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THE TENTH PERIOD OF SOVIET THIRD WORLD POLICY

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THE TENTH PERIOD OF SOVIET THIRD WORLD POLICY

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Now that Mikhail Gorbachev has been General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) for well over two years, it would be useful to ask whether his policy toward the Third World is distinctive and in what ways it is different from that of his predecessors, particularly Leonid Brezhnev. Gorbachev in his first two years has consistently surprised Western observers by speaking in a very different way about the entire Soviet policy agenda. He has stated on numerous occasions that for him domestic policy has priority over foreign policy, and that to carry out his ambitious economic reform program, he needs peace and the lowering of international tensions.¹ In the realm of foreign policy, he and his lieutenants have been proclaiming the need for "new political thinking" about problems of international security and global order. The "new political thinking" at this point consists of a few concrete changes in arms control and China policy, and a great deal of rhetoric, some of it utterly utopian, about the mutuality of security, economic and environmental interdependence, the impermissibility of war in the nuclear era, and the like.² In view of this new rhetoric, has Third World policy changed?

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¹See for example his address to the international peace forum, February 16, 1987 (translated in Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) *Daily Report*, USSR, Feb. 17, 1987, pp. AA15-26).

²For an overall description of the "new political thinking," see Charles Glickham, "New Directions for Soviet Foreign Policy," *Radio Liberty Research*, Supplement, 2/86, Sept. 6, 1986.

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For while the Third World has never been at the top of the Soviet policy agenda, it has been a consistently neuralgic issue in U.S.-Soviet relations, and if Gorbachev genuinely seeks a less conflictual environment for *perestroika* he will have to come to grips with the Brezhnev legacy in places like Afghanistan, Nicaragua, Angola, and Southeast Asia.

I would argue that Gorbachev does have a fairly well defined Third World policy already in place, one whose theoretical roots have been developed systematically over the past decade, and whose real-world implementation is by now quite evident. The core of this policy is a shift to the "right" in the traditional language of the world communist movement: future initiatives are likely to be toward strengthening ties with large, strong, geopolitically important Third World states, even if they are capitalist-oriented, rather than helping to power self-proclaimed Marxist-Leninist regimes, the policy that characterized the 1970s. This type of shift or tactical adjustment is nothing new in Soviet foreign policy, and in fact represents only the tenth and most recent period in an alternating cycle of left- and right-wing strategies pursued since 1917.

At the same time, the Soviets will have to deal with the legacy of the late Brezhnev years, their commitments to weak, troubled Marxist-Leninist states like Angola, Afghanistan, and Ethiopia. The shift in Soviet preferences with regard to clients has not thus far and will not likely mean the abandonment of any allies from the earlier generation, but will rather overlay the old list of friends with a new one. Overall Soviet policy in the Third World will therefore look quite eclectic, with a broadening of Soviet ties to a heterogeneous collection of states around the globe.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This shift in policy must be seen against the background of the Brezhnev years and the policy reassessment that has taken place since then.³

³I have described both the policy of the late Brezhnev period and the subsequent reassessment in *Moscow's Post-Brezhnev Reassessment of the Third World* (Santa Monica: The RAND Corporation, R-3337-USDP,

Underlying the burst of Soviet activism in the mid to late 1970s was the belief that Moscow could secure and protect its influence in the Third World by promoting self-proclaimed Marxist-Leninist regimes, and helping them to form vanguard parties which would provide an institutional basis for continued relations with Moscow. This "second generation" of clients would, the Soviets hoped, be less hung up on their own nationalist agendas and more willing to collaborate with Moscow than were the "first generation" bourgeois nationalists of the 1950s and 60s. At the same time, the Soviets hoped the new clients would be less vulnerable to coups and other political setbacks. In contrast to the arms-length policies of the 1950s and 60s, the Soviets with their Cuban and East German allies worked actively in the late Brezhnev years to restructure the internal political systems of countries like South Yemen, Afghanistan, and Ethiopia along orthodox Leninist lines.

The project of exporting Soviet political and economic structures to the Third World did not work very well, and by the early 1980s there was a general recognition in the Soviet theoretical literature that earlier hopes for stronger clients and more permanent influence based on the promotion of Marxist-Leninist vanguard party states were not being realized. While the new generation of Marxist-Leninist allies did prove more willing to cooperate with Moscow politically and militarily, they did not do well as a group. They tended to be economically backward, even by Third World standards, and made their situations worse by the "premature" introduction of socialist measures like collectivized agriculture and indiscriminate nationalization of foreign property. Due to their narrow political bases and ideological characters, many of these regimes were perceived as illegitimate by much of their own populations; as a result several, including Angola, Mozambique, Afghanistan, Cambodia, and Nicaragua, faced internal guerrilla insurgencies. The need for large amounts of Soviet military and economic assistance did not end with the regime's coming to power but

1986), and "The Rise and Fall of the Marxist-Leninist Vanguard Party," *Survey*, Summer 1985.

continued and in many cases grew substantially over time to the point where the Third World "empire" constituted a non-negligible drain on Soviet resources.

While disillusionment with the Marxist-Leninist vanguard party state was more or less universal among Soviet specialists on the Third World by the mid-1980s, few suggested alternatives to this policy. An important exception was Karen Brutents, since the mid-1970s a deputy head of the CPSU Central Committee's International Department. Brutents initially had responsibility for the Middle East and Latin America, and now, with the retirement of Rostislav Ul'yanovskiy, probably holds the portfolio for the rest of the Third World as well. Brutents differed from many of his colleagues by never manifesting particular enthusiasm for Marxist-Leninist vanguard parties; throughout his academic career he was consistently skeptical about the possibility of building genuine socialist institutions in backward countries.⁴ In a series of articles written in the early 1980s, Brutents argued in favor of shifting Soviet emphasis away from countries that are ideologically correct but small and weak, to larger, geopolitically important Third World nations with "objective" anti-imperialist potential, including some that are capitalist oriented. Writing in *Pravda* before Brezhnev's death, Brutents pointed out "the solid base for the Soviet Union's cooperation with those liberated countries where capitalist relations are developing but which pursue a policy of defending and strengthening national sovereignty in politics and economics." He further noted the Soviet Union's growing cooperation with large, non-Marxist-Leninist countries like India, Brazil, and Mexico, and suggested that they and not the socialist-oriented Ethiopias, Afghanistans, and Angolas ought to be the focus of Soviet attention.⁵ In a 1984 article he further amplified this thesis. Noting the existence of significant contradictions between many

⁴See for example "Epokha sotsializma i natsional'noye osvobodheniye narodov," *Kommunist*, No. 18, December 1967, p. 96, and "Pravyashchaya revolyutsionnaya demokratiya: nekotorye cherty prakticheskoy deyatel'nosti," *MEiMO*, Part 2, December 1972, p. 125. I am grateful to Scott Bruckner for many insights on Karen Brutents.

⁵"Sovetskiy Soyuz i osvobodivshiesya strany: voprosy teorii," *Pravda*, 2 February 1982.

capitalist-oriented Third World states and the West, he observed that "As long as it does not reach the monopolistic stage, even the development of capitalist relations in the liberated countries does not nullify [these contradictions] and does not directly contribute to consolidating the positions of imperialism."⁶

While Brutents's views were out of step in the late Brezhnev years, his ideas found a much more receptive audience under Gorbachev. The International Department, which succeeded the Communist International (Comintern) as the organ for promoting the world revolutionary process, had traditionally been the home of a number of hard-liners who for ideological reasons were quite sympathetic in the 1970s to a policy centered on the promotion of Marxist-Leninist vanguard parties, and relatively insensitive to the effects such a policy might have on U.S.-Soviet relations.⁷ But Boris Ponomarev, the former Comintern official who headed the International Department virtually since its creation in the mid-1940s, finally retired in February 1986, and the other deputy responsible for Third World affairs, Rostislav Ul'yanovskiy (another man whose career started in the Comintern of the 30s), retired later that year. Ponomarev was replaced by Anatoliy Dobrynin, the former ambassador to the United States, a career foreign ministry official who by background and life experience is very different from his predecessor.

The other important Soviet official to write about the importance of the non-Marxist-Leninist Third World has been Aleksandr Yakovlev. Yakovlev, a former head of the Institute of International Relations and the World Economy (IMEiMO), was promoted to head the Propaganda Department of the CPSU Central Committee by Gorbachev in 1985, was made a candidate member of the Politburo at the January 1987 Central Committee Plenum and then rapidly advanced to full membership at the June 1987 Plenum. He is clearly one of Gorbachev's closest advisors, and the party secretary most responsible for implementation of the policy of *glasnost*.⁸

⁶"Osvobodivshiesya strany v nachale 80-kh godov," *Kommunist*, No. 3, 1984.

⁷This is well documented in Arkady Shevchenko, *Breaking with Moscow* (New York: Knopf, 1985).

⁸For more on Yakovlev's background, see Alexander Rahr, "Soviet

Gorbachev's foreign policy to date reflects in many ways Yakovlev's thinking. The latter's interest in the large states of the Third World was set in the context of his larger strategy for Soviet foreign policy. Yakovlev has argued that there are numerous intercapitalist contradictions which the Soviet Union can exploit. Rather than focusing so narrowly on U.S.-Soviet relations as often tended to be the case under Gromyko, he has suggested a multipolar strategy in which the USSR would broaden its range of contacts and cultivate important capitalist allies of the United States such as the countries of Western Europe, Japan, China, and the like. Hence Gorbachev's first two years as General Secretary have seen considerable diplomatic activity with states like France and West Germany and several new initiatives toward China; Shevardnadze visited Tokyo, which Gromyko had not done since the mid-1970s, and suggested a visit by Gorbachev to Japan for later in 1987.

The Third World implications of Yakovlev's general line lead him to the same policy as Brutents. In one recent article, he stated

Among the consequences engendered by the operation of the law of unevenness in our age is the appearance of sufficiently strong young national capitalist states -- the "new industrializing countries" -- which are at the same time both the object and agent of economic expansion. They -- for instance, Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico -- have their own monopolistic groups, in certain cases capable of entering the struggle against the "old" industrial empires....

One must suppose that in the historically foreseeable future, the centrifugal trend -- toward the growth of interimperialist contradictions and the further splintering of the monocentric capitalist world of the postwar decades -- will actively resist the centripetal forces.⁹

Yakovlev and Brutents are in effect promoting the return to a

Propaganda Chief's Unexplained Absence," *Radio Liberty Research*, RL 447/86, Dec. 2, 1986, and Julia Wishnevsky, "Aleksandr Yakovlev and the Cultural 'Thaw'," *Radio Liberty Research*, RL 51/87, Feb. 5, 1987.

⁹Aleksandr Yakovlev, "Interimperialist Contradictions -- The Contemporary Context," *Kommunist*, No. 16, November 1986 (translated in FBIS, 12 Dec. 1986, annex, p. 7).

Khrushchev-like right wing policy of cultivating ties with bourgeois nationalist states in the Third World, and by implication deemphasizing support of Marxist-Leninist vanguard party states.

The line has received official sanction. A new party program was adopted at the 27th party congress in February 1986 to replace the last one that had come out under Khrushchev in 1962. The draft version of the new program echoed the Brutents-Yakovlev line exactly, stating that

The practice of the USSR's relations with the liberated countries has shown that real grounds also exist for cooperation with young states which are travelling the capitalist road. There is the interest in maintaining peace, strengthening international security, and ending the arms race; there is the sharpening contradiction between the people's interests and the imperialist policy of diktat and expansion; and there is the young states' realization of the fact that political and economic ties with the Soviet Union promote the strengthening of their independence.¹⁰

The language of the party program makes clear that the Soviet Union should be neither inattentive to the Third World nor accommodating of American and Western interests, but should rather hope to play on the "contradictions" between the West and the newly industrializing countries. The party program, on the other hand, makes very little mention of the socialist-oriented countries -- the self-proclaimed Marxist-Leninists from the 1970s that had been ritualistically celebrated in earlier statements by Soviet leaders.¹¹

¹⁰Draft party program translated in FBIS supplement, 28 Oct. 1985, p. 25.

¹¹Gorbachev's address to the 27th party congress in February 1986 does not contain a separate section on the Third World and makes scarcely any mention of individual Third World countries, except for Afghanistan which is spoken of as a "running sore." *FBIS Daily Report*, National Affairs, 26 February 1986, p. 31.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW LINE

Moscow's new emphasis on large, geopolitically important states was therefore one of the more carefully thought-out policy shifts of recent times, and certainly one of the most clearly announced in advance. By now the real-world implications of the policy are evident in a variety of regions around the world, nowhere more so than in India. India, of course, has been a favored Soviet client since the mid-1950s, but in the past two years has been singled out for special treatment. Of all the countries in the Third World, India has received by far the greatest degree of Soviet attention since Gorbachev came to power. Besides Afghanistan, India was the only other Third World country mentioned by name in Gorbachev's address to the 27th party congress in 1986.¹² Rajiv Gandhi visited Moscow in May 1985 as one of Mikhail Gorbachev's first guests, and Gorbachev returned the favor in late Nov. 1986, his first visit to a Third World or Asian country.¹³ Gorbachev clearly intends to make India the centerpiece of his policy toward the developing world. In his address to the Indian parliament, he said: "To me personally, it is quite obvious that much of what we call new political thinking manifested itself internationally for the first time in relations between the Soviet Union and India. And the fact that differences of socio-political system and ideology and our national, cultural, and other distinction have not hampered our dialogue is extremely important as a guiding example for others."¹⁴ Since the visit, Soviet leaders speaking in other Third World countries have repeatedly referred to Soviet-Indian relations as a kind of "model" for Moscow's ties with a developing country.

¹²This is a reference to the Indian-Soviet summit. See FBIS, 26 Feb. 1986, p. 030, and Alvin Z. Rubinstein, "A Third World Policy Waits for Gorbachev," *Orbis*, Vol. 30, No. 2, Summer 1986, p. 357.

¹³This was actually the fourth summit between Gandhi and Gorbachev. See Jyotirmoy Banerjee, "Moscow's Indian Alliance," *Problems of Communism*, Jan.-Feb. 1987, p. 1.

¹⁴FBIS *Daily Report*, Soviet Union, 28 Nov. 1986, p. D6.

In the course of these exchanges, the Soviet Union and India agreed to a wide-ranging series of economic and military ventures, including a package of credits worth \$1.4 billion in May 1985, a four-year trade agreement in November 1985, a bilateral trade agreement in November 1986, and an agreement announced in July 1986 under which India would manufacture MiG-29 aircraft.¹⁵ This is not to suggest that the Soviet-Indian alliance has been without problems. The Soviets have had a difficult time balancing their bilateral trade with India, in view of declining Indian demand for Soviet machinery and the drop in world oil prices that began in the mid-1980s.¹⁶ But the Soviet Union in the early 1980s remained the largest customer for Indian exports, while India remained one of the largest consumers of Soviet arms.¹⁷

India has not been the only large, important Third World country on Gorbachev's agenda. In October 1986, Soviet foreign minister Shevardnadze visited Mexico City. Sometime thereafter the Soviets announced plans for the General Secretary to visit Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay (it is not clear whether he will visit Cuba, and quite unlikely that he will stop in Nicaragua) at some point, the very list of countries cited by Brutents and Yakovlev as targets for Soviet diplomacy.¹⁸ The Mexican foreign minister, Bernardo Sepulveda Amor, received a lavish reception in Moscow in early May 1987 and was received personally by Gorbachev, at the same time that the Libyan foreign minister passed through Moscow with relatively little fanfare.¹⁹ The

¹⁵The 1985 agreement was to have doubled Soviet-Indian trade in 1986, but hopes for this were not realized due to drops in the prices of oil and tea. See Bohdan Nahaylo, "Gorbachev's Asian Debut: The Visit to India," *Radio Liberty Research*, RL 440/86, Nov. 21, 1986, p. 4.

¹⁶Dilip Mukerjee, "Indo-Soviet Economic Ties," *Problems of Communism*, Jan.-Feb. 1987, p. 21.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹⁸Robert S. Greenberger, "Reagan Administration Gets Nervous as Soviet Union Woos Latin America," *Wall Street Journal*, Nov. 17, 1986.

¹⁹See Bill Keller, "Soviet, In a Shift, Expands Contact with Third World," *New York Times*, May 25, 1987, p. 1.

Mexicans have been receptive to Soviet overtures and have endorsed various Soviet international positions, including those on Central America and the total elimination of nuclear weapons.²⁰ While Gorbachev's visit to South America was delayed by other, more pressing matters, Shevardnadze in late September 1987 undertook a visit to Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay.²¹

Evidence for heightened Soviet interest over the past three years in the capitalist-oriented parts of the Third World abounds. The area in which the Soviet Union has undertaken the most visible initiatives is the Middle East. Moscow established diplomatic relations with Oman and the United Arab Emirates in September and November 1985, respectively. While the process of normalizing ties with the conservative states of the Persian Gulf was set back temporarily by the civil war in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen in January 1986, the Saudi oil minister visited Moscow in early 1987 and there are persistent rumors that the opening of Soviet-Saudi diplomatic relations are imminent.²² Moscow was demonstrative in promptly rescheduling in March a large tranche of debt to Egypt which was to come due later that year, inviting comparisons between its behavior and that of Egypt's Western creditors like the United States and the International Monetary Fund, which have pressed Egypt for various internal reforms. The Soviet Union has been edging closer to reopening ties with the predominant military power in the Middle East, Israel, as well. First official contact was made in Helsinki, Finland, in August 1986. In April 1987, Gorbachev made the pointed assertion at a dinner for Syrian President Hafiz Assad that the absence of diplomatic relations between Israel and the USSR "cannot be considered normal," and a Soviet consular delegation arrived in Jerusalem in July.²³

²⁰See interview with Sepulveda, *Izvestiya*, March 22, 1987.

²¹William R. Long, "Shevardnadze to Begin Trip to South America," *Los Angeles Times*, Sept. 26, 1987, p. 4.

²²Stephen Page, "Patterns of Soviet Activity in Southwest Asia," *International Journal*, Vol. 41, Spring 1986, p. 321.

²³See Galia Golan, "Gorbachev's Middle East Strategy," *Foreign Affairs*, Fall 1987, p. 41.

Moscow's most remarkable initiative, however, came in the Persian Gulf in the summer of 1987. The Soviets were prompt in responding to Kuwait's request to protect its tankers threatened by Iran in May 1987 by agreeing to permit Kuwait to charter three Soviet-flag tankers to transport its oil. But Soviet diplomacy was low-key and non-confrontational, and sought to maintain its balance between the two belligerents.²⁴ Moscow was also able to capitalize on American heavy-handedness in tilting fairly openly toward Iraq and sending a large naval task force into the Gulf in response to a parallel request from Kuwait. While continuing to support Iraq with weapons and voting in favor of the first UN Security Council resolution urging a ceasefire in the tanker war, the Soviets kept their bridges open to Teheran by not supporting the second resolution mandating sanctions against Iran. The Iranians, not wanting to be isolated from both superpowers simultaneously, invited Deputy Foreign Minister Vorontsov to Teheran in June and again in August. In the course of these visits the two sides discussed a number of economic projects including a new oil pipeline and railroad to the USSR.²⁵ Moscow was thus not only able to meet the Kuwaiti request for reflagging, but to use the opening as leverage to actually *improve* relations with Teheran at the same time. Should Iran and Iraq for their own reasons decide to settle the conflict, Moscow will be in a very good position to play the role of mediator (as it did for India and Pakistan at Tashkent).²⁶

²⁴When one of the chartered Soviet ships, the *Ivan Koroteyev*, was attacked by Iranian forces, the Soviets were extremely mild in their response. The Soviets increased the size of their naval task force in the Gulf over the summer to one destroyer, three minesweepers, and a supply ship, a much smaller and less threatening force than the forty-plus ships sent by the United States.

²⁵See for example Daniel Abele, "Recent Soviet Moves in the Persian Gulf," *Radio Liberty Research*, RL-307/87, August 10, 1987.

²⁶Whether the Soviets can continue to balance between the two belligerents is much more problematic. Earlier attempts to do so, for example during the Nasser-Qassem rivalry in the late 1950s, or during the Ogaden War between Ethiopia and Somalia, ended in failure.

The USSR has also been very active building bridges to the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) states, despite its heavy involvement with Vietnam. There has been an upsurge in bilateral visits between Soviet officials and their counterparts in Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand. Indonesia's economics minister Ali Wardhana visited Moscow in October 1984; in July 1985 Anatoliy Zaitsev, head of the Soviet Foreign Ministry's Southeast Asian bureau, was the first of several Soviet delegations to visit Bangkok; and Yakov Ryabov, a deputy prime minister, visited Kuala Lumpur in November 1985. The Soviets have expanded economic ties, and have tried to capitalize on the ASEAN states' trade disputes with the United States and fears of the People's Republic of China (PRC).²⁷ In early March 1987 Eduard Shevardnadze made a visit to Australia, Indonesia, and a number of other countries in Southeast Asia.

Gorbachev's kind words toward India should be contrasted with the speech given by Yegor Ligachev a couple of weeks later at the 6th congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam in Hanoi. This party congress was marked by a remarkable degree of self-criticism on the part of the Vietnamese themselves; nonetheless, Ligachev can only be described as brutally frank. The Vietnamese Communist Party, he said,

is concentrating the attention of communists on existing problems, boldly revealing the miscalculations that have been committed, and restructuring its organizational and cadre work in accordance with the requirements of transformations in the socioeconomic sphere. All its activity is taking place in an atmosphere of responsible criticism and self-criticism and of observance of the principle of looking the truth in the face. This is a characteristic of a truly Marxist-Leninist party. V. I. Lenin used to say that "the party of the revolutionary proletariat is strong enough to criticize itself openly and can call error and weakness by their names without beating around the bush."²⁸

²⁷See Donald Zagoria, "Soviet-American Rivalry in Asia," in Andrzej Korbonski and Francis Fukuyama, eds., *The Soviet Union and the Third World: The Last Three Decades* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1987), pp. 261-262.

There has obviously been a considerable degree of recrimination between Moscow and Hanoi in recent years over the latter's mismanagement of the Vietnamese economy and the squandering of the \$1-2 billion Soviet subsidy. The Soviets have shown no inclination to cut the subsidy and in fact have apparently agreed to raise it by approximately 50 percent the next five years.²⁹ Nonetheless the Soviets are clearly unhappy with Vietnamese economic performance and its cost to them.

Comparison of India and Vietnam is instructive when trying to understand the motives for Moscow's right-wing shift, since they are in many ways prototypes of the bourgeois nationalist and Marxist-Leninist client, respectively. Moscow's interest in Vietnam is obvious: the latter has provided concrete payoffs in the form of basing rights at Danang and Cam Ranh Bay, and serves as an ally and counterweight to the People's Republic of China. Vietnam is, moreover, officially classified as a "socialist" country by the Soviets, and therefore of special ideological significance; it and Cuba are the only two Third World full members of Council for Mutual Economic Assistance.

The benefits offered by India are much less tangible. India has consistently refused Moscow basing rights and is almost certain to do so for the foreseeable future. While reasonably anti-imperialist and anti-Chinese, India has proven over the years to be fully independent of Moscow in its political and economic dealings with the outside world. Nonetheless, India has advantages over Vietnam in several respects:

- It pays its own way. Bilateral Soviet-Indian trade is quite considerable and does not represent a disguised Soviet subsidy the way that Moscow's trade with many Marxist-Leninist

²⁸FBIS, 17 Dec. 1986, p. E5. A *Pravda* editorial following Ligachev's return stated that "the Sixth CPV Congress concentrated mainly on the tasks it still has to resolve. The Political Report... devoted the most serious attention to disclosing and rectifying errors permitted in the past and to eliminating the phenomena of stagnation that have prevented the party and the country from making more rapid progress and that have particularly serious consequences in the socioeconomic sphere." FBIS, 30 Dec. 1986, p. E1.

²⁹See Hiroshi Kimura, "Gorbachev's 'New Thinking' and Asia," unpublished paper, May 1987.

countries, including Vietnam, does. In return for military technology and industrial machinery the USSR imports substantial quantities of Indian textiles and consumer goods.³⁰

- It is highly influential in nonaligned circles. While Vietnam has totally isolated itself from ASEAN and the rest of Asia by its militaristic policies in Cambodia and elsewhere, India remains in very good standing with most of the Third World.
- There is tremendous stability to the Soviet-Indian relationship. Moscow's ties with New Dehli have lasted now well over thirty years. Moscow can be confident that the Indian government will not soon be overthrown by a coup or displaced by a guerrilla movement.
- India can be relied on to take the Soviet side on numerous East-West issues like the Strategic Defense Initiative and arms control, and to exercise a certain moral suasion supportive of Soviet positions in fora like the United Nations. Vietnam, of course, takes pro-Soviet positions as well, but carries very little weight internationally. India, moreover, can be anti-American and anti-Chinese without at the same time embroiling Moscow in dangerous conflicts with either of the other superpowers.
- Finally, there are specific political issues on which Moscow hopes to buy Indian good will, particularly Afghanistan and Cambodia. It is important to bear in mind that India is in a position to help the Soviets solve problems, rather than being the source of problems like the Marxist-Leninist regimes in Vietnam or Afghanistan.

While Soviet-Indian relations are by far the best developed, Moscow can hope to achieve a similar range of benefits by cultivating better relations with countries like Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina. Already bilateral trade with Argentina is substantial (though largely one-way).³¹ Moreover, Moscow can hope to develop influential friends among

³⁰It is true that India receives below market interest rate credits to finance its purchases of Soviet military equipment. But Indian imports of Soviet weaponry (which do not show up in published trade statistics) are offset by the persistent Indian current account surplus, leading to an overall equilibrium in the balance of payments. Mukerjee (1987), p. 24.

³¹For a fuller account of Soviet-Argentine trade, see Aldo Cesar Vacs, "Soviet Policy Toward Argentina and the Southern Cone," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political Science*, Vol. 481, September 1985, pp. 159-171.

these large Latin American countries without facing the prospect of having to subsidize yet another faltering economy, and without having to embroil itself in confrontation with the United States.

It should be noted that the shift in Soviet emphasis toward big Third World states should not be regarded as evidence of a Soviet retreat or disengagement from the Third World. The policy envisioned by Brutents and Yakovlev is in fact a very active one, seeking to build new and in some cases stronger ties with states that have grievances against the United States and the West -- indeed, to play upon those grievances and to exacerbate them where possible. One has only to consider the anti-Americanism of Mexican elites to imagine what fertile soil the Soviets may have to play on. At the same time, the kinds of relationships that Moscow can develop with these countries will tend to be more political and economic rather than military in character. The Soviets will make greater efforts to line up these influential developing states behind Soviet positions, and expand their economic links, particularly in the area of raw materials and intermediate technologies.

The new Soviet policy at this point does not consist of more than statements of purpose and a series of visits (or planned visits) of Soviet officials. Whether any of Moscow's relations with this group of countries will develop into something more substantial in terms of either politics or economics has yet to be seen. Nonetheless, the level of Soviet diplomatic activity two years into the Gorbachev administration is impressive, and suggests that further, more dramatic initiatives are yet to come.

THE OLD AGENDA

Moscow's new initiatives toward the large, capitalist-oriented states have overlaid rather than replaced its existing commitments to earlier generations of clients, including the self-proclaimed Marxist-Leninists from the 1970s. Any hopes that the post-Brezhnev reassessment of the Third World would lead to Soviet retreat in any part of the world have thus far been disappointed. Regardless of Gorbachev's domestic priorities and the pragmatism of his reform program, the USSR

still considers itself a superpower with global interests and commitments. The costs of the Soviet empire may be onerous at the margin when Soviet economic managers start casting about for future investment funds, but they are hardly unbearable to the point where the Soviet leadership would feel justified in taking the political risks of outright retreat in countries where Moscow has invested significant prestige.

Thus the old agenda is still very much a part of Soviet Third World policy, with Moscow feeling compelled to dedicate ever-increasing sums of money to established clients. As noted above, Ligachev's visit to Vietnam resulted in a commitment to increase Hanoi's subsidy by 50 percent over five years. Syria reportedly had its approximately \$15 billion debt rescheduled during a visit by Assad to Moscow in April 1987, as well as receiving commitments for supply of more advanced weapons.³² Nicaragua and Libya have both received new commitments for arms supplies under Gorbachev's tenure as General Secretary, the latter getting SA-5 long-range missiles in December 1985 which were fired at U.S. aircraft in the Gulf of Sidra in March 1986, thereby touching off the sequence of events leading to the U.S. retaliatory raid on Tripoli the following month. The Soviets and Cubans have helped to organize the third major yearly offensive against Jonas Savimbi's UNITA in the spring of 1987, based on substantial promises of military aid made in 1983-84, and there are reports that the Soviets are beginning again to provide Mozambique with counterinsurgency assistance after the latter's disappointment with the Nkomati accord.

In many ways, Afghanistan should be a good test of a more far-reaching change in Soviet Third World policy. While it is true that the Soviet political system is immune to the same sorts of public-opinion

³²Ihsan A. Hijazi, "New Soviet Aid to Syria Reported," *New York Times*, April 30, 1987. On the other hand, there were reports of differences between Assad and Gorbachev on a number of points including the Iran-Iraq war, Palestinian reunification, and an international peace conference; diplomatic sources said that "Syria did not fit well into Gorbachev's new policy of seeking to defuse regional conflicts in order to build a more stable strategic relationship with the United States." Quote from "The USSR This Week," *Radio Liberty Research*, RL-168/87, May 1, 1987, p. 2.

pressures faced by the United States in Vietnam, there is accumulating evidence of growing disenchantment with the occupation of Afghanistan on the part of both the public at large and Soviet elites, and other kinds of negative social consequences.³³ With the provision of ever-increasing quantities of U.S. military assistance to the Afghan mujahedeen, including Stinger portable anti-aircraft missiles, the rate of Soviet equipment losses has gone up considerably over the past eighteen months.³⁴ The Soviets have repeatedly stated their intention to withdraw and have dropped numerous private hints that they are prepared to do so imminently, provided they can find an appropriate face-saving formula to mask their abandonment of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA). Yet despite these hints, the much-touted withdrawal of six regiments announced in Gorbachev's Vladivostok speech in July 1986, and the unilateral ceasefire undertaken by the PDPA regime in December of that year, there is as yet no real indication that the Soviets are prepared to accept the consequences of withdrawal. Indeed, Soviet military operations have increased substantially in scope and effectiveness with each summer offensive, with the frequency and violence of Afghan Air Force cross-border attacks turning upward in early 1987.³⁵

Finally, the Soviet collective security system has continued to grow. The most recent self-proclaimed Marxist-Leninist state to sign a declaration of Friendship and Cooperation with Moscow was little Benin,

³³Not only are there increasingly frank admissions of casualties and other costs from the war in Afghanistan, but even some airing of criticism of the Soviet presence there. See for example the radio commentary of March 27, 1987, which admitted that the resistance comprises "vast numbers of the Afghan population," quoted in "More Selective *Glasnost*' About Afghanistan," *Radio Liberty Research*, RL-167/87, April 28, 1987, p. 5; and Bohdan Nahaylo, "Ukrainian Mother Protests Soviet Media Coverage of the War in Afghanistan," *Radio Liberty Research*, RL 34/87, January 22, 1987.

³⁴Though probably not at anything close to the rate of one plane per day that had been reported in the Western press. David Ottoway, "Big Losses of Soviet Planes Cited," *Washington Post*, December 17, 1986.

³⁵"Afghan Planes Said to Kill 35 in Attacks on Pakistan," *New York Times*, Feb. 27, 1987; and Barbara Crossette, "Pakistan Downs an Afghan Intruder," *New York Times*, March 31, 1987.

the chairman of whose People's Revolutionary Party, Mathieu Kerekou, journeyed to Moscow for this purpose in November 1986.³⁶ There are indications that the traditional expansionist agenda is not dead either, when it can be done with low visibility and without significant costs; there have been persistent reports of Soviet deliveries of money and weapons to the communists in both the Philippines and Chile. Soviet support for the New People's Army, which evidently began in 1984-85, has been well-disguised behind middlemen like the Vietnamese so as not to provoke a sharp U.S. reaction.³⁷

Thus Soviet policy currently has an inconsistent, eclectic character: Moscow is promoting ties with strong, capitalist-oriented states while at the same time continuing support for its earlier Marxist-Leninist clients, seemingly stuck with commitments it may have preferred never to have incurred, but from which it cannot retreat now. In many regions of the world, the two policies are mutually incompatible, and where a choice exists, the Soviets have shown a preference for sticking by their existing alliances. Thus, Moscow has moved to reinstitute diplomatic relations with Israel at a snail's pace, evidently for fear of incurring the wrath of Syria and other rejectionist Arab clients. Continued Soviet support for Vietnam and Hanoi's occupation of Cambodia is a major obstacle to improvement of relations with Australia and the ASEAN states. But despite lectures on this subject by Australian Prime Minister Robert Hawke and Indonesian President Suharto, Shevardnadze in March 1987 showed little inclination to use Soviet leverage over Vietnam³⁸ to produce a political settlement of the Cambodian situation.³⁹ Moscow has been very cautious in implementing its new policy, moving ahead quickly only in cases where

³⁶Benin's Declaration (as opposed to a treaty) does not mention consultations in the events of threats to Benin's security, as do many other similar documents.

³⁷Leif Rosenberger, "Soviet Support for the New People's Army in the Philippines," unpublished article, June 1987.

³⁸If such a thing exists, a rather questionable proposition.

³⁹See *Radio Liberty Research*, RL 95/87, March 6, 1987, and RL 103/87, March 13, 1987.

there are no immediate costs to better ties with the capitalist Third World. The continued festering of the conflicts on the old agenda -- in the Middle East, South and Southeast Asia, Southern Africa, and Central America -- will in many cases act as a brake on Moscow's ability to upgrade ties with the new category of countries.

THE TEN PERIODS OF SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY

Samuel Huntington has recently noted that Soviet policy in the Third World has gone through two phases or waves in the postwar period (corresponding to the Khrushchev and late Brezhnev tenures), interspersed with three periods of American assertiveness.⁴⁰ This periodization is correct as far as it goes, but if we look back to the whole of Soviet history, we would find that policy toward the colonial and later the Third World has in fact gone through a total of ten periods or shifts, of which the one described here is only the tenth and latest.

The central issue defining these shifts has been an alternation between what have come to be known in the world communist movement as "left-wing" and "right-wing" strategies. The distinction between left and right revolves around the question of the appropriate choice of allies in the quest for communist power and Soviet influence. In left-wing periods communist parties have tended to eschew alliances of any sort, concentrating on maintaining their own orthodoxy and discipline. Right-wing periods, by contrast, have been ones of broad alliance between communist parties and other sympathetic non-communist groups. In the context of the colonial/Third World, these have been local "bourgeois" nationalists, national liberation movements, and other "anti-imperialist" groups.

The issue of alliance with bourgeois nationalists has been the topic of endless debate in Soviet and world communists' circles. It was raised initially at the Second Comintern Congress in 1920 when a young Indian Marxist, Manabendra Nath Roy, criticized Lenin's draft theses on the national and colonial question.⁴¹ Roy argued that Lenin's general

⁴⁰Samuel Huntington, "Patterns of Intervention," *The National Interest*, No. 7, Spring 1987.

⁴¹A complete transcript of this debate is contained in 2-oi

endorsement of national liberation movements led by local bourgeoisies in the colonial world would only serve to establish capitalism in these areas and would ultimately lead to betrayal of communists and the revolution. Roy argued that bourgeois nationalist groups like the Chinese Kuomintang and the Indian National Congress were inherently untrustworthy and should not be seen as vehicles to advance the interests of world communism.

This tactical debate has never been resolved fully. Indeed, the whole of Soviet foreign policy from 1917 to the present can be seen as an alternation between left and right-wing policies, as indicated in the ten periods listed in Table I. The first period was one of revolutionary enthusiasm immediately following the Bolshevik revolution, when Bolshevik leaders had hopes for the immediate spread of communism to Europe and particularly to defeated Germany. While the Soviets were not particularly active in the colonial world in this period, they staged a congress of Peoples of the East in Baku in 1920 and encouraged the establishment of important communist parties in countries like China and Indonesia. This initial left-wing period existed when hopes were high for instability in the capitalist world and immediate socialist revolutions were followed by three more prior to Stalin's death: the so-called "Third Period" from the Sixth Comintern Congress in mid-1928 through the beginning of the popular front period in 1935; the brief interlude during the Nazi-Soviet pact from 1939-1941;⁴² and the period known as the *Zhdanovshchina*, dating from the founding of Communist Information (Cominform) in September 1947 to approximately the 19th CPSU congress in 1952.⁴³

kongress Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala. Iyul'-Avgust 1921g. Stenograficheskii otchet (Petrograd: Izdatel'stvo Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala, 1921), fourth session.

⁴²Given Moscow's alliance with Nazi Germany at the time, it may seem odd to characterize this period as a left-wing one. Nonetheless, in most parts of the colonial world the Comintern ordered local parties to follow an insurrectionary left-wing strategy of hostility both to capitalist regimes and potential social democratic or bourgeois nationalist partners.

⁴³Strictly speaking, the end of the *Zhdanovshchina* came much earlier, sometime shortly after Zhdanov's death in August 1948. I date the end of the left-wing period traditionally associated with it not to Stalin's death, but to the 19th CPSU congress, when a new policy was formally announced.

Table I

THE TEN PERIODS OF SOVIET THIRD WORLD POLICY

Dates		Characteristics
1. 1917-1921	left	War Communism
2. 1921-1928	right	The period of the New Economic Policy
3. 1928-1935	left	The "Third Period"
4. 1935-1939	right	Popular Front
5. 1939-1941	left	Nazi-Soviet Pact
6. 1941-1947	right	Wartime Alliance
7. 1947-1953	left	<i>Zhdanovshchina</i>
8. 1954-1964	right	Khrushchev's opening to "bourgeois nationalists"
9. 1973-1982	left	Brezhnev and the Marxist-Leninist vanguard party
10. 1982-present	right	The Andropov-Gorbachev era

These left-wing periods were interspersed with right-wing ones in which the Soviets put off hopes for the immediate revolutionary seizure of power in favor of a longer term strategy of building influence through cultivation of alliances with non-communists. The first of these periods of retrenchment is dated in conventional Comintern histories from 1924 (after the failure of the uprisings in Germany during the Ruhr crisis), but actually began with the signing of the Anglo-Soviet trade agreement in 1921 -- Moscow's first effort at detente with the West. Later right-wing shifts tended to occur at times when Moscow wanted good relations with the West, such as during the popular front period in the mid-30s, or during the wartime alliance with the United States and Britain.⁴⁴

⁴⁴It should be noted, however, that right-wing periods are generally more propitious for promoting Soviet interests and influence, and hence no less threatening for Moscow's Western opponents.

While the periodization of Soviet history through 1953 is relatively conventional, fitting the post-Stalin years into the traditional left-right framework may seem strange to many. Nonetheless, these categories are still a useful means of understanding Soviet policy, at least toward the Third World. Khrushchev and Brezhnev did not make use of Stalinist terms like "right-wing opportunist," "united front from below," or "class against class," but the issue of whether and to what degree to ally with bourgeois nationalists, socialists, and other sympathetic anti-imperialist groups has been and still remains a very live and open question. The old Lenin-Roy debate is still being carried on today using a somewhat, but not totally, different vocabulary.

Khrushchev, for example, dramatically expanded Soviet influence in the Third World by adopting what was essentially a right-wing policy of support for bourgeois nationalist regimes like Nasser's Egypt, Nehru's India, and Sukarno's Indonesia, the very states that Moscow had spurned as "imperialist lackeys" in the left-wing period after September 1947.⁴⁵ Like Lenin, who in the early 1920s was willing to write off completely the fledgling Turkish communist party for the sake of smooth relations with Kemalist Turkey, Khrushchev maintained alliances with Nasser of Egypt and Qassem of Iraq while they persecuted local communists. The choice for the Soviets was a familiar one: the right-wing policy brought broadly based political influence, but at the cost of a significant dilution of communist control and influence over the behavior of the local state.

By the 1970s, Soviet policy had swung once again to the left.⁴⁶ The exact dating of this turn is more difficult to specify since the

⁴⁵Actually, the shift to a right-wing strategy that is frequently associated with Khrushchev in fact began before Stalin's death. With respect to the Third World Stalin is frequently and inaccurately associated with the sectarian left-wing policy adopted between 1947 and 1952. As should be clear from Table I, his rule encompassed several shifts between left and right.

⁴⁶Table I leaves a gap between Khrushchev's ouster in 1964 and the late Brezhnev years. This period is hard to characterize because the Soviets had become disenchanted with Khrushchev's support of bourgeois nationalists without quite knowing what should come in their place.

break with past policy was not nearly as trenchant as under Stalin: even in the "left-wing" period, Brezhnev continued to support traditional bourgeois nationalist clients like India, Syria, and Algeria. All Soviet policy since Stalin has been "right-wing" in the sense that it has all but abandoned the use of orthodox communist parties and works instead almost entirely through "revolutionary democrats." But by the mid-70s Soviet policy had moved leftwards relative to the Khrushchev era, insofar as it distinctly emphasized support for self-proclaimed Marxist-Leninist national liberation movements or regimes, and made efforts to help them evolve into formal Leninist vanguard parties. The Soviets in this period shifted the center of gravity of their support away from the bourgeois nationalists to the self-proclaimed Marxist-Leninists for exactly the same reasons that had motivated their earlier shifts from right to left: alliance with the bourgeois nationalists in the 60s and early 70s proved disappointing because they were unreliable and insufficiently anti-imperialist in their policies. The Soviets therefore fell back on groups that were, if not orthodox communists, at least more ideologically sympathetic and consequently less prone to nationalist preoccupations.

The tenth and (to date) final period of Soviet policy is the one that we are currently in, which was described above. The shift in Soviet emphasis to large, geopolitically important Third World countries is in effect a classical shift to the right. Like Lenin in the early 1920s, Stalin during the period of the Popular Front, and Khrushchev in the 1950s, the new Soviet leadership has come to recognize that political power lies not with narrowly based Marxist-Leninist groups in the Third World, but with powerful nationalist regimes such as those in Mexico, India, and Argentina, and that the best strategy for influence may be an "opportunist" one of alliance with the national bourgeoisie. In fact, the writings of Brutents refer back to the previous right-wing period, that of Khrushchev, in a positive way, praising the non-aligned movement in which the latter invested so much capital at the 1955 Bandung conference.⁴⁷

⁴⁷See "Dvizheniye neprisoedineniya v sovremennom mire," *MEIMO*, No. 5, 1984.

The use of Stalinist categories to produce this neat periodization of Soviet foreign policy from 1917 to the present is likely to provoke several objections which should be noted in advance. Policy shifts in the post-Stalin Soviet Union have been a good deal less trenchant and well-defined than before 1953. Moscow no longer sees fit to announce publicly a single "line" applicable to all parts of the world, as it did in the various Comintern congresses and at the founding meeting of the Cominform in 1947. Periods 8 through 10 only apply to Soviet policy toward the Third World, and not to Soviet foreign policy generally as it did before 1952: the problems of Third World Marxist-Leninists are almost totally de-linked from those of European Communists. Post-Stalin shifts have been much more pragmatic and therefore messier: established alliances with particular groups or countries are no longer ruptured with the breathtaking suddenness and totality that characterized, for example, Moscow's break with the Kuomintang in late 1927. Thus India on the right and Vietnam on the left have remained important clients through the left-right shifts from the mid-50s on.

More important, the Soviets no longer have a world communist movement through which they can work and to which they can give orders with a reasonable expectation of being obeyed. The splits first with Yugoslavia and then with China irrevocably shattered international communism, with no hope for its revival; even now, seemingly close allies like Vietnam cooperate with Moscow on the basis of political calculation and not because they see the Soviet Union as a moral model and the last bastion of socialism. The material with which Moscow must work is also poorer. Among the Third World Marxist-Leninists of the 1970s, only Cuba and Vietnam qualify in Soviet eyes as genuine socialist countries, ruled by what passes now for orthodox communist parties (the formal criterion having disappeared with the dissolution of the Comintern in 1943). The groups governing countries like Angola, Ethiopia, and Afghanistan were but pale imitations of the Chinese or Indonesian communist parties of the 20s and 30s, at a much more primitive level in terms of both party organization and ideological self-understanding. As noted earlier, since the death of Stalin all Soviet

policy has been right-wing insofar as Moscow has tended to dispense with the mediation of local communist parties and to work directly with sympathetic leftists like the Sandinistas or the Angolan MPLA.

Nonetheless, putting the most recent phases of Soviet policy toward the Third World in the context of the longer history of Moscow's foreign relations serves to emphasize the incredible continuity of the tactical issues facing Kremlin leaders. The Brutentses and Yakovlevs of today have their earlier counterparts in the Stalins and Bukharins of the 1920s, while those like Ul'yanovskiy and Ponomarev in the International Department who advocated Marxist-Leninist vanguard parties in the early 70s repeated many of the arguments of early leftists like M. N. Roy, Georgiy Safarov, or Lev Trotsky himself. Soviet policy toward the developing world has thus far had an endlessly cyclical character, with the shortcomings and defects of one line leading a new generation of Soviet leaders to try the opposite. Thus the pointless adventurism and the narrow and self-defeating sectarianism of left-wing periods bring on calls for a softening of line and a broadening of alliances, while the unreliability of bourgeois nationalist allies and their frequent betrayals of communist and Soviet interests lead to a search for more ideologically orthodox and therefore loyal partners. Just as Soviet experience with Chiang Kai-shek and Kemal Ataturk in the 1920s led to their replacement by the likes of Li Li-san or Ch'u Ch'iu-pai during the "Third Period," so the Brezhnev leadership sought to replace the Sadats and Siad Barres of the 1970s with leaders like Abd al-Fattah Ismail and Mengistu Haile Mariam. Both the left- and right-wing policies have their own advantages and defects, and neither can totally satisfy Soviet policy requirements for both influence and reliability. Hence the endless repetition of the same tactical issue. Throughout the past seventy years of Soviet policy there has certainly been a great deal of secular evolution, but with respect to the Third World one is much more struck by its cyclical quality.

THE ELEVENTH PERIOD OF SOVIET POLICY

The larger question facing us is whether this cyclical alternation between left- and right-wing policies will continue into the future, or whether Soviet foreign policy will break out of the cycle altogether and move into an entirely new phase.

There is good reason to think that the Soviets will be disappointed with the results of their shift to the right. It is difficult to see how Soviet relations with countries like Mexico and Brazil or the ASEAN nations could develop very far. Military goods and services remain the Soviet Union's area of comparative advantage in competing with the West for the favor of Third World countries. But the large and fairly stable newly industrializing countries do not need the package of internal and external security assistance offered by the Soviet Union and its bloc allies. Indeed, Brazil competes with Moscow in selling arms around the Third World. In the absence of a much more thoroughgoing internal economic reform, the Soviets will remain relatively poor at offering technology, markets, and other sorts of economic benefits. Out of a smaller resource base the Soviet leadership moreover seems to have decided against offering substantial quantities of economic assistance. Moscow's relations with New Dehli or Buenos Aires will therefore never become as close as its ties with Vietnam or Cuba, much less the smaller Marxist-Leninist states like Afghanistan or Angola. None of the larger capitalist-oriented states is likely to offer Moscow military access to its territory, and none will participate in the Soviet "socialist collective security system." While the Soviets may hope to exploit the "contradictions" existing between these states and the United States, they like previous generations of bourgeois nationalists will ultimately follow their own interests rather than those of the Soviets.

When disappointment with the new policy sets in, as it inevitably must, where will Soviet policy swing? Will there be calls for a return to greater ideological orthodoxy, and support for self-proclaimed Marxist-Leninists? Will we see a return to Soviet interventionism in the Third World, in the manner of the late Brezhnev period?

We obviously cannot answer this question now, but it is possible to provide some structure to a prediction by trying to understand what prior changes must occur before Third World policy can undergo a secular change.

The first has to do with the internal Soviet institutional setting. Traditionally, there have been certain bureaucratic advocates of expansionism within the Soviet system -- the party, and within the party, bureaus like the International Department, and the military, which has a special interest in protection of Soviet borders and therefore areas on the periphery of the USSR. Significant changes have already taken place in the leadership and relative standing of both of these groups since the death of Brezhnev. The leadership of the International Department has already passed on from the Stalinist generation of Ponomarev and Ul'yanovskiy to a much more cosmopolitan group of officials.⁴⁸ The military has steadily lost ground to the party over the past decade, and the humiliation and firing of Defense Minister Sokolov and Air Defense Chief Koldunov are just the latest in a series of moves (which include the firing of Chief of Staff Ogarkov) designed to lower the profile of the military.⁴⁹ Nonetheless, the forces represented by these groups are very powerful, and the internal institutional drama is far from being played out.

The second precondition for change is the question of politics, that is, Gorbachev's survival. It seems fairly clear that Gorbachev and people around him like Yakovlev and Yeltsin are committed to a fairly ambitious reform program which has already produced a clear shift in

⁴⁸I believe, without being able to fully document, that the death of Mikhail Suslov in 1981 was very important in paving the way for these personnel changes, and that, consistent with his reputation, Suslov played an extremely important role in keeping alive the ideological issue in Soviet foreign policy. There are still a few hardliners from his generation left in the International Department -- in particular, Ivan Kovalenko, who has borne some responsibility for keeping Soviet-Japanese relations frosty.

⁴⁹For a good account of recent Soviet civil-military relations, see Jeremy Azrael, *Soviet Civilian Leadership and the Military High Command: 1976-1986* (Santa Monica: The RAND Corporation, R-3521-AF, 1987).

Third World policy, among other things. But they are limited in how far and fast they can move by internal opposition, evidence for which now seems pervasive.⁵⁰ At a minimum, this opposition is going to limit their options, while at a maximum it may lead eventually to the ouster of Gorbachev. Presumably one of the factors currently obstructing a Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan is Gorbachev's fear that the ensuing consequences may be used against him by people with their own agendas.⁵¹

The final and most important change concerns Gorbachev's domestic economic reform program. If Gorbachev follows Deng Xiao-ping's road to thoroughgoing economic reform, decentralizing the economy and de-constructing certain major socialist economic institutions like the administered price structure, collectivized agriculture, or the inconvertible ruble, one can expect Soviet foreign policy to change as well. As long as the People's Republic of China believed that it represented the most advanced form of socialism at home, it followed an expansionist foreign policy abroad, subsidizing subversive movements and national liberation movements in various parts of Asia and Africa. When Beijing decided that it had to play economic catch-up to the capitalist world, it quietly ended its support for Third World radicals. This was not only because the PRC was more preoccupied with domestic developments, but also because Maoism itself had been undercut as a universal ideology.

We can expect the same thing to happen in the course of a serious Soviet reform: one can hardly expect Soviet leaders to encourage formation of Marxist-Leninist vanguard parties if they themselves are debunking Marxist institutions and holding elections for local party officials. Already we are witnessing the rather amusing spectacle of Third World Stalinists being brought to Moscow and made to praise Gorbachev's *perestroika*.

⁵⁰Since early 1987, Gorbachev and his lieutenants have spoken frequently to resistance to *perestroika*. See particularly Gorbachev's speech to the Komsomol, FBIS Soviet Union *Daily Report*, April 17, 1987, pp. R1-17.

⁵¹However, the question of whether internal politics necessarily leads to foreign expansion rather than the opposite is far from clear. See Stephen Sestanovich, "What Gorbachev Wants," *The New Republic*, May 25, 1987.

The prospects for so thoroughgoing a reform are, at this point, anyone's guess. Gorbachev has suggested some remarkable changes in domestic policy, the most far-reaching of which is the proposal to reform the price system made at the June 1987 Central Committee Plenum. While we cannot enter into a discussion of this subject here, it would seem that institutional resistance to such sweeping changes will be enormous and that they will be very difficult to implement, particularly within the current five-year plan.

Thus the prospects for a final breakout from the right-left cycle of Soviet policy in the manner of the PRC do not at this moment look particularly promising. Nonetheless, it seems unlikely that the eleventh period of Soviet policy will be a simple return to a left-wing strategy as happened in the 1970s. The role of ideology in defining Soviet foreign policy objectives and in providing political instruments for expansion has been steadily declining throughout the postwar period. The changes already brought about by Gorbachev have further accelerated that decline. Whatever the real world implications of the "new political thinking," the old ideological language of Marxism-Leninism and vanguard parties is seldom heard any more, and those who use that idiom seem strangely out of place in the current milieu.⁵² The Soviet Union is likely to remain an expansionist power with farflung military and political interests all over the Third World. Indeed, the Brutents-Yakovlev strategy for the tenth period of Soviet policy is explicitly expansionist and hostile to American interests. But the basis for this expansionism will likely become an increasingly secular one. The Soviet Union will still seek influence and worry about prestige and commitments, but more in the manner of a traditional great power than as the bearer and home of a universal ideology. In this case, the eleventh period of Soviet policy is not likely to be based on national liberation movements espousing Marxism-Leninism or vanguard parties.

⁵²See for example Vadim Zagladin, "Kommunisticheskoe dvizheniye v sovremennom mire," *Kommunist Vooruzhennikh Sil*, No. 1, January 1987. Zagladin, now one of two senior deputies in the International Department and a representative of the old guard, delivers a soft message here, but uses an older vocabulary.