the patterns of relations among states. According to Marx, foreign policy of a state is characterised by the nature of the ruling elite of that state. Foreign policy formulation for working class is a kind of struggle against bourgeoisie and is a part of general struggle for emancipation of the working class.

14. A. Lynch, The Soviet Study of International Relations, (Cambridge, 1987), p.10

15. Zafar Imam, "The Soviet View on Non-Alignment" in K.P. Mishra, ed., Non-Alignment : Frontiers and Dynamics (Delhi, 1982), p. 448

But it was left for Lenin to develop Marx's understanding of international relations and foreign policy into coherent ideas which served as a sound foundation for shaping the Soviet foreign policy.

Marx restricts himself to capitalism whereas Lenin goes beyond. To him Imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism, that is to say capitalism in transition or more precisely moribund capitalism¹⁶. His analysis focussed on dynamics of internal contradictions of capitalism. He explained that the international political behaviour in world politics is merely a resolution of these contradictions. The economic factor is dominant. It is the character of individual unit which defines the essence of international system of states.¹⁷ Lenin identified five elements "concentration of production and capital leading to monopolization; the merging of bank capital with industrial capital and creation of a financial oligarchy; the export of capital as distinguished from the export of commodities; the formation of international monopolist capitalist powers,¹⁸ which constitute the core of imperialism. It is because of

16. Lenin, Selected Works, (Moscow, 1977), p.26

17. A. Lynch, n. 14, p. 14

18. Lenin, n. 16, p. 232

this internal contradiction in capitalism that wars become inevitable.

Against Marx's two forces, Lenin found three forces, the capitalist imperialist continuum, proletariat movement and national liberation movement. Lenin said that it is the contradiction and harmony among these that really determine the international politics.¹⁹

In the spring of 1918, Lenin expressed his inflexible conviction that the Soviet power in their struggle for socialism against the yoke of capitalism, will in future do everything possible to promote the international socialist movement to secure and shorten the road leading mankind to get rid of the international capitalism and to strive for the creation of a socialist society. 'Decree of the peace' under the leadership of Lenin was addressed not only to the government but also to advanced class conscious proletariat of Britain, France and Germany. It called upon masses to take part in direct struggle for peace. It stated that the Soviet Union would be committed to complete renunciation of all forms of aggression, self-determination, self-condemnation of colonialism and the equality of all nations

19. Ibid.

big and small. It was also observed that the Soviet Union would maintain not only equality of relations with oppressed people but also be ready to render all kind of fraternal assistance in their struggle for liberation.²⁰

Lenin knew before October Revolution that socialism would not replace capitalism overnight. The replacement would take an entire historical epoch, in which states with different social system would continue to exist side by side. They would inevitably have to maintain political, economic and cultural relation with each others.²¹ Lenin warned that this policy of peaceful-coexistence did not mean negation of proletariat internationalism, or opposition to imperialism. Neither did it imply a reconciliation between socialism and capitalism or recognition that capitalism was everlasting or the struggle against imperialism was being relaxed.

Lenin meant that peaceful co-existence ought to be regarded as one of the principle forms of struggle against imperialism and the wars it is hatching against the arms drive, the aggressive design of the monopolists in the

20. B. Ponomayor and Others (ed.) History of Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917-45, (Moscow), 1969), p. 42

21., Soviet Foreign Policy: Brief Review (1955-65), (Moscow, 1967), p.12

colonial states. He was sure that socialism is certain to win this peaceful competition because the socialist mode of production has decisive advantages over the capitalist. "The contradiction between socialist and capitalist system is the primary contradiction of our time",²² he said, "and the struggle will continue without any let up". But it would not be achieved by export of revolution. He pointed out that capitalist rule will crumble not because some one wishes to seize power but will be undermined and shapped by history itself. Capitalism would be toppled by the people it exploits. Lenin made it very explicit that theory of export of revolution is a bourgeoisie invention and has nothing in common with Marxism-Leninism.²³

So peaceful coexistence only means that ideological conflict and political disputes ought not to be settled by war.

From the above discussion it can easily be seen that the framework of the Soviet foreign policy does not simply include ideology. On the other hand ideology is related to concrete reality of international situation. There is

22. Ibid., p.37

23. Ibid., pp.37-8.

characteristic inter-connection between ideology and reality. In the overall framework of the Soviet foreign policy it is logical to say that understanding concrete reality of international situation is essentially the task of professional diplomats and administrators, in other words all those institutions and individuals that are involved in making foreign policy and in actuality conducting it. In this context the role of a foreign minister in the Soviet system cannot be considered as purely decorative. On the contrary it emerges significant however high profile the leader of the party and government may be.

Yet one cannot overlook the fact that very institutional mechanism of the Soviet system of government does inhibit the role of a foreign minister. A foreign minister, in the USSR, is after all the head of a ministry who is subject to institutional control of party as well as higher government organ like council of ministers and soviet communist party. He cannot act as a distinctly different from other ministers still it depends on rating of foreign minister in the party and of course his personality and equation with the leaders. If he is close to Lenin as Chicherin was in 1920s, he does play. Likewise, if he is a diplomat of longstanding, a member of highest policy making body (politbureau) and enjoys the confidence of leader as

Gromyko did have, then he cannot be dismissed as a show-boy of the party and leader.

In this connection it is worthwhile to bring into focus the environment in which a Soviet foreign minister has to function.

Traditionally, fundamental pronouncements on foreign policy had been made before the party Congress which is empowered to set the basic line of the party and state on policy matters. No doubt under Lenin's leadership sharp discussion took place and divergent opinions were welcomed. But ultimately it was Lenin who used to prevail. Such was the charisma of his personality that in December 1917 at the time of signing Brest-Litovsk Treaty when Lenin's view was left in minority, he managed to impose his will on his hot-headed colleagues. Lenin brought his entire prestige and authority to bear. He threatened to resign which was too a great bargain for the fellow members to stick to their way of thinking and finally they had no other option than to accept Lenin. Thus treaty was signed by Lenin inspite of representing only minority opinion in party Congress.

Serious debate on foreign policy used to take place as late as till sixteenth party congress in 1930. Afterwards this was done behind the doors of central committee by 1934 and eventually into politibureau.

Under Stalin all decisions of the politbureau were in one form or another his own. The role of the other members could best be described as consultative. The Soviet political superstructure prior to 1953 was a complicated mosaic of shifting and interlocking institutions resting on an entrenched foundation of one-man-rule.²⁴ All powers were delegated from above. The institutions of both party and state as well as their relationship to one another were essentially created by Joseph Stalin and were designed not to limit his own power but to limit that of his subordinates and rivals. Both institutions and subordinates were liquidated with remarkable ~~and remarkable~~ dispatch when occasion demanded.

At this stage it is in order to quickly review the attitude of the leaders of the party and government from Stalin onwards on foreign policy matters because after all it was the leader of the party who set the pace of foreign policy as such. This very pattern indeed emphasises the role of individual in conducting the affairs of the Soviet state. Though it depends on the leader of the party and

24. V.V. Aspaturian, "Soviet Foreign Policy" in R.C. Macridis, ed., Foreign Policy in World Politics, (New Delhi, 1976), p. 178

government, how much leverage he would allow to his foreign ministry; for example a leader like Gorbachev would ordinarily love to be in limelight of the international community while a leader like Brezhnev would certainly prefer the cozy environment of his office in Kremlin.

Against Trotsky's theory of 'permanent revolution', Stalin firmly believed in 'socialism in one state' i.e. in the Soviet state. He opined that failure to build national strength would invite capitalist intervention and certain defeat. He had no hesitation in saying that a program of encouraging of revolution in capitalist countries should be carried on, but it should be regarded as less important than building socialism in the Soviet Union.

Stalin argued that the only bar to a complete socialist society in Russia was the risk created by capitalist enemies.²⁵ His image of the world after the Russian Revolution was one of the forced co-existence between a single socialist state and hostile capitalist world surrounding it -- a coexistence imposed on both antagonists by objective historical conditions.²⁶ Neither side is

25. G.H. Sabine, A History of Political Theory, (New Delhi, 1973), 4th edn., p. 774

26. Aspaturian, n. 24, p. 173

significantly powerful to end the existence of the other. Besides the most fundamental contradiction between capitalist and socialist camp, bourgeoisie world was plagued with four additional inescapable contradictions, the contradiction between the proletariat and bourgeoisie in each country, the contradiction between victor and vanquished capitalist states, the contradiction between imperialist states and their colonial subjects. Stalin was known to this fact but was not interested in aggravating contradiction between socialist camp and capitalist camp so long as the Soviet Union was weak. That is why he conceded that war between the two blocs was no longer imminent. It might be preceded by a series of wars among capitalist powers themselves.

It was this perception of Joseph Stalin that the Soviet Union throughout his regime, pursued a policy of isolationism²⁷ in the words of Issac Deutcher.

After the death of Stalin, the twentieth party congress under the leadership of Khurushev abandoned the Stalin's notions of capitalist encirclement. This congress also recognised a third anti-imperialist but non-socialist group

Great
27. Issac Deutscher, The Contest - Russia and the West (London, 1960), p.45

i.e. non-alignment nations. It antiquated inevitability or wars and gave new lease of life to old concept of peaceful coexistence. Khrushchev saw the main contradiction of the current historical stage to be that of between anti-colonial and imperial forces.

It is during Khrushchev's tenure that the Soviet foreign policy passed through the passive phase of peaceful coexistence to active phase.²⁸ If the first phase was marked by a process of building and consolidating socialism in the face of extreme hostility from the capitalist world, then the second phase was known by the acceptance of the Soviet Union as the ascendant historical force, a realisation on the part of the Soviet ruling elite that in the new third stage of capitalism general crises, it was no longer the case that the international system was a rigidly hierarchial order headed by a single power and now there were two leaders - USSR and USA.²⁹

Khrushchev was very dynamic. He himself had great

28. Robbin F. Laird and others, "From Cold War...Soviet Foreign Policy", in Hoffmann and Fleron, ed., The Conduct of Soviet Foreign Policy (New York, 1980), pp. 290-1
29. W. Zimmerman, Soviet Perspective on International Relations (1956-67), (Princeton, 1973), p. 277

interest in foreign policy matters. But he could not muster monolithic support for his initiative. Since in his time, politbureau was sharply and evenly divided so he deliberately encouraged Central Committee to become most important organ of power and authority in determining foreign policy decisions. Generally politbureau makes the final decisions. General Secretary has the most important voice. He can determine the agenda of politbureau meetings. He controls secretariate and has decisive right in selecting new members. Nevertheless, since Stalin no General Secretary has had unbridled discretion though Brezhnev clearly was increasingly pre-eminent since 1971.

Brezhnev was a consensus builder unlike Khrushchev who was a confrontationist in his nature and approach. Leonid Brezhnev was very cautious in the beginning. It is because of this reason that peaceful co-existence which was in Khrushchev time, cornerstone of the Soviet foreign policy, was reduced to equal status with other goals and principles as it had been under Stalin and Lenin.

Gradually, Brezhnev consolidated his position, by the beginning of 1970. Peaceful coexistence which was now referred to as detente was returned to a central place in the theory and practice of the Soviet foreign policy. Brezhnev used the term for less abundantly and with

considerably less enthusiasm than Khrushchev had but he pursued the policy with great deal of success than Khrushchev.³⁰

Brezhnev and his like-minded colleagues were less prone to engage oneself in explicit doctrinal innovation. The trend of the Soviet analysis of the structure of the international system followed the patterns of the last years of Khrushchev era. Emphasis had been on the state and state system which had taken precedent over the world system of capitalism and socialism as main actors in the international arena.³¹ Increasingly there has been a tendency to dissociate the world historical process from analysis of world politics.³²

If Brezhnev era was marked by competitive peaceful-coexistence Gorbachev replaced it by cooperative

30. Margot Light, The Soviet Theory of International Relations, (Great Britain, 1988), pp. 53-4

31. Zimmerman, n. 29, p. 277

32. W. Zimmerman, "Elite Perspective and the Explanation of Soviet Foreign Policy", in Hoffmann and Fleron, ed., The Conduct of Soviet Foreign Policy, (New York, 1980), p.26

coexistence³³, Gorbachev has given a new direction to the Soviet foreign policy. He is neither a theoretical innovator like Khrushchev nor a conservative as Brezhnev was. At the most he can be called a reformist who knows that the Soviet economy lacks confidence and its institutions are crumbling - a person more close to earth, pragmatic one. That is why he is more concerned about global interdependence.³⁴ He wants that the Soviet Union must share the fruits of scientific-technological-Revolution to fight out the ecological hazards and to save the world from nuclear catastrophe. Despite emphasis on US-Soviet relations, Gorbachev simultaneously focuses upon multipolarity in international relations. He advocates that local and regional conflict be more effectively insulated from the East-West rivalry. He condemns the arrogance of omniscience in relations with the Soviet allies specially socialist states. He is against 'Brezhnev doctrine' and does not believe in export of revolution.

He relies more on his flexibility of mind than going back to Marxism to get a solution as his predecessors did. Ability to adjust to new realities is what distinguishes him

33. G. Mirsky, "Deideologisation of Inter-State Relations Perestroika - Soviet Monthly Digest (2, 1980), p.15

34. B. Eklof, Soviet Briefing: Gorbachev and The Reform Period (London, 1989), p.2

from any Soviet leader in the past.³⁵ It is the charisma of his personality that within a short period of six years he has changed the whole world, specially socialist bloc.

In the preceding pages we have attempted to identify a framework for our study. This framework seeks to put the role of individual in the Soviet society in correct perspective. Without overstating the case it does show the role of a leader as well as important functionaries of the Soviet system must not be dismissed off-hand.

The point, however, is that along with the leader of the party and government, other important functionaries do influence making of policies and their execution. How much they do, of course, depends on the personality of the individual involved and in the environment in which he functions.

With a view for the test of our framework we propose to take up a specific case study of a Soviet foreign minister. There can be no better choice here than Gromyko who had after all an unusually long innings as a Soviet minister.

35. David Remnick, "Comrade Personality", Esquire, (Feb. 1990), p. 78

CHAPTER - II

THE PERSONALITY OF A.A. GROMYKO

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Andrei Gromyko lived for about seventy-nine years (1909-1988). At the time of the Bolshevik Revolution he was only eight years old and he became foreign minister of his country in 1957 when he was less than fifty years only. In fact Gromyko grew up as a child of revolution in the Russia's iron-age under Stalin. It was in the midst of Stalinist purges and trials that Gromyko completed his academic career. Till 1938 his rise was steady if not meteoric. End of Stalin era catapulted him to the forefront of Soviet leadership. Gromyko saw through successfully the dark days of Stalinism and later it was none other than he himself who actively cooperated in dismanteling Stalinist apparatus in the Soviet Union.

However, in the realm of foreign policy Gromyko's career really began with his appointment in the USA as Soviet Ambassador in 1943. He succeeded his earlier boss Litvinov about whom he was hardly enthusiastic.¹

Gromyko's life-story is vivid and in many ways unusual.

1. A.A. Grymyko, Memories. M. Shukman, trans. (London, 1989), p.2

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Still his life is essentially typical for a Soviet leader. Gromyko came from the midst of the people. He was heart and soul communist. His personality was endowed with extraordinary diligence, brilliance and versatile gifts and inordinate qualities that had full scope to develop in the conditions of socialist society. It was because of this very reason that he was promoted step by step to responsible and high posts in the leadership of party and country, until he became a member of the politbureau of CPSU and Foreign Minister of the USSR and finally the President.

He was born on 18 July 1909 in the village of Stariye Gromyki in the region of Gomel, a part of Byelorussia since 1926. His father, Andrei Matveyevich, belonged to what was fairly widespread social stratum in Russian, before the revolution that of half peasants and half workers. As Gromyko himself said "this pre-revolutionary designation described a man who did not have enough land of his own to feed himself and his family and who worked away from home in a factory somewhere on a seasonal basis.² In short his was a poor family. At the age of thirteen, he used to go to earn extra money by cutting timber and rafting it down river to the factories in Gomel.

2. Ibid., p.2

These were the years just after the revolution. The Soviet Union was in the throes of economic dislocation brought about by the first world war and aggravated by civil war. Despite hardships his parents did everything they could to give education to their children. From an early age Gromyko showed an extraordinary thirst for knowledge. He finished a rural four-year school, then a seven-year school, and a technical college.

Gromyko finished a higher educational establishment. In recognition of his academic achievements he was invited to continue as post-graduate student, and complete his post-graduate research as economist in Moscow, where he defended his candidate's thesis in 1936. Before the year's end he was senior researcher at the Institute of Economics of the USSR Academy of Sciences and by the end of 1938, he became Institute's acting academic secretary. This was the time when the Soviet Union after overcoming the effects of dislocation, was picking up pace for economic development. Agriculture was being put on co-operative lines, industrialisation had begun and socialist transformation were under way in all fields of life. Special emphasis was laid on training skilled, knowledgeable specialists.

He was not only a reader but also an activist. At the

beginning of 1923, he was elected secretary of the village cell of Young Communist League, the comsomol. He became a member of communist party in 1931 (probationary member in 1920).

In the later half of the 1930s the immense peaceful labours of building a new, socialist society in the USSR proceeded in a setting of endless international tensions. Ominous clouds of war were gathering over the world. A united front of aggressive states, Germany, Italy and Japan was formed. Britain, France and the USA meanwhile adopted a policy of appeasement and desparately sought means of deflecting the spearhead of the attack from themselves on to the USSR. Their policy led to the Munich deal, concluded by Britain and France with Hitler Germany. In this situation the role and responsibility of soviet diplomacy increased. It became essential in Soviet eyes to exploit every possible opportunity, all available means to maximally delay the outbreak of war.

This was a very complicated task. Soviet diplomacy required the best in men that the foreign service could muster. Andrei Gromyko became one of these in whom the party placed its trust and who was charged with responsible diplomatic work. In the spring of 1939 he was appointed. Head of the American Department of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs.

Within six months he was summoned to the Kremlin by J.V. Stalin and to his surprise he was appointed counsellor of the Soviet Embassy in Washington, a post second in importance in those days only to that of the Ambassador.

Gromyko had set out on his mission when rabid anti-sovietism was running high in the United States. In 1943 he became Ambassador. He served in this capacity in Washington from 1943 to 1946. During this time he headed the Soviet delegation at the 1944 Dumberton Oaks conference on the foundation of the United Nations. He also participated in the 1945 Yalta and Potsdam conferences of the 'Big Three'. From 1946-48 he was Soviet permanent representative to the United Nations Security Council and was accorded the rank of deputy minister of foreign affairs. In 1948 he returned to Moscow and in 1949 he was promoted to first deputy minister of foreign affairs.

As a new man on the stormy sea of political life³ in America he began his mission by studying the country⁴ he was posted in. Afterwards, many practical problems including those of war supplies, were duly settled through Gromyko's

3. Ibid., p. 34.

4. Ibid.

continuous contacts with the US administration at various levels. He was also highly active in informing the public about developments in Soviet people's war against the Nazi invaders, fortifying the American's confidence in the inevitable and complete victory over fascism.

Speaking at the meeting in New York on the tenth anniversary of the Soviet-American diplomatic relations in November 1943, Gromyko said: "Effective co-operation in the joint military effort of the Soviet Union and the United States as the world's two biggest powers can have a strong bearing on the length of the war and can further lay a dependable foundation for still more fruitful co-operation between the two countries after the war".⁵ But the United States did not respond to Gromyko's satisfaction. His complaint was why the USA had not come out on the side of the countries calling for peace, above all the USSR had declared its determination to create a mighty united force to oppose aggression.⁶ Gromyko was of the view that mere condemnation was hardly a sign of very firm intent to take a

5. Gromyko, Lenin and the Soviet Peace Policy: Articles and Speeches (1944-80) (Moscow, 1980), p.461

6. Gromyko, n.l, p. 36

stand against Hitler. Gromyko said that Washington's attitude only changed when the USA felt the heat of war itself.⁷ In his opinion even the attack by Germany's ally Japan on the American fleet at Pearl Harbour did not open the eyes of all Americans to the danger to peace and freedom posed by Germany and her allies, because there were American politicians who wanted the USSR and Germany to bleed each other hoping that the USA would be able to have the last word in settling the terms of the eventual peace.

Commenting on Soviet Germany pact of 1939 he said that the pact was the result of the policy of a member of Western powers which did not wish to join the USSR in blocking Hitler's unleashing of war. In attacking the Soviet Union, Germany not only demonstrated the criminal nature of the Nazi clique, but also accentuated the guilt of those Western politicians who had declined to combine the efforts of the states seeking to preserve the peace.

With the steadily mounting success in the war against fascism problems of the post-war arrangement became increasingly pressing. They were discussed at the Tehran meeting among the USSR, the USA and Great Britain (28

7. Ibid.

November-1 December 1943) and at the Yalta (4-12 February 1945) and Potsdam (17 July-2 August 1945) conferences. Andrei Gromyko took part in the latter two, and in other allied conference notably in Atlantic city.

The powers of the anti-Hitler coalition saw the need for an organisation of the United Nations with the strengthening of international peace in the post-war period. At Dumberton Oaks conference establishment of UN was examined by the representatives of the allied powers, with Gromyko representing the Soviet Union.

After Mototov's departure Gromyko headed the Soviet delegation at the United Nations conference in San Francisco (25 April-26 June 1945). He said at one of its sittings "the peoples of the countries represented at this conference have a common objective to prevent another war".⁸

His ambassadorship in the United States, participation in important international conferences and his involvement in the establishment of the United Nations, gave Gromyko deeper knowledge of the problems of world politics, extensive experience in bilateral and multilateral

8. Gromyko, n.5, p.9

negotiations and a high degree of skill in upholding and further the foreign policy interests of the Soviet Union. That is why he was selected as the first Soviet permanent representative at the UN. Very soon he was appointed as Deputy Foreign Minister in April 1946.

The course of world events was then becoming increasingly complicated. Western Powers were eager to exploit the gains of the struggle of nations against fascism on its own. North Atlantic Treaty Organisation was formed in 1949. This was a manifestation of Western policy to speak from the position of strength.

From the high rostrum of the United Nations Grymyko explained the principles and aims of the Soviet foreign policy. He exposed the intrigues and manoeuvres of imperialist powers. He substantiated the burning need for briddling the arms race and for reducing aims and arms forces. He also stressed the Soviet Union's strong wish to settle question of the complete and unconditional prohibition and manufactuering and using atomic weapons.

In 1949 he was back home in Moscow where he was appointed as First Deputy Foreign Minister.

By then the cold war was in full swing. The Korean war

had broken out in the summer of 1950 as a direct result of provocation by the US imperialism from the Soviet point of view. Making a statement on behalf of government of the Soviet Union Gromyko said that the Government of the United States of America had committed a hostile act against the peace and that it bore the responsibility for the consequences of its armed aggression.⁹

In June 1952 Gromyko became Soviet Ambassador to Great Britain at a time when the Soviet-British relations were not happy. Gromyko was again made first deputy foreign minister in April 1953. He held this post till he was promoted as foreign minister of the Soviet Union in February 1957 by Khrushchev.

During this period Gromyko played a prominent role in expediting the armistice talks in Korea, and thereupon also in securing the armistice.

In May 1955 the Soviet Union submitted to the UN Disarmament Sub-Committee a programme for reducing arrangements banning atomic weapons and eliminating the danger of another war. But this programme was resisted by Western powers. This forced Gromyko to say in the

9. Ibid., p.32

sub-committee that they had no sincere intention of examining the question of reducing armaments and armed forces and prohibiting atomic and hydrogen weapons.¹⁰

In May 1955 Warsaw Treaty Organisation was formed. According to Gromyko it was "a dependable defensive shield for the gains of socialism".

In 1956 Soviet Red Army marched into Hungary. This attracted world wide criticism specially from Western powers. Justifying the Soviet action, Gromyko said the forces that were bent on overthrowing the Hungarian leadership intended to liquidate the social order and restore the previous system that had been responsible for making Hungary a bridgehead for Hitler's aggression against the Soviet Union and many other countries.¹¹ Condemning the outside forces he said "the foreign circles that condemned the Soviet action have presented the facts in a distorted light. They have generally pretended not to be aware that the Soviet Union was acting in response to numerous and persistent requests from Hungary, from democratic bodies, including that part of leadership that patriotically stood

10. Ibid., p.12

11. Gromyko, n.1, p.231

for the defence of Hungary's social order".¹²

His tireless activity in government offices his merits as organisers, his extraordinary gifts as diplomat, his rich experience in handling foreign affairs, his scope of vision and profound knowledge of the problems of world politics was recognised by the Soviet Union by appointing him Foreign Minister in 1957. Thus began the longest career any diplomat could have.

From then onwards there was hardly any event in the Soviet foreign policy which did not carry the imprint of Gromyko's wisdom, whether it was Cuban-missile crisis, or the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968 or in Afghanistan in 1979, or different arms control and disarmament conferences. He was intimately involved in the ebb and flow of East-West relations from cold war days through detente in the 1970s and back to the tense relations of the 1980s.¹³

Gromyko was appointed foreign minister by Khrushchev who often treated him with the lack of consideration in public and to draw attention to his subordinate or civil servant's

12. Ibid.

13. For detailed study, please see 3rd and 4th chapters

status, but still Khurshev could not resist himself from describing Gromyko as a good civil servant who always went by books.¹⁴

There were many occasions when Khurshev was glad to have Gromyko by his side. Recalling his apprehension about his first visit to the United States for summit talks with President Eisenhower, Khrushchev noted with satisfaction at the time that he would not be completely on his own, since Gromyko whom he respected as a fine foreign minister¹⁵ would be with him. Remembering his visit to the United Nations in 1960 and the necessity of formulating a resolution, Khrushchev observed: In matters like this we had a real craftsman in Gromyko.¹⁶

After Khrushchev's fall, Gromyko proved just as useful to Brezhnev. His admission in 1973 as a full member to Politburo^{can} without going through the normal stage of candidate (non-voting) membership, itself speaks about his close relationship with Brezhnev.

14. ~~N. Khrushchev~~^{ed.}, Khrushchev Remembers: The Testament, S. Talbott, trans. (Delhi, 1975), p.444

15. Ibid., p. 374

16. Ibid., p.481

When Brezhnev died in November 1982 the contenders for the successions to the leadership of soviet communist party were his protege Konstantin Chernanko and the former K.G.B. head Yuri Andropov. Gromyko had a long experience of working closely with Andropov not only when the latter was chairman of KGB from 1967 to May 1982 but also when Andropov was from 1957 to 1967 head of the department of the central committee responsible for relations with the ruling communist parties. Gromyko probably regarded Chernanko as something of a political upstart and certainly as one lacking sophistication in international affairs.¹⁷ Gromyko was against the appointment of Chernanko as Chief ideologue and Brezhnev's successor though loyal to Brezhnev.¹⁸ Here it is important to note that Chernanko was the choice of Brezhnev as his successor.

Gromyko's support for Andropov was unambiguous and it was rewarded by a further enhancement of Gromyko's standing within the leadership once Andropov became general secretary. He was given greater prominence than hitherto by the Soviet mass media, and accorded a politbureau's ranking which put him among top half dozen members in terms of -

17. The Times (London), 4 July 1989

18. Z. Medvedev, Andropov - His Life and Death, (Oxford, 1984), p.11

political standing. In March 1983 he was made first Deputy Chairman of Council of Ministers.

After the death of Chernanko when question of choosing next general secretary came up, Gromyko despite "belonging to older generation of politicians, gave support to the leading member of younger generation, Mikhail Gorbachev.¹⁹

It was Gromyko who proposed to the party central committee the election of Gorbachev to the general secretaryship. Gromyko's support for Gorbachev might well have been crucial as it was rumoured at the time that there was opposition to the choice of Gorbachev from within the politibureau. Gorbachev, therefore, owed a political debt to Gromyko, but he did not wish him to remain there as foreign minister because of Gromyko's old fashioned way of diplomacy and being product of Stalinist era. But Gromyko was accorded a sign of respect when he was removed from foreign ministership and replaced by Edward Shevardnadze by Gorbachev and formally promoted him to the chairmanship of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet on 2nd July 1985 i.e. head of the state status, a position of superior authority in principle to that he enjoyed earlier.

19. The Times, 1 October 1988

Inspite of being a product of Stalinist age and conservative by nature, he wholeheartedly supported Gorbachev's Glasnost and Perestroika. Commenting on Gorbachev's leadership he said, "This leadership is capable of solving the historically important questions of both economic construction and country's social development."²⁰ He viewed Glasnost as a mighty source from which the people can draw strength for their new achievements, both in domestic life of the country and in carrying out the Leninist policy of peace in international affairs.²¹

Finally there came a time when the indefatigable Gromyko started realising the burden of the age. He decided to retire. He informed about his intentions to the party central committee and to the General Secretary Gorbachev. The Politburo²² discussed his request and accepted his resignation which was ratified by the Central Committee Plenum on 30th September 1988. Gorbachev on this occasion proclaimed him as a great political and state figure.

Like any other mortal soul he also left for heavenly abode on 2nd July 1989 at the age of seventy-nine.

20. Gromyko, n.1, p.342.

21. Ibid. pp. 345-6.

Conclusion

Gromyko's life sketch provides an example how a common man with his sheer brilliance, diligence, consistency and above all loyalty to the leadership can rise from the lowest position to the top echelon of political leadership in a socialist society. He was born poor, but was rich in virtues. He was a great reader, and had undiminishing faith in the basic tenets of Marxism-Leninism. It was these traits of his personality which ultimately paid dividends in his long-chequered career.

Throughout, his relationship with his leaders were good. But it was more based on his loyalty towards them than on one to one equation, except in the very late period of his career.

CHAPTER - III

GROMYKO AS A FOREIGN MINISTER

1957 was the year when Gromyko was appointed as the foreign minister of the Soviet Union by Nikita Khrushchev. Then Gromyko's appointment surprised many of the world leaders and diplomats because he was supposed to be very close to Molotov who was one of the most serious contenders for leadership of the CPSU. Ferocity of the succession battle can be gauged from the fact that it took almost three years for Khrushchev to consolidate his power-base and send off Molotov from the power-structure of the Soviet Union, by describing him as Stalinist in nature and attitude. Nonetheless, Gromyko's ability as a professional diplomat was never in question. On his appointment the noted Soviet expert, Issac Deutscher, commented on Gromyko's personality as: "'No temperamental amateur' or blundering 'intellectual', he is a cold war veteran, second only to Molotov in inexhaustible capacity for patient manoeuvring, for tireless obstructiveness and for all those interminable contests of mud-slinging and pettifogging which belong to cold war."¹ Future proved that how apt this remark was.

1. Issac Deutscher, Russia, China and the West, 1953-66 (England, 1970), p.98

In real sense he saw through the dark days of cold-war to detente and again cold war in the 1980s.

But before one moves to investigate Gromyko as a foreign minister, it would be logical to highlight the problems and features of the Soviet foreign policy during his stewardship and his understanding of the Soviet foreign policy for ready reference.

Post-Stalin leadership introduced few changes in the Soviet foreign policy. Efforts were made to restabilish relations with socialist state more importantly with Yugoslavia and to reduce the tensions between East-West relation. Peaceful-coexistence replaced the 'two camp theses' as the foundation of the Soviet relation with the members of the NATO alliances.

In its policies towards the developing world, the new Soviet leadership introduced comparable innovation. No longer were countries like India and Egypt viewed as mere appendages of Western imperialism but rather as independent 'sates'.

Khrushchev initiated a decade-long effort to expand the role of the USSR in international affairs. The attempted placement of missile in Cuba in the fall of 1962 was

probabbly the high work of Khrushchev's attempt to challenge the dominant position of the US in international affairs, but it also indicated most closely the continuing inferiority of the USSR against the US.

The Brezhnev period saw the growth of the Soviet military capabilities, specially in relation to ~~war~~nuclear strategic capabilities in order to effect the superiority of the USA which Breznev inherited from Khrushchev. Throughout 1970, the Soviet Union not only neutralised the USA's military capabilities in Europe, Asia and Africa but also created a network of agreements with a number of developing countries that gave them access to the Third World.

The Soviet Union pursued the policy of detente with a view to meeting two-front conflict in the West and China in the East, to acquire Western technology in order to deal more effectively with the problem of economics, to expand the role of the Soviet Union as a global power. But the Soviet army's entry into Afghanistan put an end to the detente and new cold-war era began which continued till the emergence of Michail Gorbachev at the international horizon.

No doubt during detente several disarmament treaties like NPT, SALT, etc. were signed. The US debacle in Vietnam, the Watergate scandal and exposure of various CIA

activities proved a boon for the Soviet Union but still many of the Soviet supported Third World states could not accomplish the primary goal of creating a stable political system, as for example Angola, Afghanistan, etc. In the Middle East, the Soviet Union in effect was frozen out of the major development; the Arab-Israel conflict. Dependence on the Soviet Union did not prevent Syria from intervening in Lebanese civil war in 1975-76 nor did the Soviet displeasure could prevent Iraq to diversify its resources from invading Iran.

In the international communist movement the most serious challenge to the Soviet's expanded role in international system came from China. Chinese remained the most vocal critic of detente and the Soviet policy in Asia. During this time challenge was thrown from the rise of 'Euro-Communism' also. Above all, the continuing weakness of the Soviet economy limited the degree to which the USSR can compete effectively with the West.²

Such was the overall scenario of the Soviet foreign Policy during his presence in the Soviet foreign ministry.

2. For better understanding, the following books on the Soviet foreign policy can be seen:

M. Harek, Soviet Foreign Policy since the death of Stalin
(London, 1972)

R.E. Kanet, Soviet Foreign Policy and East-West Relations
(Oxford, 1982)

K. London, Soviet Union and world politics (Boulder, 1980)

J. Steele, World Power: Soviet Foreign Policy under Brezhnev and Andropov (London, 1983)

Gromyko's Views on the Soviet Foreign Policy

According to Gromyko, the Soviet foreign policy is the product of the diverse, purposeful and persevering activity of the communist party which charts the Soviet foreign policy on the basis of a profound Marxist-Leninist' analysis of the progress and prospect of world development and its leading tendencies and precise study of alignment of class forces while organically combining the Leninist principles with a realistic approach to reality.³ He said, "Soviet foreign policy is the result of the socialist revolution."⁴ "So it was and remains at the service of the revolutionary transformation in our country".⁵ It is internationalist in character since the interests of the Soviet people coincide with those of the working people in all countries of the world. It is permeated by the spirit of solidarity with all revolutionary and progressive forces of our time. The Soviet foreign policy is distinguished by its profundity and genuinely democratic character, by a de-facto recognition of the equality of all states, of all races and nationalities.

3. A.A. Gromyko, Lenin and Soviet Peace Policy: Articles and Speeches (1944-80) (Moscow, 1980), p. 401.

4. Ibid., 149.

5. A.A. Gromyko, Peace Now, Peace for the Future (Oxford, 1984), p. 245.

He said, "Soviet foreign policy reflects the nature of socialism, imbued with the lofty ideals of peace and true humanism and is wholly devoted to the creation of a communist society in our country."⁶

In his view the Soviet foreign policy is essentially humanist for it is a consistent policy of peace,⁷ it is to work for peace, to prevent a nuclear catastrophe.⁸

He opined that the class socialist character and content of the Soviet foreign policy are reflected in its fundamental principles - proletariat-internationalism and peaceful co-existence of states with differing social systems, the principle put forward by Lenin. For him the Defence of proletariat-internationalism is the sacred duty of every Marxist and Leninist.⁹

If brief survey of the Soviet foreign policy during his period sketches the diplomatic environment in which he was working, then his perception of the Soviet foreign policy brings before us Gromyko's own cognitive prism of analysis through which he was trying to diagnose and prognos the

6. Gromyko, n.3, p. 96.

7. Gromyko, n.5, p. 245.

8. Ibid.

9. Gromyko, n.3, p. 321.

world situation for the benefit of the Soviet national interest. It is because of this immediate ready context that Gromyko's description of the world scenario during his appointment year does not surprise us. He said, "His appointment year was the period when aggressive intrigues of imperialism continued to provoke serious crises in various parts of the world."¹⁰

Ultimately his apprehension proved right when in April 1961 American mercenaries mounted an invasion at the Bay of Pigs in Cuba. Describing the situation, he said, "Meanwhile US foreign policy had led to a new upsurge of tension, with Cuba as the epicentre. Even after the defeat of the American mercenaries at the Bay of Pigs, Washington had not changed its course on Cuba. Instead on the pretext that Cuba was being turned into a base for 'communist penetration into America' a long propaganda campaign about the Soviet threat in the region was launched."¹¹ This ultimately led to a crisis where the possibility of beginning of third world war was not seen far off. Blaming America and defending the cause of instalment of missile in "Cuba, he said, "This was a defensive measure" because "Cuba was not

10. A.A. Gromyko, Memories, H. Shuknam, trans., (London, 1989), p.175

11. Ibid.

given any effective guarantee by the USA that it would not carry out an armed invasion of Cuba and not help other to invade either."¹² He did not find any reason on the part of America to solve any problem through arms and invasion, threats and blackmail. In his view this issue could also have very well been settled by talks. He justified the Soviet support to Cuba. He said, "If USA undertake hostile action against states which have good relations with her and which respect her independence and give her aid at a difficult time, the Soviet Union cannot play the part of bystanders....The USSR is a great power and will not be a mere spectator when there is a threat of unleashing a big war in connection with the question of Cuba or in connection with any other part of the world."¹³

In the same spirit Gromyko proclaimed American armed intervention in Vietnam at the beginning of 1965 'aggression'. While addressing the twentieth UN General Assembly he said that the United States was acting in Vietnam as an aggressor and as violator of the Geneva Conference of 1954 which guarantees peace, independence and neutrality of Vietnam and restoration of its national

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

unity.¹⁴ He categorically stated that whatever version of events the United States might give, it was not the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam or the Democratic Republic of Vietnam which had attacked the United States rather the United States armed forces which had attacked Vietnamese territory in order to impose a political order which suited the United States in a land where Vietnamese people alone are entitled to be master. In his opinion Vietnamese must be given the opportunity to determine their own future.

Vietnam crisis was followed by Israel's attack on Egypt, Syria and Jordan in 1967. Complex mix of countries having profoundly different levels of political and economic development in Middle East had always been a matter of curiosity for Gromyko. He always wondered how the monarchies rub shoulders with socialist states, and all within a highly compressed territorial area. But the next moment he cautioned that the Soviet Union was not prejudiced towards or against any Arab country. We were in favour of normal and good relations with all of them, regardless of

14. Gromyko, n.3, p.126

their social structures.¹⁵ Explaining the Soviet position he said, "We demand the removal of Israeli troops from all occupied Arab territories and recognition of the legitimate right of the Palestinians to create their own status."¹⁶ During the UN General Assembly session in September 1984 in New York he told Israeli Foreign Minister Itzhak Shamir "In supporting the creation of Israel, right from the start, the Soviet Union was adhering to the principle that the Jewish people had the right to form their own state, just as the Palestinian Arabs had the right to form theirs. The Jewish people's right was reinforced by what they had suffered in the second world war at the bestial hands of the Nazis. And even now when Israel is not friendly towards the USSR, we do not support those who call for the liquidation of Israel as an independent state...but still we condemn severely Tel Aviv's policy of seizing lands to which it has no right."¹⁷ He believed that the best way toward a Middle East settlement was through an international conference which should result in the signing of a treaty or treaties

15. Gromyko, n. 10, p. 276.

16. Ibid., p. 267.

17. Ibid., p.275

embracing the following organically linked components:

- Withdrawal of Israeli forces from all Arab territories occupied in 1967;
- Realisation of the legitimate national rights of the Arab population of Palestine, including their right to an independent state;
- Establishment of a peace which guarantees the security and independent development of all states presently involved in the conflict.¹⁸

For Andrei Gromyko the development of Czechoslovakia in 1968 was an act of counter-revolution. This was staged by the forces that were at one with the previous order when power had been in the hands of politicians who had cared nothing for the people's welfare. These people decided to stage a coup d'etat. For this purpose they used people who had managed to penetrate into the state apparatus. He did not deny the outside support also in the same way as had happened in Hungary in 1956.

It is in pursuance of principles of socialist solidarity and their internationalist duty that the Soviet

18. Ibid., p. 276.

Union, Bulgaria, Hungary, German Democratic Republic and Poland extended their aid to avert the danger of counter-revolutionary mutiny. As Gromyko said, "The Soviet Union and other socialist countries have repeatedly warned those who attempted to push back the socialist community to try to lose any of its links that we would not stand for it and would not let it happen."¹⁹

It really pained Gromyko that the Sino-Soviet relations were in mess. No doubt he blamed Peking's jingoistic and hegemonistic foreign policy for complicating relations. But he also sensed a kind of imperialist design on playing the socialist countries off against each other. He thought that forces of imperialism were striving for military superiority. In the face of this, he said, "It is all the more important to strengthen socialist unity, and it would be easier to improve the political climate and consolidate the foundation of peace if there were a greater degree of mutual understanding between the USSR and China".²⁰

He was convinced that whatever happens between the Soviet Union and China, it has historic importance.

19. Gromyko, n. 3, p. 469.

20. Gromyko, n. 10, p. 253.

Countries of this scale, with their vast natural resources, their rich cultures and their tradition of good relations in the recent past are compelled to recognise the serious need for neighbourliness and friendship.²¹

If wars are to be prevented and there is to be a truly lasting peace, it is essential to curb the arms race and to initiate disarmament. Under this perception on behalf of the USSR, Gromyko submitted a programme of general and complete disarmament to the fourteenth UN General Assembly in 1959. Much before in 1922 Geneva conference on Lenin's direct instructions, the Soviet delegation had put a proposal for universal disarmament. But in this field a major breakthrough took place with the conclusion of the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapons Tests in the atmosphere in outer space and under water signed by the USSR foreign minister Andrei Gromyko, US secretary of state and British foreign secretary in Moscow on 5 August 1963. Following this a whole system of agreements came into being : on research in space (1967), non-proliferation of nuclear weapon (1968), the ban on nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction being deployed on the sea bottom (1971), the convention on banning the development, manufacture and use

21. Ibid.

of biological and toxic weapons and on the destruction of such weapon (1977) and the convention banning military and other substance harmful to the environment (1977). The bilateral Soviet-US anti-ballistic missile treaty (1972) and its codial (1974) and the SALT-I (1972) and SALT (1979) are specially important.

Gromyko was more or less involved in the formulation of all agreements/traties. He was not only concerned with the catastrophic end of human existence by arms race, but also about the diversiion of huge, material and intellectual resources of mankind unproductively for the manufacture of means of annihilation. He questioned how much faster would be the peoples advance along the road of socio-economic development if they were not saddled with enormous burden of huge military expenditure?²²

Explaining the Soviet position he said, "Military superiority is not our goal...we perceive the security of our state and international peace in general through the prism of curbing arms race and of agreements on disarmament concluded in good faith".²³ He stated further that such a

22. Gromyko, n.3, p. 360.

23. Ibid., p. 363.

complex problem could not be solved on a selective basis. He was rather perturbed that a few Western powers are busy in discussing the difference between arms control and disarmament²⁴ when there is a need "to approach the matter in a practical manner".²⁵

He said, "Human reason revolts against the idea that scientific genius and colossal resources should continue to be wasted on weapons of destruction. They have right to demand an end to this madness."²⁶

According to Gromyko, political detente should wage with military detente otherwise positive gains in international relations may well vanish. In his view there was no reasonable alternative to the policy of detente which actually meant that there was no reasonable alternative to disarmament.²⁷

He defined detente in the Soviet perspective as the means to secure more favourable external conditions for the building of socialism and communism and radically improving

24. Ibid., p. 262.

25. Ibid., p. 264.

26. Gromyko, n. 10, p.145.

27. Gromyko, n. 3, p. 362.

the political climate in the world as a whole.²⁸ He elaborated that it ruled out external interference in internal affairs of states and use of threat of force in disputes and conflicts. But it did not mean freezing the objective process of history i.e. conceding out the antagonism between bourgeoisie and proleteriat. Neither did it scale down the ideological confrontation. Detente meant settlement of inter-state dispute by peaceful means, containment of arms-race and to turn the course of events towards disarmament, relaxation of tensions and dominating role of the United Nations for peace pursuits.

With the entry of the Soviet army in Afghanistan, the detente period came to a halt and the phase of cold-war began again. Echoing his views on the Soviet entry in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, Gromyko said, "The enemies of the Afghan people kept on trying to prevent the building of a new, truly democratic life in that country, interfering in its internal affairs and conducting armed intervention from outside against Afghanistan a sovereign non-aligned state".²⁹ Clearly defining the Soviet position, he said, "Only the gullible could heed the groundless assertion to

28. Ibid., p. 335.

29. Gromyko, n.5, p. 172.

the effect that aggravation of the world situation had been caused by temporary introduction of a limited Soviet military contingent into Afghanistan. Our move was made to assist the Afghan people in protecting their country's sovereignty and repelling armed incursions into its territory from the outside, as well as to prevent the emergence of a direct threat to the security of the USSR on its southern border.³⁰

Gromyko justified the action on the ground that assistance was sent in response to repeated appeals by the government of Afghanistan and it was in full accord with the Soviet-Afghan Treaty of 1978 and the United Nations Charter.

Iran-Iraq war also attracted Gromyko's attention. He was convinced that bloody war was senseless from the point of view of the fundamental interests of the people of both countries.

In case of South Africa, Gromyko was of the opinion that undeclared war against Angola and some other states of region launched by racist regime of Pretoria must be stopped. Namibia must be given the right to free existence in an independent state of their own.³¹

30. Ibid., p. 56.

31. Ibid., p. 173.

Conclusion

Gromyko's life, as a foreign minister, between 1957 and 1985 and his views on different international problems and trends, confirms the general saying about the Soviet system that a foreign minister is not entitled to act freely and have his own opinion other than that of the Communist Party and the Soviet Government. No doubt, Gromyko was not an original thinker. But it is also a matter of fact that he was not assertive enough to dictate his terms even in the later part of his career. Throughout his life he remained an articulator of official versions or in other words an able spokesman of the Soviet Communist Party and Government on foreign affairs.

He performed his duties so wonderfully that it is impossible to make a judgement whether he had any personal opinion on all these issues. Even in his memoirs he is silent on such matters and repeats what is well known to the whole world.

CHAPTER - IV

GROMYKO'S STYLE AND CONDUCT OF FOREIGN POLICY

Andrei Gromyko was world's most experienced diplomat and an unparalleled broker of the Soviet power on the international scene. Until his appointment as Soviet President in 1985, he had been at or near the centre of almost every important East-West development since 1929. He also played an instrumental part in the convening of almost every international summit involving the Soviet participation.

Gromyko was a man who carried the stamp of authority that was vested in him by a succession of the Soviet foreign policy makers and at the same time deployed a relaxed urbanity that enable world statesmen and diplomats to feel at ease and confident in their dealings with him.¹ Willy Brandt, the former West German Chancellor, said, "I found Andrei Gromyko very much more affable than the picture one had formed of the acid 'Mr Meyet' (Gromyko) over the years. He was friendly, relaxed and composed - almost Anglo-Saxon in his reserve".²

1. National Herald (New Delhi) 12 July 1989
2. The Grardian (London) 11 July 1989

Willy Brandt's assertion can surprise many if one knows that when he was appointed councillor in the Soviet Embassy in Washington, he did not know English. But it was the same Gromyko about whom Sir William Hayter, a former British Ambassador to Moscow during 1930s and again in 1953 and 1957, said that Gromyko's command over English language was excellent.³ This was also recalled by Michael Simmons and Jonathan Steele, in their report writing about Gromyko at the time of his death that by then his English was impeccable enough for him to tick off his interpreter if the need arose.⁴ He himself was of the opinion that "studying the country where one is posted is an important part of any diplomat's brief".⁵ It seems, he took English learning as a part of his diplomatic work of studying the USA where he was posted. His zeal for studying the country was not limited only to the politics and foreign affairs of the particular country. His memoirs show that he did not leave even a small piece of information about America, from Kenesian Economic laws to the Charlie Chaplin and Marilyn Monroe, from business efficiency of Americans to military

3. National Herald, 12 July 1989

4. The Guardian, 11 July 1989

5. A.A. Gromyko, Memories, H. Shukman, trans. (London, 1989), p.34

Industrial Complex and Pentagon during his stay in America earlier as an Ambassador and afterwards as a permanent representative in the United Nations, in 1940s and 1950s.

During the World War II Stalin and President Franklin D. Roosevelt carried on the Soviet-American relations largely by themselves and it was Gromyko's job then as it was often later to take care of the Soviet side of the details. As he said at the time of Tehran conference that my post involved me in all the painstaking work of the three countries in organising the conference as well as taking part in it and then carrying out its decisions".⁶

He evidently had a degree of Stalin's trust. At the Yalta Summit conference in 1943, one account goes, Winston Churchill heard Mr Gromyko whispering into Stalin's ear, "you must insist on Germany's conditional surrender". The British leader, annoyed, threw cigar butts at the Gromyko.⁷ Gromyko admits that Churchill often became irritated during discussions, but he did make an effort at both Tehran and Yalta to keep his temper within the accepted norms.⁸ Whatsoever might have happened, the circulation of

6. Ibid., p.79

7. International Herald Tribune (Singapore) 4 July 1989

8. Gromyko, n.5, p.40

such news in press and international affairs speaks of Gromyko's personality as a subdued one who can be taken for granted.

In the summer and fall of 1944, Mr Gromyko helped to create the United Nations, as a successor to the League of Nations, in talks among the United States, Britain and the Soviet Union at Dumburton Oaks in Washington. He urged successfully that each of the major powers should have veto power. The Dumbarton Oaks Conference agreed 90% of the issues concerning the creation of the U.N. The question that of the division of the powers between Security Council and General Assembly was left unsettled. This controversy reflected the different positions of the participants on the questions of the need for unanimity among five permanent members of the Security Council. The US position was that if one member failed to agree with the other four, then that member's vote should not count in the Council's decision making. Britain took the same view. This created a doubt in the mind of Gromyko that the US position, if successful, would turn the UN into an instrument for imposing the will of one group of states upon another, above all upon the USSR, as the sole socialist member of the Council.⁹ The states which had had a majority in the Security Council

9. Gromyko, n.5, p.116

might, therefore, be tempted to use force, rather than seek the mutually acceptable solutions.

The Soviet Union opposed the American proposal. The USSR argued that all decisions should be agreed unanimously by the three victorious powers as well as France and China who by common consent, should enjoy the same rights. In other words the basis of effective action should be the principle of unanimity among the five permanent members of the Security Council, with the right to veto to be available if that unanimity is not achieved.

Roosevelt realised the importance of the issue and invited Gromyko to the White House to talk it over with him. He opened the discussion by underlining the importance of the Security Council and then went on to lay out the position which his people had defended at Dumbarton Oaks. It gave an impression to Gromyko that he was not particularly emphasising the issue; rather he was looking for a way to remove the difficulties.

Gromyko explained to him the Soviet position in a fashion that earned him the names 'Mr Nevet' for his tough negotiation and 'Grim Gron' for his stony countenance ¹⁰ later. He said, "We did not have room to retreat from our

10. Indian Express (New Delhi), 4 July 1980

position, just as our troops at Stalingrad knew that they could not retreat further east than the Volga".¹¹

There was no outcome from this meeting and no agreement could be reached at the Dumbarton Oaks but some positive signs were left. The question of the Veto was settled at Yalta by means of a proposal by Roosevelt basically corresponding to the position of the USSR i.e. Security Council's decisions must be agreed to unanimously by all the permanent members.

Although Yalta had not dealt specifically with this, the general agreement reached there made it possible at San Francisco. At San Francisco, departure of Molotov made Gromyko head of the Soviet delegation. By this time Roosevelt was dead and Trueman became President of America, who did not like much of what Roosevelt had accepted at Yalta. As Gromyko said that the Administration (American) had not decided it was going to bury the principle of unanimity whatever the cost but Trueman was determined whenever possible to shake the understanding we had reached".¹²

11. Gromyko, n.5, p.116

12. Ibid, p.119

When Edward Stettinius, the Secretary of State (USA) and Gromyko met alone, the latter said bluntly, "There can be no backing away from Yalta agreements. The USSR believes that without a decision on the right of veto within the spirit of Yalta it will frankly be impossible to create the proposed international organisation. We hope that the US delegation will not, merely formally but rather actively, defend the principle of unanimity of the permanent members of the Security Council".¹³

Stettinius had then nothing to "promise to see that all US representatives do not permit any confusion on this issue".¹⁴ So forceful and convincing was Gromyko during negotiations.

Gromyko had been blamed for the excessive use of veto. He used it twenty-five times between then and July 1948. But he also voted with the majority on occasions. In 1947 he supported the resolution for partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states.

He was a great believer of the UN for Peace which was evident from the fact that he hardly missed an opportunity to attend the UN.

13. Ibid, p.109

14. Ibid.

Gromyko said in 1948, addressing the first UN General Assembly that the United Nations Organisation must differ from the League of Nations not only in the sense that it must be an effective instrument capable of defending the interests of the peaceful life of peoples, but it must also be a new body in the sense that in it there should prevail a sound atmosphere and new methods of collective work.¹⁵ He warned that the revival of methods applied in the League of Nations would cause nothing but would harm the United Nations Organisation. He used to say that the Soviet Union was in favour of strict and complete observance of the Charter and of the implementation of the United Nations principles without any exception whatsoever.¹⁶ He always emphasised the strengthening of the UN and enhancing its authority in international affairs.¹⁷ But the UN does not count stand above states; it is an aggregate of states and consequently the degree of its effectiveness depends on the foreign policies of its member states, and the Organisation cannot be better than the policies of its members.¹⁸

15. A.A. Gromyko, Lenin and the Soviet Peace Policy Articles and Speeches (1944-80), (Moscow, 1980), p.12

16. Ibid, p.174

17. Ibid, p.172

18. Ibid, p.196

No doubt he was present at each and every post-war summit from Yalta to Geneva but he was seen there as an essentially a private man rarely accepting non-official invitation, an acutely single minded servant of the Stalin regime carrying out his orders with energetic accuracy, determined neither to neglect or to exceed by one iota.¹⁹

Mr Gromyko had been named a deputy to Foreign Minister Molotov when he was moved to the UN post and in 1949 he became a first deputy foreign minister under Mr Molotov's successor, Andree Y. Vyshinsky.

He frequently acted as foreign minister during Mr Vyshinsky's illness, absences and vacations. It was the worst period of the Cold-War with the Soviet blockade of Berlin in the winter of 1948-49, the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and the Warsaw pact, and in 1950 the outbreak of Korean War.

He became a full-fledged foreign minister only after the death of Stalin and consolidation of power by Khrushchev in 1957. Few of the great East-West foreign policy issues of the next few years bore hardly Gromyko's mark. In America's eyes Mr Gromyko's status sank even further during

19. The Grardian, 11 July 1989

the Presidency of John F. Kennedy. During the Cuban missile crisis in October in 1962, the Soviet Foreign Minister appeared to American officials to be either ignorant of the presence of the Soviet missiles in Cuba or lying about them.²⁰

Two days before the Cuban missile-crisis Gromyko calmly told the then president Kennedy that there were no Soviet missiles in Cuba.

But for this he should not be fully blamed. This was Khrushchev's era who never hid his hatred against bureaucrats. Gromyko's fault was that he has bureaucratic in his dealings. Like Stalin who very often used to ignore the foreign minister Litvinov and could talk to Molotov directly on issues of foreign policy, Khrushchev too used to bypass foreign minister, Andrei Gromyko. He had gathered a group of non-official advisers around him who were any day more close to him than official advisers. On foreign affairs Khrushchev relied more on A. Adzhubei than Gromyko. Adzhubei on several occasions acted as personal emissary abroad, specially at the beginning of 1960 and when Cuban-missile-crisis occurred. On such visits neither the foreign minister nor the ambassador in the particular country was

20. International Herald Tribune, 4 July 1989

informed of the details of these missions,²¹ and he was recognised as Khrushchev's unofficial deputy for foreign affairs.

So at the time of Cuban-missile-crisis when Gromyko presented his poker face (he was acknowledged as a notoriously 'poker faced Gromyko' by the author of biographies of Yuri Andropov, Martn Ebon, too)²² to the world, many of those who knew Gromyko commented that his stoic features had masked a sharp wit. At that time one anecdote became particularly very favourite among journalists that when he was asked if he had enjoyed breakfast today, Gromyko replied, "Perhaps".²³

Narrating Cuban-Missile-Crisis at one point he said "Contrary to later assertions made in the West, at no time in our conversation did Kennedy raise the question of the presence of the Soviet rockets in Cuba; consequently there was no need for me to say whether there were any there or

21. R. Medvedev and Z. Medvedev, Khrushchev: The years in Power (New York, 1976), p.129

22. M. Ebon, The Andropov File: The Life and Ideas of Yrui Andropov, General Secretary of CPSU (London, 1983), p.90

23. National Herald, 4 July 1989

not".²⁴ Though he accepted that during their conversation Dean Rusk, the then Secretary of State, expressed his particular dissatisfaction about the appearance of the Soviet weapons in Cuba, although like Kennedy he did not ask specifically about our rockets.²⁵

The debacle for the Soviet foreign policy in the Cuban-missile-crisis was one of the reasons Mr Khrushchev was ousted by his colleagues two years later. Gromyko had often borne the brunt of Khrushchev's humour in the past (sometimes even insulting). As Kissinger remembers Khrushchev saying "I can tell Gromyko to drop his pants and sit down on a cake of ice for years and you know the fool, he did do it".²⁶ Even occasionally Khrushchev's successor, Brezhnev used to take some liberty from Gromyko. Again Kissinger remembers Brezhnev saying (though this time it was shared by Rogers, the American Secretary of States) "May be we should send Gromyko and Rogers first to Mars to see that it is like up there and if they don't come back we should not go."²⁷

These examples show that loyalty was clearly one of his leading characteristics,²⁸ in the words of William Hayter.

24. Gromyko, n.5, p.177

25. Ibid, p.178

26. M. Kalb and B. Kalb, Kissinger (London, 1974), p.317

27. Ibid, p.316

28. National Herald, 12 July 1989

But he was loyal, not a slave. He had guts. He sometimes went against the wishes of his masters. As Khrushchev recalled one incident after acknowledging the fact that as a rule comrade Gromyko accompanied him on all his state visits,²⁹ "when Dulles died Gromyko was at a meeting in Geneva. We recommended that Gromyko too go. After all what is wrong with having our representative attend the funeral of our member one ideological enemy. But Gromyko resisted, then we went."³⁰

Much before this incident Gromyko refused to carry one advice of Stalin in America, to visit to American Churches and listen to sermons, in order to improve the knowledge of English language. He himself said "of course I didn't attend any church in America - perhaps the only time when a Soviet diplomat failed to carry out an order of Stalin".³¹ It is to be noted that this order was given to Gromyko in his first meeting to Stalin 1939.

It was only after Khrushchev's removal in 1964 that Mr Gromyko really began to come into his own.

29. Stobe Talbott, ed., Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament, (Delhi, 1975), p.313

30. Ibid, p.363

31. Gromyko, n.5, p.31

It is tribute to his capacity for survival that the new collective leadership with Leonid Brezhnev and Alexi M. Kosygin, felt Mr Gromyko undisturbed in his key position at the foreign ministry.

The years after 1964 saw the emergence of the "New Gromyko" and of a body of the Soviet foreign policy of a quite different order from the bluster, blunder and boost of Khrushchev's years.³²

Diplomats observed that well dressed, usually our foreign minister smiled more often and cracked a discreet joke at the beginning of official talk. He seemed to be more his own.³³

These were the years when the Soviet foreign policy followed a variety of imperatives in different areas. The alliance with China dissolved in ideological and territorial rivalry. The Soviet control over Eastern Europe threatened to break up with the short-lived 1968 liberalization in Czechoslovakia but was reaffirmed with the Soviet led Warsaw-Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia to restore orthodoxy. Brezhnev-Kosygin-Gromyko era was not marked by

32. International Herald Tribune, 4 July 1989

33. Ibid.

confrontation but detente with the West, necessitated by rift with China. There is no doubt that these policies were the result of collective decisions taken and sustained by the entire Politbureau leadership before Gromyko became a member of Politbureau in 1973. But it was he who was entrusted with the details of the negotiations, the treaty texts and the technical agreements that gave detente shape and life.³⁴ Write Michael Simmons and Jonathan Steele, "Where Soviet diplomacy achieved success in the West - in the sense that detente was a success - then those successes had much to do with Gromyko's effectiveness, where the diplomacy failed, notably at Cairo, it was not for want of his trying."³⁵

It was Gromyko who negotiated the Soviet-West German Treaty of 1970, in which Bonn recognised the post-war division of Europe, the existence of East Germany and the loss of the former German territories east of the Oder-Meisse line in Poland.

In the 1971 Treaty with the United States, Britain France and the Soviet Union agreed to normalize the status of West Berlin and put an end to years of tension caused by

34. Ibid.

35. The Guardian, 11 July 1989

its objection to allied agreements left over from war. The United States, in particular its Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, was not particularly happy at the West German eagerness for these and other agreements with the Soviet Union.

But once they were achieved the way was clear for the United States to improve its own relations with the Soviet Union, specially in the area of arms-control. Here too Gromyko played a key role on the Soviet side.

In the early 1970s talks on the necessity for limiting long range bombers and missiles carrying nuclear weapons on the part of both sides became the linchpin of improving the Soviet-American relationship.

By the early 1973 Brezhnev and his colleagues had decided that the time has come to bring Gromyko into the decision making group. This was the indication of his growing political stature and authority within the Soviet elite system.

A many days meetings of the leadership voted him full membership in Politbureau on April 27, 1973. Armed with greater status and as transformed individual Gromyko went to Helsinki, Finland, in July 1973 to open the Second great diplomatic initiative of the 1970s, the East-West conference

on European Security and cooperation to achieve the long sought Soviet goal of Western recognition of the post-war division of Europe. Two years later in July 1975, the conference ended with a satisfactory note for the USSR. But it had to concede to key declarations on human rights which was later used as a sanction by many East European and Soviet citizens for expression of dissent and right to travel abroad.

With the passage of time, Brezhnev's health began to fail and his mental alertness began to decline, he deferred increasingly to Gromyko. Gromyko, Zbigniew Brezhenski, president Carter's National Security Adviser, later recorded - Gromyko would whisper instructions in Brezhnev's ear and sometimes say: "No, don't agree to this".³⁶ On other occasions, Gromyko would indicate to Brezhnev, what points in his script (of which Gromyko was presumably one of the most important authors) he should read out and what he should omit. When visitors ask questions Brezhnev would leave it to Gromyko to answer directly or else the foreign minister would prompt him by whispering in his ears.³⁷

36. The Times, (London), 1 October 1988

37. J. Steele and Eric Abraham, Andropov in Power: From Comsomol to Kremlin (Oxford, 1983) p.3

According to Brezinski, "At the Viena Summit of 1979 between president Carter and Brezhnev, Gromyko was clearly the dominant figure on the Soviet side".³⁸

The real beginning began after president Carter assumed office in January 1977. In March 1977, Secretary of State Cyrus R. Vance who considers Gromyko had few peers in the modern world as a diplomat³⁹, startled the Russians by delivering to Moscow the new administration proposals to go beyond the Vladivostok agreement and work instead toward deep cuts in strategic arsenals.

Gromyko as a counter move called a televised news conference on March 31 and rejected the proposals. He spoke from a prepared statement and settled off statistics and arguments from notes. His rhetoric was polished, touched with anger and sarcasm as he accused the United States of seeking unilateral advantage for itself and trying to get Moscow to eliminate half of its heavy missile force.⁴⁰

Mr Vance and Mr Gromyko in the coming two years met in Moscow, Washington and in Geneva to work out the details of

38. National Herald, 12 July 1989

39. Indian Express, 3 July 1985

40. International Herald Tribune, 4 July 1989

new treaty that would not only set the ceilings on the offensive weapons but would also require some cuts on the Soviet side.

With the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, the third and last phase of Gromyko's diplomatic career began in which the relations between the US-Soviet went into deep freeze. In March 1983, he was made the first deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers which was the formal recognition of his enhanced position. Though by this time in his mid-seventies, Gromyko gave the appearance of being one of the healthiest and most energetic members of the aging Soviet leadership. His capacity to defend the Soviet interests as he perceived them was undiminished.⁴¹

It is not without logic that Brezhnev's consensus building approach in domestic and foreign affairs had given Gromyko to act more freely than in Khrushchev period, specially after 1973,. But before drawing any inference two major developments and its impact on the Soviet foreign policy in 1970s should be kept in mind. First, growing role of military and second of International Department of Central Committee in policy making apparatus.

41. The Times, 1 October 1988

1. The Soviet policy was not thrashed out of politbureau divided between 'hawks' and 'doves'. Rather policy emerged from the interplay of subtle shadings of differences among the leaders and institutions represented in the informal politbureau consensus, a consensus to which all had felt it was to conform even as events moved it in a direction more highly prized by some than by others.⁴² There is little doubt that over time the politbureau growing confidence in the political rewards to be obtained through the military instrument influence~~d~~ the relationships among the institutions tat surround it. Above all the prestige of the Soviet military establishment and its leaders, already ~~greatly~~ enhanced the political effects of ~~growing~~ the Soviet strategic stsrength, rose further with successive demonstrations of the Soviet power projection in the Third World. This enhancement of the political position of the Soviet military in turn had policy consequences. It appears likely that the Soviet military leaders, particularly, Marshal Grechko, were important participants in the political coalition, that favoured an increasing Soviet engagement in such Third World enterprises regardless of the effect on the American attitude.

42. Harry Gelman, the Brezhnev Politbureau and the Decline of Detente, (London, 1984), p.45

The point is not of course that the military could dictate to the Party. Rather the total political environment, both inside and outside the Soviet Union, gradually impelled party leaders towards the consensus that this line of policy was in the ~~next~~ Soviet interest.

One symptom of this changing political atmosphere was the party leadership's readiness to authorise the Soviet military spokesman to make increasingly explicit references to the legitimacy of the Soviet combat role overseas. Marshall Grechko's statement at the 24th Party Congress in 1971 was one of the first such assertions:

"The outstanding successes of country of socialism and our military victories have extended tremendous influence on the world's destiny and promoted the growth of the people's liberation movement and the development of the world revolutionary process. The Soviet army has demonstrated convincingly its historical mission as the defender of everything which is advanced and progressive against the forces of reaction of aggression."⁴³

Such pronouncement continued and grew stronger

43. Ibid. p.46

throughout the era of detente. By 1974 Grechko declared:

"At the present stage the historic function of the Soviet armed forces is not restricted merely to their function in defending our motherland and other socialist countries....but resolutely resists imperialist aggression in whatever distant region of our planet it may appear."⁴⁴

Another more subtle symptom of this change was the apparent upgrading of the importance of military as opposed to countervailing political consideration in the Soviet decision making which is not expected from a professional diplomat like Andrei Gromyko, who believed firmly that good foreign policy was worth two or three armies at the front.⁴⁵

The decision to proceed with the invasion of Afghanistan may have been such a case.

2. There were two departments of the central committee that had central substantive policy responsibilities with regard to the outside world and therefore interacted with various Soviet institutions concerned with foreign policy. One was the CC Departments for Relations with Communist Parties of Socialist States. This was the regime's organ --

44. Ibid, p.47

45. Gromyko, n.5, p.94

with Central responsibility for supporting policy towards the Soviet controlled communist states and towards the communist regimes that had either seceded from the Soviet bloc (Yugoslavia, Albania, China) or otherwise evolved outside of the Soviet Control (North Korea, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia).

The other was the International Department of Central Committee headed for many years by party secretary Boris Ponomarev. This department's orientation towards worldwide and external struggle with the United States was a natural consequence of its origin and its function.⁴⁶ As the western colonial empires dwindled after World War II and a Third World of new states and nationalist movements, arose, the International Department progressively expanded its functions. It became the regime's primary authoritative organ for dealing with national liberation movement. The department was responsible for choosing, cajoling, funding and helping to arm and train those factions for ideological or other reasons most likely to serve the Soviet interests in the Third World.

Meanwhile as the Soviet Union entered the period of detente in the early 1970s, the scope of the department's --

46. Gelman, n.42, p.59

work again broadened to include dealings with Western political and economic leaders who had been the special province of the foreign ministry or the Polibureau.

It is because of this reason that Leonard Schapiro said, "International department during the Brezhnev regime became something much more important than an institution for relations with non-ruling communist parties although inter-alia it retained that function".⁴⁷ Its operators came to mirror the breadth and contradictory nature of the Soviet policy toward the West much more than the activities of foreign ministry did. At the same time this retained important institutional advantage over as the government ministry whose work it paralleled. Despite the fact that its leader Panomarev was outranked by Gromyko after 1973 its other functionaries continued to be given protocol precedence over their opposite members in foreign ministry. Even after Gromyko's promotion, the department in its every day work probably enjoyed a much more direct pipeline to the Brezhnev leadership than did the ministry. Schapiro again said that the Department came to exercise the central role in coordinating intelligence and informing the leaderships.⁴⁸ "It seems therefore beyond dispute", he

47. Ibid., p.60-1

48. Ibid., p.61

asserted, "that the Soviet decision-making process which gathers information on foreign policy briefs the Politbureau and thereby exercise the decisive influence on the Soviet foreign policy."⁴⁹

So it is evident that International Department had been more important in influencing the Soviet policy towards liberation movements in the Third World than Andrei Gromyko, a full member of Politbureau since 1973, and Ponomareu still merely a candidate member.⁵⁰ In general the Central Committee apparatus probably possessed a more direct channel of influence to the Politbureau than did the foreign minister, although this was probably outweighed by the foreign minister's personal stature in those policy areas in which he had primary operational responsibility, such as dealing with the capitalist industrialised world.⁵¹

Even Gromyko's speeches as well as his travels and pattern of contacts suggest that he had always given to the dealings with the United States and Europe much more personal attention and a higher priority than to most of the underdeveloped world. It is impossible to believe that

49. Ibid.

50. Ibid., p.48

51. Ibid., p.48-9

because of space constraint he could not devote more than three pages (263-265) on Africa and two pages (265-266) on South America in his memoirs, when ~~his~~ it is full of descriptions on the USA and Europe. He himself had admitted that he had visited only Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco⁵² out of a vast continent like Africa. While writing about South America he concentrated only on Mexico. This speaks volumes about his neglect for the underdeveloped countries.

This point was also highlighted by Mr Natwar Singh, India's former Minister of State for External Affairs, who knew Gromyko personally in his conversation with the author. He said that Gromyko's whole orientation was Eurocentric. He was absolutely ignorant about underdeveloped countries. Natwar Singh even said that he knew nothing about Africa and Latin America.⁵³

Even under such handicap poor health of both Andropov and Chernanko placed increasing burden on Gromyko which he shouldered with his usual efficiency though diplomatic initiative became difficult. During this period world had

52. Gromyko, n.5, p.263

53. As told in an interview with the author

to go through Gromyko when they wanted to deal with Kremlin.⁵⁴

After the NATO alliances decided in December 1983 to go ahead with deployment of the US medium range missiles in Europe to counter the Soviet SS 20S, the Soviet Union walked out of negotiations on medium range and long range forces for two years.

When Moscow was ready to break the ice, Gromyko was sent in to meet president Reagan as well as Democratic nominee, Walter F. Manedale. In January 1985 he met in Geneva with Secretary of State George P. Shultz to start a new framework of relations and negotiations. But in March 1985 Chernomir died. Becoming of Gorbachev as new General Secretary and pursuance of New Thinking in foreign policy heralded a new era in the Soviet foreign policy whose Gromyko's cautious and rather conservative approach into foreign policy had no place. So when Mr Reagan and Mr Gorbachev finally met in Geneva in November 1985, Andrei Gromyko was not there. He was replaced by Edvard Shevardnadze.

Till the last moments of his career he never strayed from reliable orthodoxy which ensured survival while many of

54. International Herald Tribune, 4 July 1989

his elder rivals were purged. He was an agent not a principal⁵⁵, carrying out the orders of the leaders and never to neglect nor to excess by an iota. Charles Ikle explains this in his book by two examples: one, "At the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Conference in 1962, it was the British Foreign Secretary not one of the neutral delegate who said, "We began to see much in common between the American and the Soviet plans. If we can work on this common ground we should be able to produce a master plan....". The American delegate later took the same view: what we must try to do is to devise a single over-all agreement which draws upon the best from each proposal". But Gromyko would never show such a detachment towards the proposal of his own government and abandon it at the outset in favour of some common ground. He instead expressed the hope that the Disarmament Committee after impartially and carefully studying the draft treaty submitted today by the Soviet Government will recognise the need to make it the basis of the Committee work."⁵⁶

Second:

"Early in 1963 disagreement in the nuclear test ban treaty focussed on the number of inspections the Soviet

55. National Herald, 12 July 1989

56. Fred C. Ikle, How Nations Negotiate (New York, 1967) p. 149

Union offering two to three inspections to deter the underground tests while the US and the UK asked for eight to ten later seven. At that time Dr Jerome Wiesner, the president's (USA) science adviser was reported to have said in a broadcast for the voice of America, "I am sure that this is a gap which can be closed by the continued negotiations and we hope that in the next few months we will see the gap closed: . At the same time at a reception in Moscow, however, the Soviet foreign minister Gromyko in private conversation with diplomats "appeared to define the Soviet offer of those on site inspection as a final figure rather than as a negotiating positions."57

Throughout his career he remained a low-profile unyielding advocate of the Soviet interest. Unfailingly taciturn, he never explained how, but it can at least partly be attributed to his ability to identify totally with whatever brief he was given. If he had his own views, he never let it be known what they were. In his recently published memoirs he was uncritical of all his successive masters. Even Stalin is treated with respect apart from one paragraph of condemnation, and virtually no Soviet act of policy during his period of office is described as faulty.

57. Ibid.

The impression he created was that he accepted the general lines of policy whatever they were and probably gave sensible advice on the best way of putting them into execution.

William Hayter says about him, "Gromyko lands himself easily to caricature. His name suggested grimness and his rather gloomy appearance seemed to bear this out. He misleadingly looked like the apotheosis of negativism...but his negative aspect of his public persona was no more than the echo of his leaders".⁵⁸

Those who know him and have dealt with him are impressed by his political vision, his understanding of world affairs, his extensive knowledge of history and economics and redoubtable memory. Foreign personalities who have met Gromyko pay tribute to his efforts and capacity. One said, "To negotiate with Andrei, you have got to prepare carefully for every talk. You never know what the man suddenly put out from the storehouse of his memory".⁵⁹

Another said, "Each conversation with him took a turn where his knowledge of the subject determined the course of

58. National Herald, 12 July

59. Gromyko, n.15, p.484

the discussion..."⁶⁰ It is suicide to negotiate with him without mastering the record or the issues,⁶¹ so said Henry Kissinger about him.

Gromyko's method of negotiation was stereotype. It seemed a reflection of the national character and of the Russian history. He used to prefer steady pressure than to the bold move and patiently to accumulate marginal gains until they amounted to a major difference. He used to rely on the restlessness of his opposite number to extract other unachievable advantages and to hold on to his own concessions until the last possible moment, almost invariably toward the very end of the last scheduled negotiating session.

Commenting on the style and conduct of Andrei Gromyko's negotiation, Kissinger said: "Whenever possible, Gromyko tried to seal even the opening of a negotiation; that is to say, he would demand a concession as a price for sitting down at the bargaining table. After that he would seek to wear down his opposite number by endless haggling over "general principles". Once these were agreed, he would get a second crack at the issue by haggling over implementation;

60. Ibid.

61. H. Kissinger, White House Years (USA, 1979), p.789

tentative agreements thus often tended to dissolve in the exegesis of their meaning. Whatever Gromyko might say disapprovingly about linkage in general, he was a great believer in linking every detail of a negotiation to every other. He offered every concession conditionally, dependent on some movement on some other subject. Only after this laborious process had demonstrated to him - and, perhaps even more important, to his superiors - that the lemon had been squeezed absolutely dry, would he move to a settlement, often very rapidly. And then innate suspiciousness compounded by the congenital insecurity of the system and the bureaucratic structure within which he lived would take over. The only time this master negotiator would betray any emotion was in the last phase of a negotiation after the agreement was in essence complete. Then Gromyko seemed to be seized by an undefinable terror that his opposite number might pull some last-minute trick on him. He would seek to rush through the signature -- showing that the stolid exertions of the preceding months and years had taken their toll on his composure after all".⁶²

He was a man of words. It might had been difficult to get him agree but he stuck to his bargain.

62. Ibid, p.7-90

For Gromyko every negotiation was a tabula-rasa,⁶³ it started as if it had no history and it established no claim or obligation for the future. He always proceeded by splitting miniscule differences selling every marginal change of position as dearly as possible. In fact his behaviour on the negotiating table some time reminded of a retail businessman not a wholesaler.

Sometimes Gromyko's tactics left a bad taste. The absolute refusal to take any chance, the desire to squeeze every possible gain from a negotiation caused the Soviet leaders to miss the opportunity for a summit in 1970 when US bargaining position was weak. Had the Soviets responded in 1970 they should at least had complicated America's China initiative and inhibited her freedom of manoeuvre in the Middle East.⁶⁴

When things went badly his face used to take an expression of such plaintive dejection that one was tempted to yield. But above all he would persist in whatever course he was on, using whatever argument he had in hand.

63. Ibid, p.791

64. Ibid.

Conclusion

Without doubt Gromyko was one of the ablest diplomats who lived through the Stalin period, the Molotov era at the foreign ministry, roller-coaster diplomacy of Khrushchev, compromising attitude of Brezhnev and short lived Andropov and Chernenko and finally for a very small period of innovative genius, Gorbachev.

As long as he was a part of government he could not do much but when he earned the membership of politbureau he started making the full use of it. If earlier he was an implementer then later he became formulator.

His art of diplomacy might not have embodied the great vision, or put forward a compelling model of world order, but still it was very effective. He was neither a Western sophisticate nor he believed in implicit subtlety but he conducted himself with great skill, patience and discipline, which ultimately paid for him and his country. It was not his assignment or conception of his role to ask the ultimate question. This was one of the most important reasons for his survival for so long a duration.

In reality he represented the national-character and history of a country who has metamorphosed into a global power living throughout in a perpetual sense of insecurity and eternal distrust and hate for the Western capitalist world.

CHAPTER - V

ASSESSMENT OF GROMYKO AS A FOREIGN MINISTER

Against the liberal thinking, society is the centre of Marxian analysis and individual in periphery. For a Marxist, individual is never prior to society, rather it is vice-versa. For them it is the society in the process of historical development which creates individuals, leaders and personalities and decides the future course of action. Individual being a product of socio-economic conditions has no command over the objective situation so it cannot influence it in anyway. No doubt there has been some moderation in this thesis with the passage of time in twentieth century. But still it is always impossible for a Marxist to be convinced that human consciousness is supreme and autonomous in itself. It was this basic understanding which acted as a mental block for Soviet political thinkers and analysts as well as policy makers to accept the fact that personality did make an impact during the last seventy years of Soviet history. This dimension was ignored not only in domestic field but in foreign affairs too.

But if one scrutinises carefully the history of the Soviet foreign policy, it is not difficult to conclude that

dominant personalities did play a part whether it was minor or major. Greatest example is Lenin himself who was not thoroughly convinced of the classical Marxists contempt for the leaders and personalities. He doubted the basic abilities of the common masses to rise and fight against the oppression in an organised way and resort to a revolution. For them, these forces were always trade-unionist in attitude and needed the spark of intellectuals and a small group of leaders to ignite their consciousness for revolution.

So when he became the unanimous choice for the Soviet people to lead the USSR, he provided to the Soviet state a basic framework for its foreign policy in the form of Peaceful Co-existence and Proletariat-Internationalism, which after seven decades is still its cornerstone. Whether it was Stalin's 'socialism in one State' or 'Isolationism' in other words, or Khrushchev's 'adventurous policy of Globalism', or, Brezhnev's era marked by 'Detente' and new cold war or Gorbachev's period of 'new thinking' specially in the sphere of international politics, Soviet foreign policy could not afford to ignore these two principles. It is another thing that some time it was called competitive coexistence, and another time cooperative one or a

particular era was depicted as an active phase of co-existence or passive.

Even within this ideological framework it were always the dynamic personalities like Stalin, Khrushchev, Brezhnev and Gorbachev who had been instrumental from time to time to determine the direction and course of Soviet foreign policy's stream. If Stalin's insistence put Soviet Union under diplomatic hibernation for more than two decades at the international map, then it was Khrushchev's dynamism and zeal for redefining the Soviet foreign policy that forces Soviet foreign policy to recognise the new dimension in world politics in the form of Third World and potential of Soviet state as a global power and act accordingly. More or less, Brezhnev pursued the policies of the last years of Khrushchev. Advent of Gorbachev at the helm of affairs in the Soviet Union gave another boost for policy innovation. So much has been done by them and written about him that it is futile to go deep in elaboration.

Therefore, it is not illogical to infer that personality does have a role to play even within the framework of Soviet foreign policy.

It is within this context that the case study of Andrei Gromyko the foreign minister of the Soviet Union for twenty-seven years was done. A Soviet minister is always

considered to hold simply executive branch of administration namely a ministry and his role in making and conducting policy was not taken into account. However, Gromyko was an exception because of his unusually very long innings as foreign minister as well as member of Politbureau of the CPSU.

He was born in July 1909. His childhood was the time when country's economy was in the throes of economic dislocation. In 1931 he joined Communist Party and finally in 1957 he became foreign minister after serving as an Ambassador to the USA and the UK. He held this position till 1986, to become the President of the USSR. He practically saw the Soviet Union moving from hey days of Stalinization to destalinization, from a small power to Global power. In fact, he grew with the very growth of the Soviet foreign policy.

Those who know him and have dealt with him were impressed by his political vision and understanding of world affairs, his extensive knowledge of economics and history, his redoubtable memory and extraordinary industry. He was a devout communist, a great believer of the scientific foundation of Marxist-Leninist principles. In his own words

he has only tried to implement the Leninist ideas of foreign policy of the world's first socialist state.

Gromyko who virtually participated in the forming of UN and, never missed an opportunity to attend it. He had immense faith in this International Organisation. He was always in favour of utilizing the maximum services of UN for peaceful solution of world problems. Although it was he who earned the nick name Mr Neyat for using veto for record number of times. But still his record in the UN was stupendous.

From the time of inception of UN till his promotion as President of the USSR, he always stuck to the official version of CPSU. He wholeheartedly defended the Soviet case from the Soviet intervention in Hungary in 1956 to the latest one in Afghanistan. He preferred to be embarrassed than to utter a single word otherwise even in private. It was his this attitude which made it impossible to differentiate between his official and personal stands. In his expression of views he was blamed to be repetitive and stereotype, but his critics fail to understand that during all such occasions he was only repeating what was told by the government and more precisely the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Thus it can be said that he was an able

defender and articulator of the Soviet foreign policy in international arena.

For twenty-seven years he was drive-wheel of the Soviet foreign policy. He attended almost all conferences and East-West summits. He never entered a negotiation without having mastered the subject. For him every minor issue was as important as major one, pressing every point with impartial tenacity. He was indefatigable and imperturbable. When he lost this temper he did it carefully under a well thought out plan. Gromyko did not believe in the brilliant stroke or the dramatic manouvering. His innate caution and Moscow's domestic politics were against them.

No doubt his method of negotiation was sterotype. He preferred steady pressure in comparison to bold move. He was a great believer of patiently accumulating marginal gains until they amounted to a major difference. He mostly relied on his opposite number to become restless to achieve an unachievable gain. Generally, he himself used to concede in the end. His strategy was why to waste them in the beginning if other side was ready to oblige without them. This was very effective specially against inexperienced diplomats.

Kissinger remembers in his memoirs that 'Gromyko's favourite verbal device was the double or even quadruple negative. 'Not out of question' was for him a resounding affirmative.

In fact his style was the product of the Soviet system. He was well aware of the limitation of the Soviet society. He knew that greater flexibility might seem suspiciously like ideological impurity or mere softness. So he had to conduct the international affairs of a super-power from a bureaucratic jungle in which only power base was his own competence.

The price of his survival included him being the butt of a crude jokes of whoever was the top leader, Khrushchev and Brezhnev were alike in this respect. During such moments his eyes remained wary and slightly melonically. Through all these, Gromyko preserved an aloof kind of dignity, loyal and compliant but not obsequious and inevitable a point would reach where his competence would dominate the discussions. Then one could not do anything but appreciate this consummate diplomat, well briefed, confident and tenacious.

Except Lenin he worked under all top Soviet leaders who mattered in shaping the history of the Soviet Union from

Stalin to Gorbachev. He started his diplomatic career when the Soviet Union was badly in need of a person whose professional skill and patriotism to the state could not be questioned. Stalin was greatly impressed by Gromyko's diplomatic skill. Later on he became very close to Molotov, and was even considered his prodigy. It is due to his cordial relationship with Molotov that he was demoted to the post of ambassador in the UK, when Molotov fell in the eyes of leadership.

But due credit should be given to his enormous capacity to adjust himself with the changing circumstances that he was elevated by a person, Khrushchev, who thought Gromyko to belong to the opposite camp during the period of succession i.e. Molotov's camp, to the position of foreign minister.

In spite of sometimes humilitating him in public and private, Khrushchev was an admirer of Gromyko. He hated bureaucratic Gromyko but could not resist himself from appreciating Gromyko, the master craftman. During his time, Gromyko was simply a dignified clerk whose work was to manage and collect files, to check the draft material of any treaty. He was so much illinformed at the time of Cuban missile crisis that when he faced the Western media he made

himself a matter of joke, who was thought to be either pretending or lying.

Gromyko had to wait the arrival of General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev to grow his importance. Infact, it was during this period that a new Gromyko was born out of the old, less confident Gromyko. Since Brezhnev himself was a compromise choice for the General Secretaryship, consensus building approach became prominent in foreign policy making. It is because of this reason that world saw a more confident, self-poised, Gromyko after 1973 when he was brought into politbureauo along with Marshall Greecko and KGB Supremo, Yugi Andropov by Brezhnev. Kissinger himself had admitted in his reminiscences of White House days that it was only in 1973 he felt Gromyko to be better informed. He was seen more and often whispering into the ears of Brezhnev on the negotiating table and suggesting which word of the draft to be more emphasised and which had to be overlooked. Even a man like Brezensiky noted the fact that Gromyko became a dominant figure on the Soviet side at the Viena Summit of 1979. One has to keep in mind that it was the time when Brezhnev's health started betraying him and consequently mental alertness declining.

Undoubtedly, he was dominant in the second half period of Brezhnev era but Gromyko's role should not be exaggerated

out of proportion. It was the time when it was realised among the Soviet top leadership that with the emergence of the Soviet Union as the global military power, considerable participation of the military establishment is needed in policy making body that is why Grechko became an automatic choice for the full membership of politbureau. The peculiar division of power in the USSR restricted the ministry of foreign affairs to express its views on the political implications of arms control proposal, not on military aspect which was the sole authority of ministry of defense. Secondly, in the dealings with the newly formed states of Third World it was International Department of the Central Committee which had frequent access to Brezhnev than the ministry of foreign affairs, although Ponomarov, the Chief of this department, was only the candidate member of politbureau in comparison to the head of foreign ministry, Gromyko, a full member. So it is difficult to believe that Gromyko mattered a lot as much as the Soviet policy towards the third world is considered. His area of informal jurisdiction was West.

When Brezhnev died it became difficult for his successors to ignore Gromyko for his support to be the leader of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Gromyko did not rate Chernanko very high as an ideologue and leader,

though he was an explicit choice of Brezhnev as his successor to whom Gromyko remained loyal throughout his life. He supported Yuri Andropov for leadership who ultimately succeeded Brezhnev. His period was short lived and so was of Chernenko, too. But by the time so much water had passed in Volga that Gromyko became a king-maker and finally it proved so when sharply divided top leadership voted for Gorbachev, it was the support of Gromyko which proved vital, in his choice.

Unfortunately, Gorbachev was more than a radical for a conservative personality like Gromyko, who despite the enormous flexibility of his personality could not fit into the restructured blueprint of the Soviet foreign policy. So he had to make room for a younger inexperienced man, Edward Shevardnadze. Still Gromyko had the rarest of rare distinction of a very much graceful removal in a socialist society.

Gromyko thus survived several purges and outlasted Soviet leaders from Joseph Stalin to Chernenko and worked with Gorbachev. His career spanned over a period in which nine US Presidents were in office: from Franklin D. Roosevelt to Ronald Reagan. Till 1973, he was only an implementer of the Soviet foreign policy, not a maker of it. During this time his problem was that he was never an

apparatchik, a member of the Communist Party apparatus. He was basically a government man, not a party man, and it was of course the party and not the government that made policy in the Soviet Union. So at the most he was a higher civil servant or career diplomat and a very good one. In this capacity his duty was to carry out the orders of a succession of Soviet leaders.

After 1973, when he became a part of the party as a politbureau member, he was a dominant figure in conducting and formulating Soviet foreign policy. And it can be said without any hesitation that he played an important role in making Soviet foreign policy specially when Brezhnev fell ill and rather inexperienced faces in the field of international affairs, Chernanko and Andropov took over, after him.

It is very easy to criticise him for his bulldozing persistence at the negotiating table but Soviet history will always remember him as a man who protected his country in times of turbulence and confusion, who marked its weaknesses and advanced its purposes. No doubt final greatness elluded him but he achieved important objectives and rarely made avoidable error. How many foreign ministers can claim such a distinction?

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