

United States- East European Relations in the 1990s

Edited by Richard F. Staar



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INTRODUCTION

Richard F. Staar

In 1988 the U.S. Department of State published a booklet on American foreign policy that devotes only half a page to Eastern Europe out of a total of 97 printed pages. Recognizing the fact that the USSR exercises hegemony over the region, the United States government seeks to exercise "a moderating influence on Soviet policy toward those nations. [It] deals with East European governments on an individual basis to promote:

- Increased awareness of and respect for human rights.
- Domestic political and economic reform.
- Greater autonomy in their foreign policy.
- Security for all European nations."¹

The Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace at Stanford University (Stanford, California) sponsored a workshop after the November 1988 national elections on this subject, as a contribution to the foreign policy debate about future relations between the United States and each of the regimes in Eastern Europe.

Participants had been requested to focus on trends that might be important during the 1990s. The political, economic, and military area surveys as well as country background papers were prepared by recognized academic specialists, most of whom are teaching at American colleges or universities. For the projections, current or former U.S. foreign service officers (deputy chiefs of mission and ambassadors) and senior National Security Council staff members were invited to present their views at the workshop.*

*We wish to thank the John M. Olin program on Soviet and East European Studies at the Hoover Institution for its generous support, which made the conference possible.

POLITICAL OVERVIEW

The sessions ^{start} commenced with an ^{overview} overview of changing relations after 1985 between the USSR and its client regimes. Robert L. Hutchings suggests in the opening chapter that this transformation may be more fundamental than any since Stalin's death.² The call for a "common European home" by Mikhail S. Gorbachev may result in an even stronger drive for closer contacts between the two Europes after political and economic integration in 1992 by the western part of the continent.

The main obstacle, of course, involves Soviet domination over most of the countries in Eastern Europe. If the peoples in the latter accept less than full independence and sovereignty by the year 2000, there may be a chance for relaxation of Moscow control. Dr. Hutchings cites the director of the USSR Institute of Economics for the World Socialist System as concluding at a conference with American scholars that the East European states allegedly, now already have "broad opportunities to realize unhindered their national interests."³

This statement obviously should be qualified by the limits to change. As a minimum, all allied governments must remain as members of the Warsaw Treaty Organization and continue the leading role of their respective communist parties. However, two other challenges might arise, according to Dr. Hutchings: (1) a regime-supported movement toward political autonomy, qualified by alignment with USSR foreign policy, i.e., "Finlandization," or (2) a revolt against the ruling party within the context of empire decay, which has been called "Ottomanization."

The second challenge would be met by a Soviet invasion, should a political compromise be impossible.⁴ Peaceful change, of course, is preferable for all parties concerned. This may already be taking place in such countries as Hungary and Poland. If so, then perhaps Gorbachev will realize that he cannot expect genuine economic reform and prosperity throughout Eastern Europe with simultaneous domination by Moscow over the region's political life.

CMEA AND THE ECONOMIES

The economic factor is discussed by John P. Hardt in Chapter 2, who spells out Western policies most likely to result in growth and stability. Nevertheless, a comprehensive reform may take 10 years or longer to complete. The West could postpone loans until this process is in place.

The Soviet Union, by pressuring the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) members in Eastern Europe toward reforms, would be supporting this stance. *对...施加压力 相互的*

Other than rendering bilateral aid, the United States in due time might positively influence the international organizations to offer credits, Joint ventures and relaxed technology transfer would follow. Differentiation, should favor earlier help for Hungary, Poland, and Yugoslavia where reforms are more advanced than those in other East European countries. *互利 技术转移*

The potential for growth throughout the region is predicted upon the assumption that both the United States and the Soviet Union will find it in their respective national interests to support the economic recovery in the East European part of the world. Dr. Hardt suggests the following possible developments.

An American policy that facilitates commercial exchange, perhaps by easing export and credit restrictions, would align itself with Western Europe if a breakthrough has been made by a specific country (e.g., recognition by the communist regime of Solidarity as a partner in the reconstruction of Poland). Otherwise, our NATO allies may decide to proceed without the United States. *团结合作*

The Soviet Union could expand intra-CMEA exchange of goods and restructure that organization. The announcement Gorbachev made in his 7 December 1988 address before the United Nations about a 10 percent reduction in Soviet armed forces over the next two years⁵ could be emulated by other Warsaw Pact members. If so, the overall military burden would also be reduced by those East European governments, if Moscow permits them to do so.

Closer ties among the USSR, Western Europe, Japan, and the United States in terms of joint ventures and other mechanisms might impact Eastern Europe on a trilateral basis. The key to all of this could affect the Soviet's near monopoly control over energy supplies, primarily natural gas and petroleum.⁶ How this leverage is used will influence the outcome of reform in the region. *垄断控制 经济合作*

Dr. Hardt suggests that the response to Western policies involves both benefits and risks for the USSR. He develops several scenarios, the most detrimental of which would lead to a loss of Soviet leadership over Eastern Europe. Another envisages a split between the [West] European Economic Community (EC) after 1992 and the United States, with the former continuing to trade and the latter engaging in economic warfare against the Soviet Union. *不利 合作 战争*

The emerging relationship between the EC and the CMEA is treated

by Josef C. Brada in the second part of Chapter 2. He traces the protracted talks between the two economic blocs, which commenced in 1973 although there had been country-to-country agreements long before that. A joint declaration, signed in June 1988, recognized the right of the EC to negotiate trade agreements with individual CMEA members. The first was agreed upon three months later with Hungary.

During 1987 only 7 percent of the EC trade involved Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. However, Western Europe sends to the CMEA some 60 percent of the latter's legal high technology imports. The East also willingly accepts subsidized agricultural commodities from the West. In return, the EC receives one-third of all East European exports. It is doubtful that this ratio will increase substantially, according to Professor Brada.

One interpretation suggests that by making Eastern Europe dependent upon EC technology and manufactured products, the non-USSR members of the CMEA⁷ might become detached from their metropole. Other observers argue the reverse, namely, that better East-West relations will mean a break between the United States and the EC, with Western Europe becoming dependent on Soviet energy/raw materials and ultimately "Finlandized."

After 1992 the West European common market may divert its trade away from the CMEA, although increased production output could have the opposite effect. The surge of interest by EC members (and Japan), with 12 billion dollars in loans given to the USSR or being considered during October-December 1988 could be looked upon as preliminary to a "Marshall Plan" for the Soviet-dominated region.⁸ Or it could simply result in a new credit war, according to Professor Brada.

THE WARSAW TREATY ORGANIZATION

Apart from politico-economic factors, there still exists the military dimension, which is addressed by Christopher D. Jones in Chapter 3. He identifies the unchanging objectives of the Warsaw Pact and mechanisms through which they may be achieved. This military alliance is faced with three sets of adversaries: (1) domestic opposition to each East European regime, (2) those persons in both Germanys who believe in political unification, and (3) the Federal Republic of Germany's military allies.

Professor Jones does not believe that any of Gorbachev's arms control initiatives would require either Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO) re-

structuring or a reduction in its military capabilities.⁹ The same missions will endure; they are the following:

- Preemption of independent WTO member capability for defense by national means. *（取消独立）*
- Designation of elite military units from member states for intervention against other states. *（精锐部队）*
- Combining these elite units into bilateral formations and then into a "greater socialist army" to face NATO. *（扩大）*
- Assignment of first-line responsibility for internal repression to indigenous national armed forces. *（镇压和控制）*
- Defense of home territory against NATO disruption of Soviet logistics and against domestic antiwar protests. *（使全苏服从，后）*
- Providing occupation troops for areas captured by Warsaw Pact forces.

To achieve these six objectives, the USSR has used several principles vis-à-vis its allies: (1) fragmentation of national control over indigenous armed forces, (2) the use of WTO multinational agencies to legitimize bilateral Soviet-East European links, and (3) the pursuit of cohesion through functional integration, resulting in the absence of any choice other than to accept USSR domination. *（部署、军事、内部）*

These three principles are applied by means of military doctrine, the WTO political directorate, joint maneuvers (both bilateral and multilateral), central agencies of the alliance, the officer education system, and defense production, which makes war materiel interoperable. *（通用）*

All of the foregoing have survived the mismanagement of the Brezhnev-Andropov-Chernenko era. Professor Jones identifies the new arms control proposals, including the one for a set of conventional force reduction talks that would cover the area from the Atlantic to the Urals and supersede the 15-year-old Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction (MBFR) negotiations. Gorbachev already announced in his speech on 7 December 1988 before the United Nations in New York that the Soviet armed forces would be cut unilaterally by 500,000 men over the next two years. However, even the foregoing will not affect the status quo in Eastern Europe or between the two Germans, according to Professor Jones.

THE NORTHERN TIER

The discussions center in Part II on the three countries comprising the largest units within the so-called socialist commonwealth of nations. Ar-

thur R. Rachwald (Chapter 4) suggests that the political dynamics of Poland will be affected by USSR domination through the end of this century, unless Soviet power unexpectedly were to decline. The stalemate between regime and opposition continues.¹⁰ Despite this fact, the Polish model of socialist pluralism ultimately will include the ruling party, Solidarity, and the Roman Catholic Church.

This should result in freedom to determine the domestic system, although as a member of the Warsaw Pact and with communists in control of internal security. The choice for the Polish regime in the 1990s will be either to continue its socioeconomic decline to the point of civil war or to allow representative government and a free economy. In any event this road to pluralism is likely to be slow, frustrating, and expensive, according to Professor Rachwald.

In his projections, also in Chapter 4, Nicholas G. Andrews discusses the basic objectives of U.S. policy vis-à-vis Poland in the 1990s as supporting de-Stalinization, decentralization, and democratization. He lists seven principles upon which the foregoing could be based and then delineates three ways in which American goals can be achieved: encouraging political pluralism, offering economic assistance, and expanding contacts with the Polish population. The success of this policy will depend, of course, upon the regime's attitude and its readiness to compromise. For that to materialize, one may have to wait until a successor replaces General Wojciech Jaruzelski.

In contrast with those of Poland, the political stability and economic growth rate of East Germany are the most impressive throughout the region. The alternate model across the border to the West, uncertainty regarding Erich Honecker's successor (which may not be settled until the next party congress in May 1990), and the lack of full popular support are mentioned by Robert Gerald Livingston in Chapter 5.

Dr. Livingston does not consider political stability to be a problem, since both Germanys and the USSR have a shared interest here. Apart from incremental economic reform, the German Democratic Republic (GDR) may be moving toward more legality based on pre-1933 traditions. West German influence is increasing,¹¹ with the GDR becoming more attracted to its prosperous neighbor. The possibility of this relationship developing into a de facto FRG protectorate over East Germany is not inconceivable, according to Dr. Livingston.

Nelson C. Ledskey (also in Chapter 5) recognizes that the two Germanys have a special relationship that the United States will not undermine. In effect, our NATO ally has been given the lead to pursue its own objec-

tives. American concerns center on development of political pluralism, respect for human rights, and more responsible international behavior by the GDR. Progress has been slow. Mr. Ledsky suggests that Moscow is and will be more important for East Berlin than Bonn. If the reform effort fails in the USSR, no intra-German dialogue can prevent a spill-over effect.¹²

Czechoslovakia is also of prime geopolitical importance for the Soviet Union. Zdenek Suda (Chapter 6) develops three possible scenarios, all aimed at preserving dominance of the ruling communist group: (1) continuity through cooperation, with only moderate and controlled reform, (2) an indigenous reform to gain popularity, which might develop a momentum of its own, or (3) ignoring the Soviet changes, which would be a most dangerous course of action. Which one has been selected will be known at the next party congress opening on 10 May 1990, or perhaps earlier.¹³

Professor Suda concludes with a discussion of international communism, now coming to an end. The phenomenon might pose a danger only if directed from a single center that has the power to intervene. To render such intervention impossible by promoting the independence of small countries should become the axiom of U.S. policy in the 1990s, according to Professor Suda.

American relations with Czechoslovakia are surveyed (also in Chapter 6) by Carl W. Schmidt, who contends that modest progress has been made over the past six years, and he provides the evidence for this. He also discusses fundamental differences between the two governments, especially regarding human rights. A possible course of future action is delineated, based on realistic expectations, as follows: encouragement of East-West regional cooperation, pressure for observance of human rights, welcoming genuine economic and political reform with most favored nation status, and expansion of exchanges (including views and information), among others.

THE SOUTHERN TIER

The three countries remaining as members in both the Warsaw Pact and the CMEA are discussed in Part III, beginning with Romania (Chapter 7). Mary Ellen Fischer stresses that the longevity of current leader Nicolae Ceaușescu would affect trends in the 1990s. Conditions will change only after his removal or death. Until that time, personalized power, na-

tionalism, rapid industrialization, and centralized control should continue.¹⁴

Professor Fischer concludes that Ceaușescu's resignation is highly unlikely, with forced removal at almost the same low level of probability. A transition managed by the highest ranking communist leaders might not result in a dynastic succession, however. Emil Bobu would seem to be the one most likely to emerge at the top from a collective leadership, unless he is removed earlier by his current mentor. Commitments to Marxism and the Soviet alliance, nationalism that enhances legitimacy, and personalized power as a tradition in politics should remain.

In his projections (also Chapter 7), Robert R. King offers two scenarios: (1) with Ceaușescu and (2) without Ceaușescu. The former would suggest little, if any, change in U.S.-Romanian relations. The limits of Soviet tolerance have been reached. Should the leadership change in Bucharest, Dr. King does not believe that it will alter the strategy of foreign policy. On the tactical side, greater flexibility will lead to improvements, especially if Gorbachev remains in power.

The communist leader in Bulgaria is the oldest (born 1911) in all of Eastern Europe. Todor Zhivkov had conscientiously emulated Soviet policies until his national party conference in January 1987, at which the announcement was made that fundamental reforms would be postponed until the next communist party congress (1991). The mid-1988 Central Committee plenum purged two leading communists, rejected automatic application of USSR experience, and ordered a crackdown on dissent.¹⁵

However, as John D. Bell (Chapter 8) points out, important factors favor resumption of reform. Society has changed significantly since Zhivkov became party boss in 1954. Members of the generation born after World War II are more sophisticated than their predecessors. Neither disloyal nor antiregime, they find the fundamentalist Marxism of aging leaders irrelevant and an obstacle to progress, according to Professor Bell.

Jack R. Perry (also Chapter 8) agrees that Bulgarians look forward to an economic future with some hope. He suggests that the United States encourage the people to work toward true independence. Normalization of relations with Sofia is well worth pursuing by Washington and is attainable, as Eastern Europe emerges from under the Soviet shadow, according to Ambassador Perry.

Despite the impression that Hungary had become the showplace of Eastern Europe, the national communist party conference in May 1988 revealed a different picture: complacency, delays in reform, a growing hard currency debt, inflation, a declining standard of living, and social

tension. Also discussed were political mistakes, which are to be rectified by working groups, appointed at the conference. The new leader, Károly Grósz, however, has indicated that a multiparty system is out of the question during his lifetime.¹⁶

According to Peter A. Toma (Chapter 9), at least five major independent groups have been harrassed by the authorities. Draft legislation, if approved, supposedly will protect them in the future. Only after a new constitution is adopted in early 1990 (to replace the 1949 Stalinist document) will it be theoretically possible to pass a law allowing other political parties to operate. Unless these economic and political reforms are pursued vigorously, Professor Toma predicts that mass demonstrations will trigger the use of force by the regime. Some 20 peaceful ones took place during the 1988 calendar year in Budapest.¹⁷

Martin J. Hillenbrand, also in Chapter 9, suggests that the United States alone no longer can play a decisive role in Eastern Europe. Allowing our NATO allies, especially the Federal Republic of Germany, to take the lead would be a wise policy. The United States itself should encourage all Hungarian moves toward economic and political liberalization, perhaps even relaxing controls over the export of dual-use products by the Economic Community in Western Europe. American foreign policy options must be formulated within the broad context of the East European region, including the Soviet Union, according to Ambassador Hillenbrand.

NON-WARSAW PACT MEMBERS

The larger of the two non-Warsaw Pact countries is Yugoslavia (associate CMEA member), which has experienced inflation, unemployment, strikes, and ethnic disruption during the 1980s. Even this domestic political upheaval has not affected renewed financing by the West, however.¹⁸ Whether conditions can be stabilized depends upon the international environment, according to Susan L. Woodward (Chapter 10). Several domestic Yugoslav policy compromises have been reached to prevent political disintegration, and these are not under serious challenge.

The first is based upon a strong and independent defense to protect national sovereignty. The second compromise, between centralization for defense and development on the one hand and regional self-sufficiency on the other, means a weak center. The third involves free enterprise in commodity production and the market at the micro level, contrasted with

socialist ownership and distribution at the macro level. Professor Woodward suggests that political stability has been bought by Belgrade with a persistent suboptimal economic policy.

In his considerations of future U.S. foreign policy, Richard E. Johnson (also Chapter 10) suggests that it would be a mistake to become involved with these domestic Yugoslav problems. The ferment has brought openness to political life and, to date, has been devoid of violence. It is in the interest of the United States to preserve an independent and strong Yugoslavia. The "three liberalizations" concerning prices, imports, and foreign exchange were introduced in May 1988 without friction. The same applied to a consensus reached during October of that year on constitutional amendments. However, Mr. Johnson does not recommend that the West extend more credits tied to economic reform at this time. The International Monetary Fund and World Bank, among others, contributed \$1.4 billion during calendar year 1988 to Yugoslavia.

Albania, neither a member of the Warsaw Pact nor of the CMEA, seems least prepared to enter the twenty-first century. Decades of economic mismanagement, stagnation, and repression were the legacy of Enver Hoxha, inherited in April 1985 by Ramiz Alia, who has moved cautiously and with moderation to reverse these trends.¹⁹ Reinvigoration of the economy would require that the Albanian regime abolish central planning and overcome resistance of the entrenched bureaucracy.

Elez Biberaj (Chapter 11) contends that radical reform appears unlikely. Since this alternative is unacceptable, Alia has chosen superficial reforms without touching the fundamental features of the system. None of these will succeed if unaccompanied by political change and more responsible use of power by the elite. However, reform in the political system will be difficult, risky, and contentious, according to Dr. Biberaj.

In his commentary, also in Chapter 11, Nathaniel Davis examines the signs of thaw that have appeared in Albania. These include some flexibility in agriculture, the easing of repression by Alia, slightly more tolerance of religion, and some economic reforms faintly similar to Gorbachev's *perestroika*. In foreign affairs, Professor Davis examines the continuing obstacles and impediments to the establishment of U.S.-Albanian diplomatic relations and discusses the prospects for overcoming them.

Notes to Introduction

1. U.S. Department of State, *Fundamentals of U.S. Foreign Policy* (Washington, DC: Bureau of Public Affairs, March 1988), p. 53.
2. See his new preface, "Gorbachev and Eastern Europe," in *Soviet-East European Relations: Consolidation and Conflict* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), paper, pp. xv-xxvii.
3. Oleg T. Bogomolev, "The United States and Eastern Europe," *Problems of Communism*, 37, no. 3-4 (May-August 1988), 65-67. The meeting took place during July 1988 in the United States.
4. This is the assessment also of Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, the dean among contemporary sovietologists. See his Special Address, *ibid.*, p. 69.
5. "Vystuplenie M. S. Gorbacheva v OON," *Pravda*, 8 December 1988, pp. 1-2.
6. A new CMEA Committee for Cooperation on Fuel and Raw Materials held its first meeting in Moscow. "Priniat plan raboty," *Pravda*, 19 November 1988, p. 4.
7. See Steven W. Popper, *Conflicts in CMEA Science and Technology Integration Policy* (Santa Monica, CA: October 1988), RAND Corp., P-7491, for a recent study of this organization.
8. Ronald Bailey, "Let Them Make the Loans," *Forbes* (12 December 1988), p. 102; *U.S. News & World Report* (19 December 1988), p. 20. The USSR owed the West \$43 billion at this time, with American banks holding less than half of 1 percent of the outstanding Soviet debt.
9. On these capabilities, see Jeffrey Simon (ed.), *NATO-Warsaw Pact Force Mobilization* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1988), pp. 563.
10. Evidence comes from a Central Committee plenum that dismissed six members of the ruling Politburo and added eight new ones. John Tagliabue in the *New York Times*, 22 and 23 December 1988, pp. A-8 and A-4, respectively.
11. Serge Schmemmann, "2 Germanies' Political Divide Is Being Blurred by Glasnost," *New York Times*, 18 December 1988, pp. 1, 14.
12. In the discussion, the use of National Endowment for Democracy (NED) funding was suggested. For successes achieved, e.g., in Poland by NED, see George F. Will, "Seed Money for Democracy," *The Washington Post*, 18 December 1988, p. C-7.
13. "Razrabotka programmy KPČ," *Pravda*, 17 December 1988, p. 4. See also the *New York Times*, 16 December 1988, p. A-11, for the retirement of two known hard-liners.
14. See, e.g., "Ceașescu Opposes Reform," *Soviet East European Report*, 6, no. 8 (10 December 1988), 6.
15. Sofia radio, 20 July 1988.

16. For the reasons, see Tagliabue, "Independents a Problem in Budapest," *New York Times*, 19 December 1988, p. A-3.

17. V. Gerasimov, "Perestroika v Vengrii," *Pravda*, 12 December 1988, p. 5.

18. For details, see Richard F. Staar, *Communist Regimes in Eastern Europe*, 5th rev. ed. (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1988), pp. 221–259.

19. For a Soviet assessment, see the article by N. Iurchenko on Albania in *Pravda*, 28 November 1988, p. 6.