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GERMANY, RUSSIA, AND CONDITIONS FOR STABILITY IN CENTRAL EUROPE

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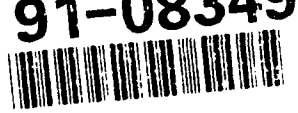

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For all the positive trends spurred on by recent changes in the politico-military and economic map of Europe, there are also powerful negative forces which threaten stability from the Atlantic to the Urals. If history provides us any useful precedents, the main threats to regional stability will, in all likelihood, emanate from Central Europe. Disillusionment with the old in Central and Eastern Europe has continued as the new is proving unable to satisfy expectations. Gorbachev's 'new thinking' seems, of late, to be losing out to a resurgence of the powers of reaction. German reunification, although potentially the main catalyst for bridging the post-war artificial division of Europe, is viewed by many in the East and West with suspicion -- the age-old 'German question' having once again come to the fore. In short, the dark clouds of authoritarianism, hypernationalism and social and economic collapse are never totally beyond the Central European horizon. (Cont'd on reverse)

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As a first step, in order that the conditions for stability in Central Europe be given a chance to develop, East-Central Europe must continue to provide the example for movement on the region's 'return to Europe' begun by the revolutions of 1989. The past year has made clear, however, how difficult it is to build a new political framework on a deteriorating economic and social foundation. Attempts at intra-regional cooperation have also failed to generate much hope. The relationship between East-Central Europe and its two larger neighbors, Germany and Russia, are also, especially in the case of the latter, cause for concern. In all likelihood, the most we can hope for is that the negative influences from the Soviet Union can be limited, and the positive forces from Germany can be maximized. Finally, the overarching relationship between Germany and Russia is, arguably, the key to stability in Central Europe, and ultimately in Europe as a whole. Disharmony here could doom progress made elsewhere. Although recent events give cause for hope, there is no guarantee that this, or the other relationships mentioned, will continue to enhance the conditions for stability in the region. One thing does, however, seem clear: the path to a stable and prosperous 'common European home' will be long and difficult for all who travel it.

ABSTRACT

For all of the positive trends spurred on by recent changes in the politico-military and economic map of Europe, there are also powerful negative forces which threaten stability from the Atlantic to the Urals. If history provides us any useful precedents, the main threats to regional stability will, in all likelihood, emanate from Central Europe. Disillusionment with the old in Central and Eastern Europe has continued as the new is proving unable to satisfy expectations. Gorbachev's 'new thinking' seems, of late, to be losing out to a resurgence of the powers of reaction. German reunification, although potentially the main catalyst for bridging the post-war artificial division of Europe, is viewed by many in the East and West with suspicion — the age-old 'German question' having once again come to the fore. In short, the dark clouds of authoritarianism, hypernationalism and social and economic collapse are never totally beyond the Central European horizon.

As a first step, in order that the conditions for stability in Central Europe be given a chance to develop, East-Central Europe must continue to provide the example for movement on the region's 'return to Europe' begun by the revolutions of 1989. The past year has made clear, however, how difficult it is to build a new political framework on a deteriorating economic and social foundation. Attempts at intra-regional cooperation have also failed to generate much hope. The relationship between East-Central Europe and its two larger neighbors, Germany and Russia, are also, especially in the case of the latter, cause for concern. In all likelihood, the most we can hope for is that the negative influences from the Soviet Union can be limited, and the positive forces from Germany can be maximized. Finally, the overarching relationship between Germany and Russia is, arguably, the key to stability in Central Europe, and ultimately in Europe as a whole. Disharmony here could doom progress made elsewhere. Although recent events give cause for hope, there is no guarantee that this, or the other relationships mentioned, will continue to enhance the conditions for stability in the region. One thing does, however, seem clear: the path to a stable and prosperous 'common European home' will be long and difficult for all who travel it.

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INTRODUCTION:
ON STABILITY IN CENTRAL EUROPE

In the past few years, Europe has undergone some of the most astounding and, on the whole, positive changes of the twentieth century. Since the mid-1980s, the European Community (EC) has made significant strides toward the further integration of 'Europe 1992.' More recently, Central Europe saw the collapse of communism and is now struggling with the hard choices needed to select a path to the future — preferably, for most of them, a path to 'rejoin' Europe. The disillusionment experienced here with the old has, however, continued as the new is proving unable to satisfy expectations. The word 'instability' has once again crept into the lexicon of the region. Concurrently, on the eastern fringes of Europe, the Soviet Union, which had shown such promise with Gorbachev's 'new thinking,' has turned from an economic basket case into a powder keg of popular, ethnic and nationalist dissatisfaction and dissent. By some appearances, it is reverting to the authoritarian system of yesterday, pushed on by reactionary elements, including the military, the KGB and Internal Security troops, and, of course, the *apparatchiks*. Unless contained, these negative forces in the USSR could raise tensions to such a level that they would, like a virus, spread westward, sidetracking the continued reconstruction and development of Central Europe. Although less directly, such negative forces could also cause a diversion, out of necessity, of some resources that were to be devoted to building the bright future that many predict for Western Europe. On top of all that, perhaps *the* element which could have the most significant impact on all three parts of Europe — West, Central and East — is the unification of Germany and the resurgence in the minds of many of 'the German question.'[1] The thought of Germany, once again, being the fulcrum of Europe

1. Some call it 'the German *Problem*,' but that, in light of today's circumstances, seems overly dramatic.

may indeed bring fear, or at least apprehension, to the minds of many who recall the tragic history of the first half of this century.

Thus, Europe has reached a crossroads: a point at which it must make some fundamental and very difficult choices in order to ensure that the positive trends continue and the negative trends do not become overwhelming. Although it is difficult at this time to predict what Europe will be like even five years from now, we do know that the old order has collapsed under its own weight and that no new order has yet replaced it. Judging by developments over the past year, however, and reflecting on European history over the last two hundred years — even the relative 'stability' of the last forty-five — there appear to be no precedents upon which we could develop an overly optimistic forecast for the future. Clearly, it is almost exclusively up to the Europeans themselves what course they will take. One would hope the path would be selected peacefully and jointly by all concerned states, taking into consideration each others' interests. Sadly, it appears this will not be the case, at least in the foreseeable future. In the interim, some measure of security and stability from the Atlantic to the Urals short of the ultimate goal of lasting peace and prosperity for all is still necessary for the maintenance of an atmosphere in which continued steps in the right direction are possible. This is especially true in Central Europe.

It is fair to say the most immediate threats to stability in Europe as a whole emanate from the area between Berlin and Moscow. What can be done, and by whom, to ensure these threats are mitigated, and that an atmosphere prevails in Central Europe in which the conditions for stability can take hold? To begin to answer this question, it may help to visualize Central Europe as a system of three concentric circles. The innermost circle, which for our purposes will be called East-Central Europe, contains the countries of Poland and Czechoslovakia.[1] At

1. This study highlights these two states not because they are the Eastern European countries where the greatest potential for instability lies (this dubious honor is jointly held by Romania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia), but because they comprise the area where internal problems could bleed over to the east and west, putting the two regional superpowers -- namely, Germany and Russia -- at odds. Additionally, other

issue are internal and intra-regional developments that enhance or threaten stability in the area. The development of the conditions for stability in Central Europe will, to a great extent, depend on the peoples and policy makers in these two countries. It is they who are primarily responsible for how events unfold in a domestic political sense. This is key because the promise of true democratic pluralism is one of the prerequisites for civil harmony and hence for stability. Economic and socio-cultural difficulties and tensions are important elements in this question as well. But the key, it can be argued, is democracy. It seems clear, however, that the sought after harmony has not, and will not blossom overnight. Dark clouds of hypernationalism, authoritarianism, and economic and social collapse are never completely beyond the horizon. Even if a certain modicum of harmony did bring stability within their own borders, these countries would not be immune to 'viruses' transmitted through the frontiers. What, then, are the chances for the development of internal and intra-regional conditions for stability in the area? This and related questions will be covered in the first section of this paper, which reviews conditions in East-Central Europe and prospects for the development there of an atmosphere conducive to progress.

The second circle has two halves, and brings in the two regional superpowers — Germany and the Soviet Union. Here we are concerned with the relationship between the countries of East-Central Europe and their larger neighbors. For the eastern half of the circle, we must first ask where the Soviet Union is headed, and what will the impact of its difficult journey be on East-Central Europe? Due to chaotic domestic conditions, the leadership in Moscow almost certainly has precious little time to focus its attention on the pressing issues along its western borders. Even if they did, it is likely their contribution would be less in the form of active, helpful participation in the development of conditions for stability, than in the form of benign neglect, reflected in simple non-interference in events in East-Central Europe.

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studies define East-Central Europe as including Hungary. Although critical to the early stages of the revolution in Eastern Europe, Hungary does not meet the geographical, and hence the geopolitical and geostrategic, requirements set out here, and will be referred to only in passing.

This is probably a best-case scenario. There is no guarantee Russia will step back and allow the 'former socialist states' a totally free hand in selecting their own paths back to Europe. The Soviet Union has a great deal invested in this area, and it would be difficult, if not impossible, for the Kremlin simply to turn its back and give up whatever residual influence it may retain. Even if trends in the near future seem to correspond to our best case, the *laissez faire* approach will likely last only as long as the Soviets do not perceive any threat to their vital interests. Our second section, then, is a discussion of the relationship between the Soviet Union and its former satellites in the area. Key here are the prospects for limiting the negative consequences on these smaller neighbors as the empire begins what many believe are the final throes of decay.

In the larger, all-European context, the greatest burden for the development of the conditions for lasting stability in Central Europe will almost certainly fall to Germany. Of the major players on the Central European stage, only Germany has the economic might, the democratic traditions and the geographic, historical, and cultural associations with the area in question to be able to exert a truly positive influence on events. But the issues surrounding Germany's role in Central Europe, especially after unification, are, for historical reasons, complex. Although the relationship between Germany and its eastern neighbors holds much promise for mutual advantage, there are lingering suspicions and fears which will have to be surmounted. Much of the progress in the area, if there is to be any, will come from these ties. How, then, might Germany's influence be levied, and are its eastern neighbors ready and willing to see the possible replacement of Soviet military and ideological with German economic hegemony? This and related questions will be discussed in the third section.

The final, and overarching circle deals with Germany and Russia in terms of their bilateral relationship and its impact on stability in Central Europe. In the final analysis, disharmony here could doom progress made elsewhere. The main issue regarding regional stability is not, then, the chaos generated by the disintegration of the Soviet Union, nor the internal and external challenges associated with the unification of Germany, nor the 'Balkanization' of Eastern Europe, though they are all key variables in the equation and therefore deserve our attention. It is

rather the behavior of Germany and Russia as they move toward an understanding in their bilateral relations, and the ripple effect this will have on their relations with the 'new' states of East-Central Europe. What kind of relationship between Germany and Russia is required in order that stability might have a chance? What could cause a disruption in the relationship to the point where regional stability could be jeopardized? These questions are fundamental because a condominium must be reached between Bonn and Moscow in order to ensure that the threats to stability in the inner two circles, whether real or perceived, do not bleed over the borders, possibly putting these two regional superpowers at odds. Without this understanding, it is likely the German-Russian marches will, as in the past, be a hotbed of instability and potential conflict. If this grim scenario is not avoided, we could witness a series of events which could precipitate the start of 'Cold War II,' or worse. Western Europe could be distracted from the daunting tasks of continued integration — an eventuality which could ultimately slow the development of conditions conducive to the eventual return to Europe of those in the East who desire it. The bright future of the 'common European home' might be endangered.

When the synergistic relationship between these circles is developed sufficiently, it becomes clear that what happens in each has an impact, to a greater or lesser degree, on the others. To a greater or lesser degree because, as will be argued throughout this paper, although events in the innermost circle are of significant importance to stability in the region, and will have an obvious impact on relations between Poland, Czechoslovakia and their larger neighbors to the east or west, they will not necessarily have a decisive effect on the third circle — German-Russian relations. On the other hand, as suggested above, if there are serious disturbances in the outer circle, this will almost certainly have a negative impact on the countries of East-Central Europe. Events in the two halves of the middle circle will, as one might expect, have a direct effect on both the inner and outer circles, as well as on each other. But overall, as German-Russian relations go, so go the conditions for stability in Central Europe. This is not to suggest that what happens in the inner two circles is not key to stability in the area as well. It is, however, to say that perturbations in these relationships, while they will play a key role in

regional (Central European) affairs, are less likely to cause serious disruption in the larger context of pan-European security and cooperation. The final section of this essay attempts to put these difficult questions in the context of this latter, broader issue, since it is the general stability in Europe which could ultimately be threatened should Central Europe serve as a barrier rather than a bridge from the Atlantic to the Urals.

SECTION II

THE INNER CIRCLE:
EAST-CENTRAL EUROPE

It seems clear that the first steps on the path out of the artificial forty-five year division of Europe have been, and must continue to be, taken in Eastern Europe. The revolutions of 1989 initiated a series of events which are of immense importance, not only to the entire continent, but to the world as a whole. To the extent that they remain positive, it is in everyone's interest that these trends continue. To take the optimistic view of Milovan Djilas, the new democracies have "the potential to establish [Europe's] unity, to inspire it with energy, to revitalize its creative powers."[1] On the down side, the area could, once again, be the breeding ground for regional tensions and instability. In any case, it seems likely that the region, due to the preoccupation of Western Europe, the Soviet Union, and the United States, all with their own pressing problems, is destined to play a role in the formation of a new European order out of proportion with its size and clout. This is especially true of East-Central Europe. The turf between our two major players is once again at center stage. But a natural consequence of recent events is that, as noted by Charles Gati, "like most things hyphenated, East-Central Europe is absorbed in an ardent and arduous search for a new identity."[2]

Some suggest that the last two years have seen the cultural demarcation line between East and West simply shift to the east, up to the Romanian and Bulgarian frontiers.[3] A more critical look at the experiences of the countries that got a head-start on reform — Poland and Hungary — suggests, however, how extremely difficult it is to construct an entirely new political framework on a deteriorating economic and social foundation. The problems are systemic

1. Milovan Djilas, "A Revolutionary Democratic Vision of Europe," *International Affairs*, April 1990, p. 272.
2. Charles Gati, "East-Central Europe: The Morning After," *Foreign Affairs*, Winter 1990-91, p. 129.
3. Robert E. Hunter, "The Future of European Security," *The Washington Quarterly*, Autumn 1990, p. 61.

and pervasive. Never before has such a change been attempted; that is, from a totalitarian political and command economic system to a democratic pluralist free-market system. It is not a change, like a law requiring people to drive on the right-hand side of the road on one day and the left hand side on the following day, that can be implemented overnight. It is, however, a change that, if not carried out properly, can have similar disastrous results not only for the drivers, but for passengers and innocent by-standers as well. It is not that these countries are not aware that fundamental changes in politics, economics, law and order, and social behavior are essential. Unfortunately, with economies still based in large part on command directives which, along with other mechanisms, are intended to make the transition to a Western-style market less painful for the people who have already suffered so much over the last half-century, the systems continue barely to muddle through. "The result," according to one Soviet analyst, "is a vicious circle: the formation of a new political reality is protracted because of the absence of the necessary socio-economic conditions, but the latter cannot be realized without the creation of an appropriate political course, without altering the content of policy proper."[1] It remains to be seen how long the patience of the people holds out. Some suggest that it will take two to three years, at best, before true democracy begins to work. A functioning market economy will almost certainly take longer; possibly much longer. Fledgling democratic institutions and neophyte politicians may not outlast the tensions brought about by inflation, recession, shortages and unemployment.[2]

There seems to be little cause for hope that a brighter day will arrive soon. Even for the citizens of the former German Democratic Republic (GDR), who now have the dynamism of the Federal Republic's (FRG) economy and the security of its social safety net working for them, it is an uphill battle. "The path to affluence," the German Economics Minister said re-

1. Liliya Shevtsova, "Where is Eastern Europe Headed?" US Joint Publications Research Service (hereafter, JPRS) *World Economy and International Relations* (hereafter, *WEIR*), JPRS-UWE-90-008 (Washington: 27 July 1990), p. 43

2. For a good discussion of these issues, see Ian Davidson, "The Search for a New Order in Europe," *International Affairs*, April 1990, p. 278; and, Jürgen Nötzold and Reinhardt Rummel, "On the Way to a New European Order," *Aussenpolitik*, English edition, 3/90, pp. 222-223.

cently in reference to the sad conditions faced by the people in Eastern Europe, including his eastern brethren, "leads through the purgatory of economic adjustment."[1] But at the same time, Germany's President, Richard von Weizsäcker, warned that "people must not experience freedom as something that first plunges them into poverty and social hardship."[2] The new freely-elected governments are trying, but are not having an easy time of it, and may be fortunate if they survive to see the light at the end of the tunnel.

The countries and peoples of East-Central Europe desperately want to 'return to Europe.' The Czechoslovakian Foreign Minister wrote this past summer that "Europe is our natural world, of which we have always been members, regardless of what happened in our country in recent decades."[3] He hastened to add, however, that the road home will not be an easy one. Europe's main challenge, according to Mr. Dienstbier, is instability in Central and Eastern Europe. The myriad problems — from ethnic, to economic, to ecological, to religious — are not the type that can necessarily be confined to local areas, or even contained within state borders. There is no guarantee of a stable and prosperous, or even peaceful future for these countries. A nightmare come true would be what has been labeled a 'super-Balkans problem,' with long-term instability in East-Central Europe made worse by the chaos generated by the disintegration of the Soviet Union nipping at the heels of the fledgling democracies.[4]

These countries that took their lead from Gorbachev's 'new thinking' have little more to hope for in the way of encouragement or assistance from their former big brother. Nor, contrary to some opinion expressed in the German media, should they feel that they are somehow in Gorbachev's debt.[5] They must now reorient their thinking and activities to the West. This

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1. Quoted in "Minister Predicts High Rate of Growth in Eastern Europe," *The German Tribune*, 9 September 1990, p. 6. Translated from *Handelsblatt*, 28 August 1990.
2. Quoted in Hermann Bohle, "Nation-State Politics No Solution to Problems, Warns Weizsäcker," *The German Tribune*, 7 October 1990, p. 3. Translated from *Der Tagesspiegel*, 25 September 1990.
3. Jirí Dienstbier, "Die Außenpolitik der Tschechoslowakei in einer neuen Zeit: Vorschläge zur wirtschaftlichen Gesundung Osteuropas," *Europa Archiv*, 25 Juli 1990, p. 397.
4. Joachim Krause and Peter Schmidt, "The Evolving New European Architecture — Concepts, Problems, and Pitfalls," *The Washington Quarterly*, Autumn 1990, pp. 89-90.
5. See "Several Reasons to Welcome Gorbachov's Nobel Prize," *The German Tribune*, 28 October 1990, p. 2. Translated from *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung für Deutschland*, 16 October 1990.

they do without hesitation, with some notable exceptions described below, due to the lingering and strong anti-communism and anti-Sovietism prevailing in their countries.[1] Across East-Central Europe, Gorbachev's efforts for reform in the Soviet Union[2] "are a source of mockery, [their] significance is subject to derision; [they are] viewed, at best, as ... a futile attempt to square the circle."[3] The recent trend toward the reinforcement of authoritarianism in the USSR probably comes as no surprise to these former citizens of the Soviet empire.

What Gorbachev's reforms did do, however, in addition to creating the environment in which the revolutions were possible, is to eliminate totally the requirements for unity in and among these states. National and ethnic rivalries are no longer kept below the surface by oppressive regimes — arguably one of the costs of democracy. Particularly with further deterioration of economic conditions, the masses are becoming dissatisfied not only with the old, but also with the new, and it is difficult to predict what ilk of leadership will come to power in the 'post-disillusionment phase.'[4] There is justified concern that, no matter what the cause, the collapse of one of the nascent democracies could lead to authoritarian rule.[5] There are, to be sure, some who see in Lech Walesa, the democratically elected Polish President and hero of the Solidarity movement, a pronounced 'authoritarian streak.' Even the Czechoslovakian President, playwright and human rights activist, Vaclev Havel, felt that he had to obtain special presidential powers in order to keep tensions between the Czechs and the Slovaks from pulling the country apart at its ethnic seams. Such trends, particularly if based in, or prove to be cata-

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1. One indication of a shift to the West is the fact that instruction in the Russian language has virtually ceased in East-Central Europe, while Poland is short 10,000 German teachers and Czechoslovakia and Hungary are trying to meet the demand for German and English teachers by retraining Russian instructors. See Paul F. Reitze, "Goethe Institute Expands in Eastern Europe," *The German Tribune*, 9 December 1990, p 13. Translated from *Die Welt*, 23 November 1990.
2. The bulk of the research for this paper was completed prior to the brutal Soviet crackdown in the Baltic states in January, 1991. It remains to be seen what reforms, if any, continue to have the support of Mr. Gorbachev and his reactionary backers. In any case, it seems that *perestroika* has, in many respects, failed, and *glasnost* is on the defensive, facing increasing censorship in the Soviet media.
3. Gati, p. 131.
4. See Pierre Hassner, "Europe Beyond Partition and Unity: Disintegration or Reconstitution?" *International Affairs*, July 1990, p. 471.
5. See Timothy G. Ash, "Eastern Europe: Après Le Déluge, Nous," *New York Review of Books*, 16 August 1990, pp. 51-56, *passim.*; and, Wolfgang Bok, "Walesa Inherits Daunting Legacy," *The German Tribune*, 23 December 1990, p. 2. Translated from *Stuttgarter Nachrichten*, 11 December 1990.

lysts for, radical nationalism, which some say has replaced communism as the 'ideology' of much of Eastern Europe, could be cause for concern to that country's neighbors. The possibility of cross-border armed conflict could not be excluded. This would be especially dangerous if Poland and/or Czechoslovakia were involved, since they border on both Germany and the Soviet Union.

Although some fear that in such cases the smaller states might see it to be to their advantage to draw a major regional power into a sub-regional conflict, it is difficult to accept the assertion that either of these powers could see in such a scenario "opportunities for expanded influence."[1] In fact, the interests of each would likely cause them to display great sensitivity for the interests of the other. As suggested earlier, there are no obvious vital interests in East-Central Europe regarding which either Germany or Russia would perceive an advantage to the use of military might. This situation is quite unlike that leading up to WW I. As that crisis approached, noted Robert Hunter, "the great powers either wished to exploit regional, ethnic, and religious strife or were unable to disentangle themselves from its consequences. Today, instability is the major powers' common enemy, and all would welcome a means of containing if not resolving local problems."[2] Moreover, it is recognized on both sides of the fault line that all parties must work together to devise a 'stability strategy' focused on facilitating the difficult transition process in Eastern Europe and, most importantly, aimed at keeping the possibility of conflict to a minimum.[3]

As suggested at the outset, it will be largely up to the countries of East-Central Europe, themselves, to build the foundations for a bright future. Indeed, much work is being done to this end in the individual countries, but attempts at intra-regional cooperation have met with little success. How can this be when it must be clear to all concerned that the peoples in the area share so much in common, from political dreams and economic aspirations, to cultural and

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1. John J. Mearsheimer, "Why We Will Soon Miss the Cold War," *The Atlantic Monthly*, August 1990, p. 41.
2. Hunter, p. 62.
3. See Shevtsova, p. 48.

historical roots? To be sure, there have been attempts to develop out of these commonalties joint regional agendas: the Budapest Meeting of the 'Southern Four' (Hungary, Yugoslavia, Italy, and Austria) in November, 1989, and the Bratislava Central European Conference (Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland, with Italy, Austria, and Yugoslavia as observers) in April, 1990, are two examples. Unfortunately, it appears that the variance in approaches, situations, and conceptions, in addition to centuries-old rivalries, will cause the countries of Eastern Europe to tend toward introspection in their search for their own path to the West. Mr. Dienstbier has sadly admitted that the prospects for cooperation are, indeed, not good:

> The states of Central and Eastern Europe are battling economic difficulties, ecological devastation, and with the moral consequences of the past era. Our modernization would be easier if we ... could find our path, interests and goals along with those countries of the erstwhile Soviet bloc ... [There are, however, problems such as] the preference for national interests over universal principles, increasing self-centeredness in society and politics, and the eruption of national passions, and even ethnic and racial hatred. All of this flows into politics, and politics must deal with all of it, making it difficult to take the decisions that are without a doubt in line with the principles that we have chosen for the conduct of our external relations.[1]

But this is nothing new to this part of the world.[2]

There is clearly a need for a 'de-Balkanization' of relations between the struggling countries of East-Central Europe.[3]. The situation described above not only makes cooperation among them more difficult; it also, and for the short term maybe more tragically, complicates Western attempts to develop a coordinated economic reconstruction and development strategy. Some already see European Community efforts to provide aid to these countries as putting money down "a bottomless pit."[4] Indeed, it may be that it will be more complicated and frustrating for the West to deal with the new democracies than it was with the old Soviet satellites.

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1. Dienstbier, p 398.
2. See, for example, István Deák, "Uncovering Eastern Europe's Dark History," *Orbis*, Winter 1990, p. 51; and, Shevtsova, p. 47.
3. The importance of regional cooperation in East-Central Europe is further highlighted in, for example, Zbigniew Brzezinski, "The USSR and Europe: Toward a Common Home," *Problems of Communism*, November-December 1989, pp. 4-5.
4. Peter Hort, "European Community Faces Tough Schedule as Aid, Memberships Hopefuls Line Up," *The German Tribune*, 9 December 1990, p. 5. Translated from *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung für Deutschland*, 24 November 1990.

The accomplishments of 1989, in all likelihood, will be looked back upon as having been 'the easy part.' The path back to Europe will, no doubt, get tougher. We may, in the future, be forced to the conclusion that the dreams of those who participated in bringing down the Iron Curtain were simply unrealistic, at least in the near term. These countries have much hard work ahead of them before they can prove by deed — that is, by stabilizing democratic institutions and mindsets, and creating workable market economies — that they are deserving of full fledged membership in 'Europe.' This will likely take years, and is in no way guaranteed.[1]

This does not mean, however, that we should long for those bygone days of the Cold War.[2] They were, in a sense, more 'stable,' but it was a false stability, and it came at a high cost — at a cost of the social, intellectual and economic enslavement of millions. A resurrected Cold War that some would — astounding as it may be — like to see, would imply a renewal of these conditions. But a review of the recent history and current trends in Soviet relations with the countries of East-Central Europe shows us two things: first, how unlikely it is that we will see those days again; and, second, how tenuous the stability is in this wing of the common European home. Soviet relations with its erstwhile satellites have become even more complex than Western relations with them. A major difference is that, in the future, we can probably expect solutions to some of the problems of East-Central Europe to come from the West. Similar help from the East is doubtful. The most we can hope for is non-interference from the Soviet Union with East-Central Europe's movement along the path 'back to Europe.'

1. See, for example, Werner Ungerer, "The Development of The European Community and Its relationship to Central and Eastern Europe," *Aussenpolitik*, English edition, 3/90, p. 234.
2. For an incredible counter-argument, see Mearsheimer.

SECTION III

THE MIDDLE CIRCLE - EAST:
RUSSIA AND EAST-CENTRAL EUROPE

Alexis de Toqueville observed that empires tend toward instability as they begin to decay. "The most dangerous time for bad government," he wrote, "is when it starts to reform itself."[1] Since this is also true in the latter part of the twentieth century, we can continue to expect many challenges and few solutions to emanate from Moscow. No one, certainly not President Gorbachev (as was sharply illustrated recently by the resignation of Mr. Shevardnadze), knows where the Soviet Union is headed, much less where it will end up. But when you don't know where you are going, almost any road will get you there. It is the uncertainty of the Soviet destination that is the biggest question mark in the future of Europe, especially of Eastern Europe.

"Soviet actions" in the recent past, according to experts on European security affairs, "have proved to be the most profound strategic retreat in peacetime history."[2] The real reason for this redefinition of Soviet security interests is not entirely clear, but it is likely to have been a combination of changes in domestic priorities, internal and external economic problems, and imperial overstretch, as much as, and probably more than, 'new thinking' in the areas of national security affairs and international relations. One thing is clear: the Soviets have severed the umbilical cord between ideology and external security. There is no longer a perception, at least in the minds of the reformers and even the conservatives, that the ideological integrity of their Warsaw Pact allies is vital to the security of the Soviet state. There is a reactionary element, however, that has condemned the leadership for losing the hard-earned gains of socialism, and at the same time leaving an exposed flank to the west. The loss of political, military

1. Quoted in Philip C. Clarke, "Bush Draws Line in Middle Eastern Sand to Counter 'New Hitler' on the Loose," *ROA National Security Report*, September 1990, p. 7.
2. Hunter, p. 55.

and economic control and the abandonment of ideology in Soviet relations with Eastern Europe has, they add, jeopardized Russia's position as a superpower.

Fortunately, there are also enlightened voices heard more and more in Soviet professional literature.[1] One observer noted, for example, that the removal of Soviet troops from most, and eventually all, of Eastern Europe

> has created a feeling of confused worry ... [among a large share] of the USSR population. ... [For these people,] the removal of troops means losing control over space, coming closer to danger and, in the final account, changing parity. In parity, ... if someone loses then, naturally, someone else also gains. ... [But] a different system of arguments is necessary [today], based on the new thinking and on an analysis of national interests.[2]

But this author and other Soviet commentators lament that Soviet political thinkers and foreign policy analysts have been negligent (some say incompetent) in not reacting quickly enough to the changing situation; that they are far behind the power curve in preparing updated assessments of Soviet security and other national interests. To others, who also are being heard above the reactionaries, it is not a great tragedy to 'lose' allies. In fact, according to their assessments, the Soviet Union is better off without them. The rationale here is that to have many allies is proof that one perceives a threat of war. This, in turn, reflects a failure of foreign policy. There is no question, they continue, that the USSR wants friendly neighbors along its frontiers, but the socio-economic makeup of these neighbors is not a factor that determines whether or not the country is 'friendly.'[3]

If one accepts that Soviet influence in East-Central Europe will no longer be measured in terms of military or ideological hegemony, and that *perestroika* and *democratizatsia* in the Soviet Union are not bringing the domestic economic and political about face that was

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1. We are cautioned by some that the common practice of Western sovietologists of trying to decipher official policy by reading between the lines of such publications is no longer, i.e., since *glasnost*, a valid form of research.. (See Steven J. Frantzen, Review of *Die Deutschen und Gorbatschow: Chancen für einen Interessenausgleich*. Erlangen: Straube GmbH, 1989. *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs*, Summer 1990, p. 421.) It must, however, certainly be just as valid, precisely because of *glasnost*, as reading and interpreting Western scholars who have no obligation to support any particular governmental policy.
2. Yevgeniy Shashkov, "Eastern Europe: Recollections and New Realities," JPRS. *Kommunist*. JPRS-UKO-90-013 (Washington: 28 September 1990), p. 70.
3. A. Demosfenovich, M. Nosov, and K. Pleshakov, "Who Are They, Our Allies?" JPRS. *Kommunist*. JPRS-UKO-90-004 (Washington: 2 March 1990), pp. 73-74; and, Shashkov, p 70.

promised, how then can Russia hope to remain a major player in European affairs? How, if at all, can the Soviet Union actively participate in the development of the conditions for stability in Central Europe? These questions are constantly on the minds of experts in the East and West. One thing is clear: the Russians do not want to get the feeling they are being cut out of Europe. There are unambiguous warnings in the literature that the West should not become so giddy with a feeling of victory in the Cold War that they prompt a 'Versailles syndrome' in the Soviet Union[1] — an allusion to the post-WW I period when a humiliated and demoralized Germany was ostracized from the world community.

How did it come about that the Soviets were willing to risk being put in such a tenuous, inferior position in the region? The Kremlin almost certainly has conducted a thorough post-mortem on their retreat from Eastern Europe. Part of their analysis must reflect the fact that, at least in the early Gorbachev days, the idea of a 'common European home' was based on the assumption that Moscow could control, or at least have a considerable influence on, events in Eastern Europe; and, that the old guard regimes would be successful in their (Kremlin-instigated) internal reforms, which, Moscow hoped, would allow them to retain their legitimacy. As has been noted, however, the Soviet leadership was caught by surprise when their Eastern European house of cards, with the GDR as its base, toppled so quickly. It became clear almost immediately that even a 'reformist' version of the Soviet external empire could not survive the groundswell of dissent.[2] After some time, Gorbachev realized that he had little leverage left with which he could sway these troubled regimes. More urgently, it became clear that Moscow had to choose what was more dear to them — hegemony in Eastern Europe or the salvation of the Union and continued Communist Party dominance at home, both of which

1. See Shashkov, p. 73.
2. See Ronald D. Asmus, "A United Germany," *Foreign Affairs*, Spring 1990, p.70. Some Soviet observers decry the fact that, over the last several years, the Kremlin had lost touch with the true meaning of events in Eastern Europe. Particularly, notes one such expert, "in the wake of important international events, the Americans frequently proved to be more efficient at briefing our allies than we ourselves." N. Spasov, "The Emergence of the USA and Eastern Europe in New Roles," JPRS. *WEIR*, JPRS-UWE-90-011 (Washington: 14 September 1990), p. 31.

could be guaranteed only by means of a certain measure of internal reform. After deciding to cut Soviet loses in the area, Gorbachev did an about face and became the leading proponent of self-determination and democracy in Eastern Europe. He could now focus his energy and his country's resources on domestic programs.[1]

There is little doubt, according to Soviet analysts, of who put the 'bomb' under their relationship with Eastern Europe. It was placed by Stalinist totalitarianism — a system against which the USSR has also turned, or so many there would have us believe. On the surface, there is some bewilderment as to why, as both the Soviet Union and their 'allies' are freeing themselves from the yoke of authoritarian state socialism, there is not the same improvement in Soviet relations with these former satellites as there has been with the West. Why, they ask, is this 'joint cleansing' not bringing back the old slogans of 'friendship and cooperation?' In responding to his own questions, one Soviet observer wrote:

> Many people in the Soviet Union are sincerely perplexed: Why is there such mistrust of us in Eastern Europe? Why are our allies turning their backs to us even on the question of unifying Germany? Is historical memory really lost so rapidly? ... No, [in those] countries, they will never forget the suffering that German fascism inflicted on them. However, both the Czechs and the Hungarians have even fresher memories of how Soviet tanks burst into the squares of their capitols in the postwar years ... They know from experience what the 'Brezhnev Doctrine' meant.[2]

Did Moscow grow wiser from this experience? Many in the Soviet Union are critical of the apparent absence in their own country of lessons learned from the disaster in Eastern Europe. They assert that, although trends there are often mirrored in the USSR, or *vice versa*, Soviet social scientists, the Party and the Kremlin have failed to draw conclusions from these events and seek ways in which to avoid similar turbulence at home.[3] There is a good chance that the final conclusion of the Kremlin's postmortem on Eastern Europe alluded to earlier contains exactly these sentiments. If the Soviet leadership does not take note of these findings, it will be

1. See Milan Svec, "East European Divides," *Foreign Policy*, Winter 1989-90, pp. 42-49.
2. Shashkov, pp. 71-72.
3. A. Bryachikhin, "We Must Not Land on the Roadside," *International Affairs*, Moscow, August 1990, p. 26.

unfortunate as it will not advance regional stability, but it certainly will not be the first time that an empire has refused to learn from its mistakes.

Military ties between Russia and East-Central Europe have, for all practical purposes, been cut. The Warsaw Pact, as a military organization, was officially dissolved upon mutual agreement of all member states in a ceremony in Budapest on 25 February, 1991. At best, the Soviets admit, a 'diplomatic shell' may be all that survives.[1] Regarding Soviet troops still in Central Europe, it is to everyone's advantage that they be removed quickly. Incidents in the former GDR and Poland, for example, although isolated, show that frustrations on both sides (i.e., the Soviet Army and local populations) will, from time to time, be vented on each other. It is also possible that, if chaos in the USSR reaches the breaking point, hundreds of thousands of Soviet troops may be stranded on foreign soil that is no longer hospitable.

In an article written at the time that some of the major agreements on the status of the Western Group of Forces (Soviet troops in eastern Germany) were being reached between Germany and the Soviet Union, the Polish Foreign Minister labeled as a "peculiar solution" the idea that Soviet forces would stay in Germany for some time. He seemed satisfied, however, that this would, from the Soviet point of view, offer some assurance that Moscow's security interests would be protected as the external elements of unification are implemented. But he went much further, suggesting the establishment of "another security zone ... in the Soviet Union, along its western border," in which there could be limitations on the stationing of offensive weapons.[2] Additionally, for follow-on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) talks, should they occur, Mr. Skubiszewski clearly favors a national approach, vice the bloc approach of CFE I. Regarding treaty monitoring and verification, Poland would also like to be able to inspect the territory of all participants, including those members of its own group of states,[3] which no doubt means the USSR.

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1. See Shashkov, p. 70.
2. Krzystof Skubiszewski, "Change Versus Stability in Europe: A Polish View," *The World Today*, August/September 1990, p. 150.
3. *Ibid.*

The states of East-Central Europe are united in their relief that ideology no longer plays a role in alliance relationships. Further, they are skeptical about the possibility of political co-operation among Warsaw Pact members. In Mr. Skubiszewski's view, the cutting of the Soviet security umbilical cord has engendered a self-confidence, especially in East-Central Europe, to the point where these countries can determine the ultimate fate of the Pact. Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary, he says, will decide if there is to be a political role for that moribund tool of Soviet hegemony. Poland's view is clearly that there is little room for such a role.[1] The diminution of the military component of relations with Eastern Europe is also supported by many statements from the Soviet side. Analysts do, however, caution that the conditions for stability in Central Europe are not yet mature. "After all," they say,

> a serious military threat may arise not only because of someone conscious, aggressive actions to destroy the status quo. The countries of Eastern Europe have entered a phase of inevitable and necessary changes, which nonetheless carry an element of instability. In some of them, outbursts of conflict are possible on religious grounds, in others ... on national grounds, and still others ... it is impossible to rule out powerful internal upheavals if a different type ...[2]

Although there appears to be no immediate cause for Soviet concern for their security along the frontiers with East-Central Europe, there are pressing issues such as with the Moldavians along the border with Romania. Although less obvious, the matter of the Polish and Slovak minorities in the Ukraine and Byelorussia also has potential for generating future tensions. In such cases, there is good reason for the Kremlin to be concerned with separatist movements that have as their ultimate goal some type of union with co-nationals across the border. Such a situation, in the worst case, could bring the use or threat of use of military action. This is, however, not the most likely scenario. Any external use of force would hardly prove helpful in dealing with the separatist problems faced by the Kremlin, or in advancing *perestroika*, or even in the consolidation of power by the (now resurgent) reactionary elements in the Soviet Union.

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1. The only possible future for the Warsaw Pact might, in Mr. Skubiszewski's view, be "as an instrument of consultation [on disarmament matters], something different from political cooperation at large." Skubiszewski, pp. 148-149.
2. Shashkov, p. 73.

In any case, such behavior would probably cause Western countries to discontinue, or at least suspend,[1] economic assistance to Russia. This seems to be understood in Moscow. In the end, as long as any threatening conflagration is quickly resolved, "such developments would also be unlikely to threaten the larger peace of Europe, as distinguished from the domestic peace of the Soviet Union itself and peace along its borders."[2]

Beyond the obvious incentives for stability along its frontiers, some Soviet authors believe there are good reasons why the countries of Eastern Europe should desire rapprochement with the USSR. They cite a common low level of economic development, a common postwar history (no matter how critical one might be of it), and a common interest in ensuring regional stability as elements of the basis for cooperation. The new relationship, they say, would stress economic and political, rather than defense interests.[3] Indeed, a considerable problem for the Soviets is, now that the tremendous burden of sustaining the 'glacis' of its erstwhile allies is off Moscow's shoulders, how to mold a new order in the region that can help the USSR economically. The former satellites are, understandably, not necessarily interested in actively participating in the economic healing of Russia. The high level of economic intercourse between East-Central Europe and the USSR will, however, remain a key factor forcing some modicum of cooperation. Energy imports, for example, from the Soviet Union make up over a third of the total imports for both Czechoslovakia and Poland. That same gas and oil makes up about seventy percent of total Soviet exports to Comecon member states. As importantly, Eastern European goods are well suited to the Soviet market, and can not, for the time being, compete in the West.[4] Finally, along with the commonalities mentioned above, geographical proximity

1. This was the (all too temporary) response by the EC to the brutal military crackdown in the Baltic states in January, 1991.
2. Richard H. Ullman, "Enlarging the Zone of Peace," *Foreign Policy*, Fall 1990, p. 107.
3. See Demosfenovich, pp. 75-76.
4. For these reasons, Czechoslovakia has proposed that 16 billion dollars in credit be advanced to the Soviet Union. But the credits would not go to Soviet banks; rather, they would come from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and be paid directly to producers in Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary, which would send goods to the Soviet Union. See Dienstbier, p. 406.

and a forty-five year history of doing business with each other argues for future cooperation. "However much we decry" Comecon, notes one Western observer,

> their remains an important degree of economic interdependence among its members which is unlikely to change overnight. The Soviet economy is likely to continue to represent the most important market for the Eastern European countries. Its success, therefore, is very important for them as they attempt such radical transformations of all aspects of their societies.[1]

The success or failure of the, albeit halting, moves in the Soviet Union toward a market economy will tend to transfer similar success or failure to the economies of Eastern Europe.

There are, unfortunately, grave threats to the stability of these economic relations. Serious dislocations have occurred in trade between Comecon members. The organization has virtually ceased to function. Signed contracts have recently been canceled or revised by almost all parties, particularly the Germans (except for contracts with the USSR) and the Soviets.[2] The oil crisis has made problems much worse, if that is possible. Because Russia now charges dollars for oil exports to Eastern Europe, as do all members of Comecon for all commercial transactions with each other, and due to problems with domestic production and transportation, the Soviet Union cut back sharply on energy deliveries in 1990. This trend is continuing in 1991, and it appears that Eastern Europe will be paying up to five times as much for Soviet oil this year as compared to 1989. This may, surprisingly, be a 'blessing in disguise,' since these unsettling conditions leave the countries of East-Central Europe no alternative other than to refocus their trade patterns westward — a move which is, in the near future, according to some Soviet observers, "a physical impossibility."[3] Nevertheless, since, for Poland and Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union is no longer reliable either as an energy supplier or as a consumer of their products, the new realities of this economic relationship will force them to make

1. John Roper, "Europe and the Future of Germany -- A British View," *The World Today*, March 1990, p 46; see also Hanns W. Maull and Achim von Heynitz, "Osteuropa: Durchbruch in die Postmoderne?" *Europa Archiv*, 10 August 1990, pp. 446-447.
2. See, for example, Ralf Neubauer, "East German Trade With Comecon Plummets in Free Market," *The German Tribune*, 9 December 1990, pp. 6, 9. Translated from *Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger*, 24 November 1990.
3. Interview with N. P. Shmeler in G. Sturua, "People's Deputies Interviewed on Warsaw Pact," JPRS. *WEIR*, JPRS-UWE-90-007 (Washington: 23 July 1990), p. 50.

needed changes now to compete in Western markets.[1] It is only in this way that they can earn the hard currency needed to import energy. Considering the fact that the loss of key trading partners on both sides will cause further disturbances in domestic production and consumption patterns, and hence fan the fires of internal dissatisfaction, this gradual disassociation can only add to tensions along the fault line.

There are, then, many reasons why the Soviet Union will find the path to future relations with East-Central Europe increasingly complex and difficult. There is little doubt that the relationship will be fraught for some time with uncertainty and tension. Despite this grim forecast, increased autonomy on the part of Warsaw Pact allies is, say most Soviet observers, on the whole positive. "[T]he main thing here," they hasten to add, "is to remain within the limits of the natural self-restrictions which determine the commonality of objectives in ensuring international stability and the prosperity of each individual ally and of all of them together."[2] At the same time, they caution that some reactionary elements would hope to put relationships with the former satellites back on track, to Moscow's advantage naturally.[3] These words of caution are hardly a vision of, or a prescription for, a concrete, stable, yet flexible foreign policy between equals. But the chances that the relationship will revert to the old model are extremely remote. It seems fair to say that the Kremlin leadership has enough internal challenges to keep it busy for some time. Additionally, even if Gorbachev and/or his successors felt it necessary to restore totalitarian, or at least authoritarian rule, as seems to be the trend, their reach will not extend beyond the frontiers of the USSR. As suggested by one Western observer, though no one really knows what the geographical extent of the Soviet Union will be in the future, "one prediction seems safe: it will not be greater than it is today."[4]

1. See Gati, pp. 140-142.
2. Demosfenovich, p. 76.
3. See Bryachikhin, p. 27.
4. Ullman, p. 105.

As we have seen, there is little to hope for in the way of Soviet assistance in developing the conditions for stability in Central Europe. The prospect for some type of common action in this regard between the states of East-Central Europe and their former big brother is also questionable. Under these circumstances, where the entire region is plagued by economic catastrophe and social disharmony, Poland and Czechoslovakia quite naturally worry about the renewal of negative influences emanating from the Soviet Union. "For Central Europeans," according to Mr. Dienstbier, "it is certainly hoped that the transformation of the Soviet Union into a democratic society and a community of free and equal nations proceeds in an orderly manner and is brought about via peaceful means."[1] Others see the key to stability along the fault line not in the USSR, but in East-Central Europe. According to the Italian Foreign Minister, Mr. DeMichelis, "West Europeans can aid the Soviet Union by helping reconstitute the political and economic systems of Central and Eastern Europe. This task is essential if the Soviet Union is to avoid future instability along its borders."[2] The conditions for stability along the Polish and Czechoslovakian frontiers with Russia appear, then, to be threatened from both sides. Based on conditions in all of the affected countries in the sub-region, it seems there is little hope that an atmosphere of cordial cooperation will develop out of the ashes of Soviet hegemony. It may be that the best we can hope for is that the players can limit the negative effects of their internal events on the vital interests of their neighbors. It is especially important, of course, for the countries of East-Central Europe to be aware of how their policies might be interpreted in Moscow. As the empire disintegrates and the 'center' continues to lash out at the periphery, the countries that share a common border would be well advised to tread lightly. This approach may do little to enhance the conditions for stability in the area, but it could do much in terms of damage limitation.

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1. Dienstbier, pp. 404-405.
2. Gianni DeMichelis, "Reaching Out to the East," *Foreign Policy*, Summer 1990, p. 46.

With the intent of minimizing the possible damage in the West brought about by tensions in these relationships, some have already reassigned the role of *cordon sanitaire* to Eastern Europe:

> A democratic and economically prosperous Eastern Europe would create a needed buffer zone against unexpected changes in Soviet policy. A Soviet trespass of such an Eastern Europe would provide ample warning to the West about changed Soviet intentions and raise the cost of any future Soviet threat to the West enormously.[1]

Although the idea borders on the macabre, as it seems to throw these countries like lambs to the slaughter, it may not be an unreasonable approach to take from a (general) Western point of view. This is not, however, the case for Germany. Geography demands that it not sit passively on the side lines, quietly watching as events, for better or worse, unfold. Bonn has little choice, in the interest of its own stability and security, but to work through the morass left in the wake of over four decades of Soviet occupation of Central Europe.

1. Svec, p. 63.

SECTION IV

THE MIDDLE CIRCLE - WEST:
GERMANY AND EAST-CENTRAL EUROPE

The bleak picture painted above leads to one conclusion: the only country in Central Europe that can have a significant, positive effect on the conditions for stability in the region is Germany. As stated at the outset, Germany has the economic clout, the democratic institutions, and the historical and cultural ties to its eastern neighbors necessary for it to play a constructive role in guiding them on the path 'back to Europe.' In the words of one observer: "Who is to organize a Central Europe that gave birth to two world wars? Even though they and others may find it hard to come to terms with the idea, the Germans must do it. *Who else is there?*"[1] There is no doubt that it is in Germany's interest to do just that. But how might its influence be levied; and, possibly more importantly, are Germany's eastern neighbors ready and willing to risk the replacement of Soviet military and ideological with German economic hegemony for the sake of stability and prosperity? Preliminary answers to these questions may be found in an analysis of 'the German question' as it relates to East-Central Europe.

The question itself boils down to a basic fear or feeling of insecurity among Germany's neighbors that the country will be, to echo A.J.P. Taylor, either too big or too small for the rest of Europe.[2] Is it true, as some suggest, that fears of a problem once again arising from German soil are unfounded; that "nuclear weapons, economic interdependence, democratic education and, last, but not least, European integration would seem to make a resurgence of German totalitarianism and militarism almost unthinkable"?[3] Or, will the avoidance of hostility in Europe "depend upon a satisfactory solution being found to the resurgent German question"?[4] These themes are vital to this analysis of Central European affairs today, and their importance

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1. Herbert Kremp, "Europe's Political Geography Begins to Change," *The German Tribune*, 9 September 1990, p. 4. Translated from *Die Welt*, 28 August 1990. Emphasis added.
2. See Stuart Croft, "Germany and the Emerging European Security Architecture," *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, July 1990, p. 257.
3. Hassner, p. 475.
4. Croft, p. 263.

is supported by history. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, Berlin was in the precarious position, as the *de facto* fulcrum of Europe, of having to try to orchestrate the balance of power on the continent. In that era, Germany was, in the words of Timothy Garton Ash, "juggling relations with all states around it, Janus-faced between East and West."[1] Germany is again in the middle — geographically, economically, militarily and politically on the European fault line.

This is not to say that Germany was not at the center of the East-West divide for the last forty-five years. In fact, it was the division of that country which became the focal point of the Cold War.[2] In a sense, however, Germany has, for most of the post-war period, been shielded from having to play more than a passive role in the face-off between East and West. In fact, as Ronald Asmus reminded us, "the West Germans became accustomed to and profited from a low geopolitical profile, cloaking their national aims in the fabric of the Atlantic Alliance or the European Community and often behind their major allies, usually the United States."[3] But this has been changing in the last ten, or so, years. The Germans have gradually been shedding the low-profile, which has been replaced by a self-confidence (some would say overconfidence) based in its ever-increasing economic and political strength. Germany's interests have, over time, increasingly come to be identified as transcending the artificial division of Europe.[4] When compared to the rest of the post-war period, the difference is that, instead of being the brunt of — and sometimes the guinea pig for — the policies of others, the central role unified Germany now plays is that of the policy maker upon whom many others depend. "Germany," as noted recently by Gerhard Wettig, is now "the nerve center of security policy decisions on Europe."[5] But, as Wettig himself warned us almost a year ago, Germany's "role

1. Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 254.
2. Ernest May, "The Struggle for Germany," lecture to the College of Naval Warfare, Naval War College, Newport, RI, 19 February 1991.
3. Asmus, p. 75.
4. See Christoph Bertram, "The German Question," *Foreign Affairs*, Spring 1990, p. 62.
5. Gerhard Wettig, "German Unification and European Security," *Aussenpolitik*, English edition, 1/91, p. 13.

reversal, from passive to active shaper [in the interwar period] had harmful consequences not only for its neighbors, but for Germany as well."[1] It is for this reason that the Germans must be extremely cautious in the management of their internal (reunification) and external affairs. In short, Germany must work to convince its neighbors that they have nothing to fear from the bogey man of its past, or from any born-again German juggernaut in the future. In particular, they must mollify Soviet sensitivities at Europe's back door without rekindling old fears and suspicions at the front door, which must remain open to the rest of Europe and North America.

The thought of Germany once again being the fulcrum of Europe is unquestionably disquieting to some of its neighbors. But for many Germans, the new environment gives cause to focus on retooling regional relationships "so that Germany will be able to unfold as a nation, culture and economy with less hindrance from the East-West division and from other borders."[2] According to Walt Rostow, this would have been something the US, for one, could not have tolerated in the first years after the WW II. America, he said, did not fear a united Germany as long as it was firmly anchored in Western multinational institutions, and could not deal on a bilateral basis with the countries of Eastern Europe.[3] Germany's relationship with, or approach to, the East remained a concern to its Western allies through the 1980s, when it was thought to be desirous of a 'Europe' "which just faded out somewhere to the East."[4] But these fears tend to ignore the firm democratic, economic and political foundations that Germany has developed in the West since the war. In fact, there is little question that its approaches to the East would not have been possible or desirable to the Germans, or anyone else in the West for

1. Gerhard Wettig, "The Political Implications of Change in Eastern Europe," *Aussenpolitik*, English edition, 2/90, p. 115.
2. Ole Wæver, "Three Competing Europes: German, French, Russian," *International Affairs*, July 1990, pp. 481-482.
3. Quoted in Michael Charlton, *The Eagle and the Small Birds: Crisis in the Soviet Empire: From Yalta to Solidarity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 178.
4. Wæver, p. 481.

that matter, were it not for this solid anchorage. It is precisely for this reason that, although the easternmost frontier of Germany has moved several hundred kilometers away from the Atlantic, Germany's future has not moved eastward. The promise of continued prosperity for the Germans certainly, at least in the foreseeable future, is not to be found there.[1] Furthermore, Bonn's natural concern about relations with the countries of East-Central Europe, and especially with Russia, should not bring to mind the specter of another Rapallo.[2] The fact remains, however, that although Germany's future does not lie in the East, much of its past does — a past often marked by instability, mistrust, greed and violence. For these reasons, it is clearly in the German interest to take the lead in developing the conditions for stability there. However, neither Germany's ability to do this in the middle of tackling the overwhelming tasks associated with unification, nor the willingness of the intended recipients of the assistance, is guaranteed.

How does Germany view East-Central Europe today, and vice-versa? Will the past be an obstacle to the future? The answer to these questions are key to an understanding of the role of both in developing conditions for stability in Central Europe. As suggested above,

> the East European version of Central Europe ... was largely a spiritual claim to Western identity and a protest against Sovietization ... The German discussion, on the other hand, was highly charged by the memory of the destruction left in the wake of German rumblings about *Mitteleuropa*. [Even conservative Germans warn that] flirting with *Mitteleuropa* was a dangerous game played by West German intellectuals dissatisfied with the status quo in Europe but forgetful of the political roots of their freedom and prosperity ... 'Where does Central Europe lie?, [asked one] — In terms of reminiscences about the culture, everywhere; but nowhere on the political map.'[3]

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1. According to Heinrich Vogel, economic intercourse with Germany's eastern neighbors is not likely to exceed ten percent of total foreign trade. See his "Die Vereinigung Deutschlands und die Wirtschaftsinteressen der Sowjetunion," *Europa Archiv*, 25 Juli 1990, p. 414.
2. The Treaty of Rapallo, signed in 1922 by Germany and the Soviet Union, the two major outcasts from the world community of nations in the post-WW I period, shocked the rest of the world. Although they had little but their isolation in common, they launched moderate, mutually advantageous ventures, including secret protocols for activity in the military sphere.
3. Patricia Howard, "Three Faces of Central Europe," Vojtech Mastny, ed., *Soviet-East European Survey, 1986-1987* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1988), pp. 364-366.

These statements provide insight into the essence of the feelings of uncertainty on both sides of the East-West fault line as to the proper role for Germany in Central Europe. It should be clear today, however, that we cannot afford to have our vision blurred by what one observer called "a whole range of associations drawn from a selective misunderstanding of the past — associations with concepts of *Mitteleuropa* adopted by the German nationalist Right during the 1914-18 war; associations with the German trade drive into the Balkans in the 1930s; associations with the German invasion of Poland in 1939."[1] Today, we have no evidence in Germany of the tragic and frightening mix of militarism and an ideology pressing for territorial expansion. The situation and motivations are much different. German interest in the East appears to be based not in desires for economic aggrandizement or *Lebensraum*, but rather in overcoming the unnatural division of the subcontinent. But it is still up to Germany to demonstrate by their actions that the supranational goals of peace and prosperity are more important than outmoded frontiers between classical nation-states.[2]

There is, to be sure, politically, economically and militarily a vacuum that has developed in the German-Russian marches. Although the retreat of Soviet hegemony has been welcomed by most in East-Central Europe, there is also some concern that the overwhelming economic might of a united Germany could foster "neocolonial tendencies."[3] The emergence of Germany as a, or the, Central European power will likely have a profound effect on the reconstruction and development of its neighbors to the east, and, possibly, not always with positive consequences. One Soviet analyst worries about the lingering fears in Poland aroused by German unification, and particularly by the specter of German irredentism. "Such fears," she wrote, "leave their mark on internal life: they can lead to increased conservatism, autarkic tendencies, and populist feelings."[4] Although it is not clear to what extent this may be true, it is

1. Donald C. Watt, "Germany II: The Case Against Bourbonism," *The World Today*, May 1990, p. 79.
2. See Jochen Thies, "Germany, What Now?" *The World Today*, January 1990, p. 3.
3. Dienstbier, p. 401. For an interesting review of related security issues, see Gary L. Guertner, "Changing Security Perspectives in Eastern Europe," US Army War College Strategic Studies Institute Special Report, 15 August 1990.
4. Shevtsova, p. 47.

clear that the roots of Polish fears and resentment run deep, and are shared to an extent by Czechoslovakia. In the worst case, these feelings could have a damaging effect on internal developments should the 'post-disillusionment phase' bring a trend toward nationalistic authoritarianism.[1] These concerns are not lost on the Germans. Many recognize that their country has a special calling regarding the quest for stability in East-Central Europe. Not only do they concede that Germany shares in the blame for events that led to the current conditions there, but they are keenly aware that stability in the entire region would be threatened by a reversion to hypernationalism or other negative trends in the domestic affairs of Poland and/or Czechoslovakia,[2] not to mention within Germany itself.

In this vein, one of the greatest challenges with which Germany, and to some extent also Poland and Czechoslovakia, will have to cope is the tremendous influx of refugees from points east who are voting for a better way of life with their feet. This is a complex issue for all, but especially for Germany. Before unification, West Germany had no choice but to accept Germans from the GDR (*Übersiedler*) and those ethnic Germans from the rest of Eastern Europe and the USSR (*Aussiedler*). Others from the East of different national/ethnic origin do not have the same legal guarantees for easy access to what they perceive as a promise of a better future. The scope of the problem has been exacerbated this winter with the virtual panic among Western European states, especially Germany, about the possibility of a deluge of refugees from the Soviet Union driven out by famine.[3] Even the countries of East-Central Europe are very concerned, since they would, at best, be the intermediate stop for Soviet and other Eastern European emigrants. Concern has reached the point that Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Austria have all intensified border patrols along their eastern frontiers to stem the expected tide — a tide that may become a tidal wave after the USSR Supreme Soviet relaxes

1. A review of these issues with a focus on Poland is found in Anne Applebaum, "Warsaw Report: Poles Face Life Without Them,'" *Orbis*, Spring 1990, especially pp. 204-207.
2. See Maull, p. 450.
3. The problem was caused not by a shortage of food, but by the collapse of the infrastructure for harvesting the crops and bringing them to market.

obstacles to emigration, as is expected in the near future.[1] The potential for these circumstances to arouse ethnic and nationalist animosities, especially in these economically troubling times, is ever present:

> Even between East and West Germans, tensions seem to be increasing out of mutual resentment about the amount of help from the West and of disruption or competition from the East. In turn, both parts of Germany are united in irritation against Poles or other immigrants or temporary workers (particularly from the Third World), who are accused of unfair competition through black market of cheap labor.[2]

The crux of the problem is that the Central European fault line is rapidly being transformed from the classic Iron Curtain between East and West to a potentially more dangerous Golden Curtain; that is, the ever-widening quality of life gap between North and South. The seemingly logical thing for Germany, and the rest of the West, to do is to focus their reconstruction and development efforts on those countries and economic sectors where there is the greatest need and the best chance for transforming those societies into ones in which the people feel they have a future. Unfortunately, the Western governmental and institutional coffers are, in general, almost bare, and there is little profit incentive for private business ventures. Even if outside aid held out some prospect for long-term success, which is questionable, there seems to be little hope of warding off a massive influx of economic refugees in Western Europe over the next few years. To protect their own economies and life styles, destination countries may be forced to limit immigration drastically (something that is counter to their long-held philosophies), fueling the fires of ethnic and national animosity.

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1. Some expect that between three to five million Soviet citizens will chose to leave. Based on recent reactionary trends in their country, one should not be surprised if the numbers turn out to be even higher. Extreme estimates put the number of refugees over the next three years at 40 million Eastern Europeans and 20 million Soviets. See Ralf Volke, "'Invest in Eastern Europe to Avert Mass Influx of Refugees,'" *The German Tribune*, 6 January 1991, p. 4. Translated from *Hannoverische Allgemeine*, 18 December 1990. It does, however, appear that neighbors are cooperating in efforts to limit the mass migration across Europe: Hungarian and Austrian border troops are working together in a joint effort along their (now unfortified) frontier. Hungarian removal of border fences in 1989-90 was arguably the catalyst which brought about the rapid collapse of communism in Eastern Europe. There is, however, a joke circulating along the border that maybe Hungary should not have removed the barbed wire fence after all -- they should simply have rented it to the Austrians.
2. Hassner, p. 469.

A related issue was, for some time, at the center of discussions on how Germany and East-Central Europe would get along in the post-communist era. Many saw it as a 'litmus test' for German regional policy, but the unfortunate way in which the question unfolded did not give much cause for optimism. There was considerable balking on the part of the FRG regarding recognition, in the form of a treaty, of the Oder-Neisse German-Polish border. Though the details will not be repeated here, the gist is that there were some ambiguous, at best — threatening, at worst — statements made by Chancellor Kohl in early 1990, suggesting that Germany had not given up on trying to revisit the border question in a way that could be to the detriment of Poland. Although some may see these statements as a 'confused attempt' to keep conservative Christian Democrats from defecting to the ultra right Republicans in the German national elections in December, 1990,[1] the gravity of the situation was not lost on Germany's eastern neighbors.

To show just how seriously such an attitude on the part of Germany's leadership was interpreted by the Polish Government, Warsaw asked Moscow to keep Soviet forces in Poland until the border question was settled.[2] Since then, of course, a treaty has been signed between Germany and Poland, in which Germany explicitly recognizes the border.[3] The Poles have also asked the Soviets to withdraw their forces from Polish territory. We must not lose sight, however, of the fact that it was not only German-Polish relations which could have been further damaged if this wound had continued to fester much longer. It could have been a real obstacle to the development of conditions for stability in the entire area. If the issue had not been settled in a timely fashion, warned the Polish Foreign Minister, "then very soon, because of the emancipation in Central-Eastern Europe, we shall have on our hands at least half a dozen territorial problems in Europe ... The result is quite certain. There will be a collapse of European

1. See Roger Morgan, "Germany in Europe," *The Washington Quarterly*, Autumn 1990, p. 148.
2. See Andrew A. Michta, "The Northern Tier of the Warsaw Pact After 1989," *The Journal of Social, Political and Economic Studies*, Summer 1990, p. 169.
3. That this recognition was, for some Germans, a bitter, but at the same time hopeful act is described in Thomas Löffelholz, "Bonn, East Berlin Vote to Recognize Poland's Border," *The German Tribune*, 1 July 1990, p. 3. Translated from *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, 22 June 1990.

cooperation."[1] Optimists hope that the issue has been put to rest, but it remains to be seen whether this black cloud has vanished from relations between the two countries, and from the region in general.[2]

To address these issues, Chancellor Kohl recently made it a point to include in his policy statement of 30 January, 1991, wording intended to calm East-Central European concerns by raising the status of relationships with those countries to the level of 'partnerships:'

> The united Germany intends to comprehensively codify its relationship with the Republic of Poland in a treaty on good-neighborliness and cooperation based on partnership. ... This year we are seeking to conclude with Czechoslovakia, too, a wide-ranging treaty which will close a sorry chapter and point the way to a future of good-neighborly relations.[3]

But even with positive initiatives such as this, that there are still lingering doubts about underlying German feelings is certain. Some wonder if Bonn's interest in the rights of those co-nationals outside national borders is limited to ethnic Germans; and, whether the official German approach reflects a forward looking process for peace, or a backward looking resurrection of nineteenth century nationalism.[4] Concerns such as these gain credibility when, for example, Poland is confronted by instances of élite opinion in Germany that suggest that Polish "cooperation" regarding the German minority question in Upper Silesia might prompt assistance in Bonn for Polish accession to the European Community;[5] or, that, although the decision on the Oder-Neisse border resulted in the least amount of suffering for the smallest num-

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1. Skubiszewski, pp. 150-151.
2. There are also groups in Germany that are pressing for the return of property in the areas of Czechoslovakia from which Germans were driven after the war. See, for example, Christian S. Krebs, "New Hopes and Old Fears in Czechoslovakia," *The German Tribune*, 14 October 1990, p. 15. Translated from *Nürnberger Nachrichten*, 22 September 1990.
3. Helmut Kohl, "Policy Statement by Helmut Kohl, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, in the Bundestag on January 30, 1991," reprinted in *Statements and Speeches* (New York: German Information Center, 31 January, 1991), p. 6.
4. See Wæver, p. 491. For a comprehensive review of Bonn's policy regarding ethnic Germans in non-German speaking countries, see Barthold C. Witte, "External Cultural Policy and Germans Abroad," *Aussenpolitik*, English edition, 2/90, pp. 147-156.
5. See Thomas Urban, "A Growing Self-confidence Emerging in Poland," *The German Tribune*, 5 August 1990, pp. 5, 8. Translated from *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 20 July 1990.

ber of people, there is still a lingering question to be addressed — a question that has the ring of some type of payments to Germans who were driven out of Poland after the war.[1]

An alternative view is that there are not enough ethnic Germans remaining in Eastern Europe for disagreements regarding their circumstances to cause serious problems between the countries involved.[2] But in those areas that do not have the same large ethnic German populations as before, there are still cultural, historical and even special economic ties. It has been suggested that the path to cooperation with those regions, as well, is to downplay the importance of national borders, both in terms of nationality and economic policies. Any 'overpressure' which could build within German borders as unification, over time, brings further economic dynamism would be eased not by moving borders, as happened in the first half of this century, but by disregarding them.

There is a keen awareness in Germany that immense social problems created by the process of transition to market economies in Eastern Europe could sidetrack positive moves toward true democratic pluralism and racial, ethnic and national equality, understanding and self-determination. This insight is particularly important because, when all is said and done, the most important link between Germany and the countries of East-Central Europe will be economics. Even today, the commercial intercourse between Germany and Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union is approximately three times that of any other western country.[3] But there are limits even to these promising statistics. The German industrial and financial powers have, indeed, taken the lead in joint ventures and investment opportunities in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, but what they have seen of the fundamental systemic and structural problems facing reformers in all of Eastern Europe, and particularly in the USSR, does not give them much cause for hope or incentive for risk taking. Beyond that, there is the clear danger

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1. See Erik-Michael Bader, "Why Germany is Right to Recognize Polish Border," *The German Tribune*, 25 November 1990, p. 2. Translated from *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung für Deutschland*, 16 November 1990.
2. See Ullman, p. 104.
3. See Maull, p. 450.

that if Germany were to 'go it alone' in East-Central Europe, not only could they not fix all of the problems, but the harder they might try, the more their motives might be called into question.[1] There seem, then, to be any number of interrelated and complex reasons why even German economic muscle may be limited in what it can do to satisfy the expectations of the governments and peoples to their east.[2]

If the earlier assessment that there is a lack of focus in the Soviet Union on events in Central Europe is correct, and the suggestion that Germany not only has the necessary ties to the area but also the motives to help, it becomes clear that Germany is indeed the country best suited to take the lead in developing conditions for stability in the region. There are, of course, limits to the economic assistance Germany can provide, and there are lingering fears and sensitivities in the area regarding possible German hegemonic tendencies, albeit less so possibly in Czechoslovakia than in Poland. The overwhelming interests shared by all countries in the region, and the other countries of Western Europe, in terms of political pluralism, economic prosperity, and social harmony must take precedence over the reasons for hesitation on both sides if the conditions for stability are to be given a chance to flourish. To shed some light on what else of substance can be done toward developing these conditions, President Havel, in his address to the US Congress, asked the following rhetorical question: "How can the US help us today? My reply is ... paradoxical: You can help us most of all if you help the Soviet Union

1. For a discussion of this issue, see Wettig, "The Political Implications . . .," p. 116. German sensitivity to this issue is shown in the fact that, although the countries of Eastern Europe have displayed a keen interest in adopting German business techniques and social programs, Bonn has attempted "at all costs" to avoid giving the impression that it is trying to force the Federal Republic model on its neighbors. On this point, see Heinz Schmitz, "Eastern Europe Seeks 'Social' Plus 'Market,'" *The German Tribune*, 13 January 1991, p. 7. Translated from *Handelsblatt*, 2 January 1991.

2. A clear indication of the inability (or unwillingness) of others in the West to get in too deep economically in Eastern Europe was given by Mr. Kenneth Baker, the Chairman of Britain's Conservative Party. He prefers "to view 'help' [to the East] as management consulting and training, and appealed to the 'iron will' of [those countries], which he said cannot be replaced by any help." Quoted in Jens Gundlach, "Businessmen Peer Into Some Politicians' Crystal Balls," *The German Tribune*, 30 September 1990, p 8. Translated from *Hannoverische Allgemeine*, 15 September 1990. And what if German efforts, and the efforts of other Western industrial nations, including Japan, do not turn the tide of negative economic trends in this area? "In the worst case," according to Milan Svec, "the West might be at least partially blamed for a collapse of free-market reforms while also losing significant sums of money in the East." Svec, p. 62.

on its irreversible but immensely complicated road to democracy."[1] The Federal Republic of Germany has led the way in responding to this plea, making very clear the preeminent importance of the relationship between Germany and Russia not just to each other, but to building the conditions for stability in Central Europe. A 'partnership' is needed here — one that, as suggested by Christoph Bluth, can and must "play an essential role in containing the political and economic pressures which Europe will face in the decades to come."[2]

1. Quoted in *Life, The Year in Pictures: 1990*, p. 85.
2. Christoph Bluth, "Germany and the Soviet Union: Towards a New Rapallo?" *The World Today*, November 1990, p. 200.

SECTION V

THE OUTER CIRCLE:
GERMAN-RUSSIAN RELATIONS AND CENTRAL EUROPE

We come now to the third and overarching circle in our discussion of relationships and the conditions for stability in Central Europe. What kind of relationship between Germany and Russia is required in order that stability might have a chance? And, what could go wrong that might sidetrack moves toward a stable, if not cordial, relationship? To answer these questions, it is first necessary to look at the essence of the relationship itself.

Although Germany has always played a big part in the formulation of Soviet *Westpolitik*, it is now clear that the Kremlin will have to go back to the drawing board and retool their approach to adjust to the new situation. As noted by one Western observer,

> it would be irresponsible and ahistorical for any Soviet or Russian leadership to proceed on the assumption that [the reunification of Germany] will somehow spell the 'end of history.' With the passing of the postwar German problem, a new chapter ... will have to be opened. Policies for coping with German power and influence will have to be designed.[1]

For Germany's part, beneath the myriad complicated issues, real and perceived, surrounding unification, instability in East-Central Europe, and chaos in the Soviet Union, one thing does seem clear: Germany won the Cold War. They are, in the words of Ole Wæver, "clearly getting the version of 'Europe' that they want — with unity and with space for economic and cultural expansion into East-Central Europe."[2] For reasons cited above, it is unlikely Germany will be an obstacle to progress in Europe. But, being the 'motor' of *all* of Europe, not just the EC, is an onerous task, especially considering the mammoth challenges associated with carrying out unification in an orderly manner. In order to keep the further development of Europe on an even keel, Germany will have to provide even stronger leadership in the West than in the

1. Hannes Adomeit, "Gorbachev and German Unification: Revision of Thinking, Realignment of Power," *Problems of Communism*, July/August 1990, p. 2.
2. Wæver, p. 478.

past, and even more so in the East,[1] where it must continue to appease the major loser of the Cold War: Russia. To a great extent, European stability requires that Russia be made to feel that it is has not been placed in an untenable position. Germany is working very hard to avoid just that by making it as easy as possible for Moscow to adjust to its new relationship with the rest of Europe. As we have seen, Russian security interests have changed dramatically at the same time that its influence in Europe is declining. Therefore, an especially important factor in Bonn's approach to any future all-European security arrangement will have to be their consideration of the vital interests of the USSR.

Building mutual trust and confidence with the Soviet Union and the Russian people will not be easy for the Germans, considering the contentious, often violent, relations between these two countries over the centuries. The almost in-bred animosity toward Germany is illustrated most clearly by statements such as this: "One of the first things I learned about foreign policy," wrote one Soviet specialist on European affairs, "was that there were good and bad Germans: The first lived in the GDR and the second, naturally, lived in the FRG." Such an approach, which provided the backdrop for post-war Soviet foreign policy in the region, is now viewed by many there as having been a product of the cold war; as being "faulty and primitive."[2]

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1. Gerhard Wettig put it succinctly: "The successful outcome of German unification is crucially important for Europe. Both the economic and political success of the European Community as well as reconstruction in Eastern Europe rely on the strength of the German economy." This statement is from the introduction to an enlightening special issue of *Aussenpolitik* entitled *Problems of German Unification*, 4/90, p. 317. This issue focuses primarily on the internal, and very difficult aspects of unification. Sergei Smolnikov, writing in the Soviet journal *World Economy and International Relations*, agrees with Wettig's assessment: "It is of fundamental importance," he wrote, "that the unification of Germany not slow down the economic and political unification of the European Community. Only Germany's complete participation in the unified economic and political structure of the Community will serve as a reliable guarantee of European stability and security." See his "New Logic of European Development," JPRS. *WEIR*, JPRS-UWE-90-010 (Washington: 13 September 1990), pp. 16-17.
2. T. I. Dudinkova, "German Question Yesterday and Today," a review of Stephen Larrabee, ed. *The Two German States and European Security* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989). JPRS. *WEIR*, JPRS-UWE-90-007 (Washington: 23 July 1990), p.58.

In the years leading up to Gorbachev's ascendency to power, the Soviet approach to relations with West Germany was guided by several major themes:

> • the containment of the German threat through the division of Germany, which became the central focus of conflict between the Soviet Union and West Germany;
> • the ideological conflict in Soviet-German relations as part of the general East-West confrontation;
> • and, the asymmetry with regard to economic and technological development which manifested itself in the economic recovery of West Germany and the increasing dependence of the Soviet Union on Western technology.[1]

In support of the status quo, historiography in the USSR simply avoided the German question. In fact, according to the same Soviet specialist cited above, the common practice of adding the qualifier 'so-called' to references to the 'German problem' "attested, as usual, to its existence, if not its heightened relevance." It is only recently, she wrote, that academics have begun to explore the "deep historical roots" of the problem.[2]

This was also true of the initial voices that were heard from the Soviet Union when talk focused on the real possibility of German reunification. The first indications that the problem was being discussed seriously could be detected between the lines, smothered in innuendo, amid much 'Æsopian language' — a sure sign, in Soviet parlance, that an issue is very delicate.[3] There were those who, although they saw some merit in the intellectual exploration of the evolving circumstances as kind of a testing ground for new forms of bi- and multilateral cooperation, stressed that in approaching resolution of the German question, an issue that "can be considered closed only when ... Germany ... [is] not perceived by anyone as a potential threat, ... [t]here is no place for trial and error."[4] These are vague statements indeed. To place them in a more objective context, we must come once again to the earlier-mentioned critique of Soviet German studies which showed a lack of confidence in Soviet preparedness for the fun-

1. Bluth, p. 199.
2. Dudinkova, p. 58.
3. See Henry Trofimenko, "The End of the Cold War, Not History," *The Washington Quarterly*, Spring 1990, p. 33.
4. N. Pavlov, "The German Question and a 'Common European Home,'" JPRS. *WEIR*, JPRS-UWE-90-010. (Washington: 13 September 1990), pp. 3-5.

damental changes occurring in Soviet-German relations.[1] One wonders, wrote a critic of Soviet policy analysis, "whether Soviet scholars of German affairs are capable of laying this foundation today, or whether we should put all of our hopes in foreign studies."[2] No matter how lacking Soviet policy based on thorough analysis may have been in 1989 and early 1990, there was no way the Russians could avoid the reunification question.

"History," as we have seen, "has proven Stalin right in his prediction that, in the long run, it would be impossible to keep Germany down and divided."[3] This does not mean, however, that it has been easy for the Soviet Union to adjust to the new situation. Even Gorbachev had his initial, resolute objections to putting the question back on the agenda. After some hand wringing, his pragmatism caused him to bow to the increasingly overwhelming pressures for reunification. He was adept enough, indeed, to save face domestically by exacting from the FRG government a promise to live up to the contracts and obligations of the GDR to the USSR. As time passed, particularly when Chancellor Kohl and Foreign Minister Genscher returned from their February, 1990, trip to Moscow, it was clear that "conventional wisdom on the German question in both East and West ...[, i.e.,] that the final guarantor of German partition was Moscow," was no longer valid.[4] On the contrary, neither global superpower nor any other victor power of WW II had the final say. Instead, "the key to German unity [returned] from Moscow to Bonn."[5]

It was difficult enough for Gorbachev to accept the thought of reunification. But as we have seen, he could do little to stop it. The question of alliance relationships for a unified Germany was seen as something quite different. The Soviets, for some time, rejected the idea of Germany in NATO. Instead, Gorbachev proposed that a unified Germany be neutral — a po-

1. See also Igor Tyshetskiy, "The Security Problem of International Relations," JPRS. *WEIR*, JPRS-UWE-90-011 (Washington: 14 September 1990), p. 2.
2. Dudinkova, p. 60. The author was referring here specifically to the book by Larrabee, *op. cit.*.
3. Adomeit, p. 1.
4. Asmus, p. 64.
5. Quoted in Wæver, p. 485.

sition also held for some time by a number of left-wing German politicians. The Soviets brushed aside their interpretation of Kohl's statements that a neutral, united Germany was inherently dangerous since it could be the source of reactionary pressure to force a resurgence of military potential to the level of its economic power. On the contrary, many Soviet observers believed that German membership in NATO would bring a different kind of threat. It would, they said,

> lead to the inadmissible violation of the military-strategic balance between the Warsaw Treaty Organization and NATO, and thereby to the undermining of the very principles of stability and security in Europe. The consequences [of a reunified Germany in NATO] would be [, they said,] difficult to imagine: the end of disarmament talks, the sharp deterioration of the international situation that might lead the world to the brink of ruin where the demonstration of nuclear-missile muscle becomes the main argument.[1]

To be sure, even this tough talk presented nothing more than a smoke screen for Soviet incapacity for decisive action. Just as with the reunification question, the Soviet intransigence on the alliance membership issue was not credible. The Kremlin had no useable leverage with which to stop it. "It could suggest a price," as noted by Robert Hunter, "especially in terms of West German monetary support for the Soviet economy, ... but it could not determine the outcome."[2] In any case, it is difficult to understand how German neutrality could possibly be in the Soviet interest, or for that matter, in the interest of any state that has a stake in European security affairs. For their part, it is clear that Poland and Czechoslovakia prefer that Germany remain in NATO. Otherwise, they fear the development of an even larger military vacuum in Central Europe than already exists. It could only be worse, they think, with a German 'wild card' at its core.[3] A neutral Germany could appear to some of its neighbors as a potential ally in their designs on fellow smaller states. Still others, fearing German military potential, might seek to form alliances of defense against Germany. In either case, the trend would not be stabilizing.

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1. Pavlov, p. 4.
2. Hunter, p. 64.
3. See Gilbert Gornig, "The Contractual Settlement of the External Problems of German Unification," *Aussenpolitik*, English edition, 1/91, p. 11.

As the world was to learn after the fact, Gorbachev was eventually to turn around on the alliance issue after receiving additional guarantees from Kohl, the essence of which are spelled out in the 'grand treaty on good-neighborliness, partnership and cooperation.' The purpose of this agreement was, in Chancellor Kohl's words, "to lend a new quality to German-Soviet relations."[1] This was an extremely positive step for both sides because, as has been argued, the mere fact that the Soviets were willing to set down the new relationship in the form of a contract between equals shows they are eagerly seeking a *modus vivendi*.[2] But there are some in the West who were alarmed by the way in which this new relationship, as codified in the Treaty, came about — "not in the framework of the 'two-plus-four' talks, but rather in direct negotiations between Helmut Kohl and Mikhail Gorbachev."[3] The other powers were simply left to ratify what was agreed. Hence concerns in the East and the West that this 'special relationship' might be the backdrop for another Rapallo Treaty.

Need the West fear the ghost of Rapallo? What about the countries of East-Central Europe? To begin to answer these questions, it is interesting to note how the topic is being addressed in Russia. Without any reference to German-Soviet relations today, the author of a recent article in a Soviet journal describes the international setting and the relationship between the Soviet Union and Germany as it developed at the time of the Treaty of Rapallo:

> The Rapallo Treaty substantially altered the political situation in the world. It helped create a unique atmosphere for a Soviet-German rapprochement and initiate fruitful political, economic and cultural cooperation between the two countries. Cooperation also covered the military sphere ... [but] the Soviet Union infringed no international norms by cooperating with Germany in the military field ... It merely did its best to use the opportunities of building up its military potential with help from a more developed country.[4]

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1. Helmut Kohl, "Statement by Dr. Helmut Kohl, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, to mark the signing of the Two-Plus Four Treaty in Moscow on 12 September 1990," reprinted in *Documents of German Unity* (Hamburg: *The German Tribune*, undated), p. 2.
2. See Gornig, p. 5.
3. Morgan p. 152. Further, "as early as May, 1990, Kohl was trying to accelerate the two-plus-four talks on German unity by sending his personal envoy for private talks with Gorbachev, without the knowledge of either his own foreign minister or the German ambassador in Moscow." Bluth, pp. 199-200.
4. Sergei Gorlov, "Soviet-German Military Cooperation, 1920-1933," *International Affairs*, Moscow, July 1990, pp. 95-97.

Largely based on these same memories, some East-Central Europeans believe they do have reason to fear a German-Soviet condominium which could, to a great extent, determine their fate. In the West, the concern is more that Central Europe will develop into an exclusively German-Soviet shared sphere of influence, to which others' access would be limited. Some Soviets even speculate that American support for reunification was given out of a fear that a new *entente* could develop to the detriment of US interests in the region.[1] Although the extent to which this may be true is not clear, some in the West clearly do have reservations about a new Russo-German 'special relationship.' Are these fears justified? "Like the former Soviet fears of a united Germany," as observed by Christoph Bluth, "they are misplaced. They fail to recognize that we are now in a very different situation. Old historical parallels do not apply."[2]

German interests, as reviewed above, suggest that country's strong anchorage in the West gives little incentive for a special relationship with Russia to the exclusion of others. "We Germans," according to Bernd Stadelmann, writing for the *Stuttgarter Nachrichten*, "naturally know where we belong. There is no question ... of us being a wanderer between two worlds."[3] As for the Soviet Union, Gorbachev's

> opening toward the West ... [,i.e., his commitment] to cooperating with the existing institutions in Western Europe ... rules out the establishment or reestablishment of some kind of special Soviet-German relationship. Neither for Moscow nor Bonn ... does Rapallo provide an appropriate frame of reference: German unification has firmly been placed, both by the Germans and by Gorbachev, into the European and Atlantic context.[4]

Further, and perhaps more importantly, it can be argued that the Soviets are not likely to be eager to replace the Moscow-Washington condominium in Europe with a Moscow-Bonn con-

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1. See Spasov, p. 42. Not surprisingly, in a counter to Western fears of the ghost of Rapallo, some Soviets warn of the possibility of "the formation of an American-German axis within the framework of NATO. Such an axis would guarantee," they say, "the United States the continued US presence in Europe, and would help a unified Germany to establish its *de facto* domination in European affairs. It is self-evident that the development of events according to such a scenario would lead to cardinal change in the entire European balance of forces and would be reflected in the positions of literally all players on the European stage." *Ibid.*, p. 44.
2. Bluth, p. 200.
3. Bernd Stadelmann, "Bonn-Moscow Treaty Forges New Relationship" *The German Tribune*, 23 September 1990, p. 1. Translated from *Stuttgarter Nachrichten*, 14 September 1990.
4. Adomeit, p. 23.

nection.[1] Such a move, it is feared, would only serve to strengthen Germany's already strong hand. This, then, is the all-European context. But what of the area between Berlin and Moscow which has historically been of more immediate concern to both countries?

Observers of current events in Central Europe have searched the history books for analogies to present conditions. One reasonable precedent can be found in the second half of the nineteenth century with the rise of Germany and decay in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The role of the latter is, of course, played today by the Soviet Union. Specifically, analysts in the East and West look favorably on the 'self-limiting' diplomacy of Bismarck. "Once [German] unity was achieved," wrote one Western observer, Bismarck "was conscious of the need for self restraint, since the strong central power in Europe was a latent object of others' fear and conspiring."[2] Soviet bias is reflected in reference to the Iron Chancellor's view that the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire would not be in Germany's interest. Quoting Bismarck: "I could not conceive of an organization of the lands making up the Austrian Monarchy such as would be acceptable to us in the future should the monarchy be destroyed by Hungarian and Slav uprisings or become dependent for a long time."[3] Although we should not read too much into the resurrection of historical precedents of this type, it seems clear that it is in the interest of both the West and the East if today's decaying empire is not put in too degrading or inferior a position, particularly by an ascending Germany. German sensitivity to this situation was made clear by Foreign Minister Genscher in May, 1990: "We do not want to push the Soviet Union to the edge of Europe...," he said, adding that, "[t]he Soviet Union has opened its doors and in such a situation we must go through the door, not let someone slam it shut from this side."[4]

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1. Frantzen, p. 421.
2. Wæver, p. 492.
3. Quoted in Andrei Kokoshin, "Bismarck and Moltke," *International Affairs*, Moscow, August 1990, p. 118.
4. Quoted in Wæver, p. 487.

Statements like this must be of some comfort to the perennially mistrustful and xenophobic Russians. It remains a fact, however, that "with *glasnost* in the USSR, addressing the German topic involves not merely fierce polemics, but also the most genuine political struggle."[1] There is a recurring note, a mixture of caution and conciliation, in Soviet professional literature regarding their major western neighbor:

> Historical experience has shown that when a German region begins to move, there is no telling how far it may go, ... [*but*] ... interference in the affairs of other parties and states was and remains unacceptable to us. Any interference is fraught with never-ending escalation to the point of resorting to forcible means, ... [*but*] ... the demand that the power balance on the continent be taken into account remains ... [*and*] ... The task now is to act in keeping with the legitimate interests of all whom the prospect of German unification involves.[2]

In a different, but equally telling article, under the section heading *Tormented Deliverance From the 'Fear Syndrome,'* another Soviet author argues that his countrymen have not transcended their memories of the horrors of war, but that they must learn to live with those memories in a totally new and different world where Germany is again a force to be reckoned with. "One would like to hope," he concluded, "that the people of Germany will assess our support [for unification] at this turning-point in their history for its merits."[3]

The new and improved Soviet attitude toward the German question certainly made a difference in Moscow's approach to events in Eastern Europe. But, as noted by Uwe Nerlich, particularly regarding unification, Soviet acquiescence, because it was due in part to a lack of real influence on events, may in the future come back to haunt us in the form of a less passive foreign policy toward Germany.[4] For this reason, among others, some Germans believe their country has a special responsibility to establish a sound relationship with the Soviet Union, and to support positive political changes there. On way in which they are doing this is to urge emphasis on the finest traditions of centuries of German-Russian cooperation:

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1. Spasov, p. 44.
2. Igor Maximychev and Pyotr Menshikov, "One German Fatherland?" *International Affairs*, Moscow, July 1990, p.37.
3. Shashkov, p. 72.
4. Uwe Nerlich, "Europa zwischen alten Ängsten und neuen Hoffnungen," *Europa Archiv*, 25 August 1990, p. 485.

> ... it was Germans who, as teachers of the political elite as well as advisors to the Czars, helped in opening Russia for western culture and civilization. German universities were the preferred educational institutions of Russian scientists, and it was primarily German engineers who assisted in the establishment of the industrial basis for Russian development. [In more recent memory, it was West Germany which, during the low points of the Cold War,] fended off pressure to politicize economic relations, [seeking continuity instead]. [1]

Whether the Soviet Union holds the same romantic view of the history of Russian-German relations is not clear. More evident is the fact that Russia needs Germany.

In the final analysis, "the primary Soviet interest in Central Europe is to ensure the emergence of a politically stable and secure Germany that will be a reliable political and commercial partner."[2] There are even those in the Soviet Union who see promise in the idea of a Soviet and German dominated economic zone stretching from the Ural mountains to the Rhine river.[3] But as much as the Soviets expect help from their new 'partner,' the Germans are quick to warn them about illusory expectations.[4] Beyond the promise of economic assistance, however limited, there are other, more security-related reasons why the USSR can afford to subdue its fears of a resurgent German threat, working instead to develop good relations with its major partner to the west. First, due to the imbalance in conventional and nuclear forces, Russia should not perceive a military threat from Germany; and, second, for the time being at least, and even with the backtracking on democracy in the Soviet Union, there seems to be no ideological barrier to cooperation.

While post-unification developments in Germany are "anything but immaterial" to the Soviets, they seem generally confident "of the objective absence of causes likely to give rise to unfriendliness between the Soviet Union and a unified Germany."[5] Is there anything that, from the German point of view, could disturb the relationship? One possibility is the concern in Germany about Soviet anti-democratic activities in the Baltic states. Historical German ties

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1. Vogel, p. 413.
2. Asmus, p. 72.
3. See Smolnikov, p. 16.
4. See Manfred Rowold, "Soviet Plight and the Role of Germany," *The German Tribune*, 21 October 1990, p. 5. Translated from *Die Welt*, 9 October 1990.
5. Maximychev, p. 38.

to this area remain strong, and some warn that what the Soviet military and Security Forces did in Lithuania in January, 1991, could be the first move in a "political counter-revolution," where the threat "is not just a reversion to communist orthodoxy, but vengeance by the supporters of the old order."[1] In the final analysis, however, it does not appear that Soviet actions there will cause more than a minor disturbance in German-Russian relations. This is not to say that Bonn has not learned anything from recent Soviet intransigence. According to one analyst, "there is no overlooking the fact that Soviet foreign policy in the year ahead will be less cooperative than it was in the year just ended."[2]

With that warning in mind, we can identify at least two issues on which a continuation of the German-Soviet rapprochement could stumble. First is the situation of the ethnic German minority in the Soviet Union — especially of the almost one million Germans in Kazakhstan. In this, as in many other areas of the USSR, there are massive efforts under way by the local ethnic majorities to advance the language and customs of their people in reaction to seventy years of Russification. Innocent bystanders in this revolt against the center are other non-Kazakh, non-Russian minorities, such as the Germans. In some cases, according to one German observer, there has been a backlash against the Germans because they are materially better off — a situation brought about, he says, by their "strict attitudes toward work." For the past two years, Germans (and other European minorities) have claimed that they been used as 'scapegoats' of the separatist fervor against Moscow. Many Germans reportedly see a dim future for themselves, their language, and their culture in Central Asia and in the Soviet Union in general. Relaxed emigration laws will go a long way toward solving these people's problems, since many will simply attempt to move to Germany.[3] But, as mentioned, the increased so-

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1. Bernhard Küppers, "Accusations Fly at Red Army's Crackdown in Lithuania," *The German Tribune*, 20 January 1991, pp. 1-2. Translated from *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 14 January 1991.
2. Josef Riedmiller, "Soviet Foreign Policy After Shevardnadze: The Winds Have Already Changed," *The German Tribune*, 13 January 1990, p. 3. Translated from *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 31 December 1990.
3. Peter Hilkes, "Ethnic Germans in Soviet Union Feel the Pinch as Nationalist Tensions Rise," *The German Tribune*, 14 October 1990, p. 15. Translated from *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung für Deutschland*, 16 September 1990.

cial, economic and political tensions that this massive influx of *Aussiedler* will trigger in Germany causes Bonn to prefer to try and work diplomatic and economic magic in these areas to give the people a reason to stay home. In the case of Germans in the Soviet Union, due to the massive problems in that country already alluded to, it is unlikely Moscow can be of much assistance in improving conditions. The frustration on both sides, or all three if you include Bonn, Moscow and Kazakhstan, could, if the problems continue, reach a point where it finds expression in accusations of racism to hypernationalism. It could even be used as grounds for Germany to cut back, or threaten to cut back, on aid to the USSR.

Ethnic problems are often closely linked to economic ones. Discussion of these issues reminds us that German economic assistance to the Soviet Union, and for that matter, East-Central Europe, is not a panacea for those ailing societies. Some Germans, realizing this perhaps better than the Soviets, have begun to focus on what they might salvage from the relationship, assuming the failure of Moscow's attempts to satisfy its citizens' needs and desires. "All that Germany can now do," they say, "is help to ensure the survival of ethnic Germans in the Soviet Union, which is a limitation of damage that lacks either a grand design or a visionary master plan for the future."[1]

The second, and doubtless more dangerous issue still lacking final settlement is that of Soviet troops in Germany. As we know, there is a Treaty that specifies the details of the move out to be accomplished over the next several years. But now, the Western Group of Forces (WGF), once the premier Soviet Army grouping in Eastern Europe, is made up of over three hundred thousand Soviet soldiers who have no mission. This, along with the miserable living conditions in Soviet barracks and remote prospects for anything better in the Soviet Union, is causing the tensions in the ranks and between Soviets and local Germans to increase. Although some Germans suggest that "nothing could be worse than for 'Russians Out!' slogans

1. Gerhard von Glinski, "Gorbachev in Germany: Pacts Tighten Bonn-Moscow Links," *The German Tribune*, 18 November 1990, p. 3. Translated from *Rheinischer Merkur/Christ und Welt*, 9 November 1990.

to gain ground,"[1] the continued stationing of Soviet forces could, others fear, cause a breakdown of the positive atmosphere between Bonn and Moscow. The appalling conditions of the average soldier in the WGF has caused many of them to desert. To survive, some have resorted to crime, including robbery and, most alarmingly, the sale of their guns, grenades and even anti-tank mines. Further, although the Soviets are technically required to notify and gain German approval for all exercises and other out-of-garrison training activities, these rules have, to a great extent, been ignored, raising the ire among local townspeople. The real concern in the German Defense Ministry, according to some observers, is that the WGF, with no mission, a low level of discipline and morale, and facing an uncertain future back home, might "show little consideration for German interests or international treaties."[2] In the worst case, the situation in the Soviet Union could get out of control and Germany and Poland could see a rogue Soviet Group of Forces forcing its way east, back to Russia, paying little attention to local sensitivities or paper agreements.

Speculation aside, recent trends in German-Soviet relations do give cause for hope. The aid (primarily food and clothing) provided by the German Government and the German people over this winter appears to be proof that, no matter what the reason — i.e., gratitude for unification or simply humanitarian generosity — Germans are interested in a thorough rapprochement with the Soviet Union and the Soviet people, and the Soviets are accepting the help in the spirit is which it was given.[3] It would appear that these two regional superpowers can

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1. Sten Martenson, "Sensitive Aspects of Organizing Red Army Pullout," *The German Tribune*, 11 November 1990, p. 2. Translated from *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, 13 October 1990.
2. G. Franz Schmeidel-Roelmann, "Red Army Troops Run Guns or Take to the Woods," *The German Tribune*, 6 January 1991, p. 15. Translated from *Rheinischer Merkur/Christ und Welt*, 7 December, 1990.
3. It is interesting to note here that even when the brutal crackdown by Soviet security forces and Army in the Baltic states left a number of innocent people dead and injured, the appeared to be no detectable slowdown of private donations of food and clothing from the German public, although the Government did suspend aid temporarily. Also interesting is the fact that, after Germany announced several major aid initiatives to the Soviet Union, the countries of Eastern Europe warned Bonn not to overlook the their plight by becoming fixed on the improvement of the bilateral relationship with the country that caused most of Eastern Europe's problems. On this point, see Werner Adam, "Warning About 'A Curtain of Affluence,'" *The German Tribune*, 2 December 1990, p. 2. Translated from *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung für Deutschland*, 22 November 1990.

once again look to a positive example from history on which to model their behavior: "Just as the key to peace in Western Europe has been the relationship between Germany and France," noted Richard Ullman, "so the key to peace in Central Europe is the relationship between Germany and the Soviet Union."[1] If this best-case scenario does develop — that is, not a German-Soviet condominium in Central Europe that would decide the fate of East-Central Europeans and exclude the helpful influence of others, but rather a stable, if not cordial *modus vivendi* — the positive events within and between the countries of East-Central Europe, and between them and their larger neighbors, would have a far greater chance for success against the negative forces that threaten to inhibit the development of the conditions for stability in the region.

1. Ullman, p.103.

SECTION VI

CONCLUSIONS:
IMPLICATIONS FOR EUROPEAN SECURITY

History shows why the relationships described above are so important to European security, and provides ample precedents to the present situation in addition to the Bismarckian analogy already mentioned. In fact, there is much written today about whether the current state of affairs in Europe is more akin to the situation which existed after the First World War or after the Second. Some have even suggested that what we see now, or will see in the near future, is more like the Europe after the Napoleonic Wars, or even earlier — after the French Revolution.[1] Of all the options, the post-WW I analogy seems most appropriate because, as Pierre Hassner wrote, "the real question [now, as then, is] above all that of the domestic evolution and the ultimate fate of Germany and the Soviet Union."[2] Unlike during much of the post-WW II period, for example, there is no threat of attack from the East against Western Europe. The challenges to be overcome have to do more with threats to general stability than to peace on the continent. To be sure, the states of East-Central Europe may perceive threats to their security from within their own borders or from their neighbors, big and small. But these threats, and potential conflicts arising therefrom, can probably, if approached with caution and restraint on all sides, be localized. Furthermore, *if* they do not lead to a confrontation with or between Russia and Germany, they can probably be contained, and hence will not negatively affect the security of the rest of the continent.

The question of reducing the potential for such conflicts and of keeping the two regional superpowers on the sidelines if that fails is key. There is little doubt that "tensions arising from stresses on the old German-Russian marches" have once again come to the fore.[3] History gives Russia ample reason at the same time to fear and respect Germany. Russia was

1. See Zbigniew Brzezinski, "Destinations: Strasbourg or Sarajevo?" *Encounter*, July/August 1990, p. 24.
2. Hassner, p. 475.
3. Watt, p. 82.

always large in terms of land mass and size of its armed forces and perpetually backward in terms of society, culture and technology. This combination in a sense offset Germany's industrial strength and military potential; or, if you like, Germany's advantages compensated for Russia's sheer size. One could argue that little of the essence of this relationship changed prior to Soviet troops marching into Berlin in 1945. Nearly half-a-century later, however, Germany has recovered, and then some, with its potential being even greater after reunification. At the same time, Russia is beating a hasty, albeit surprisingly organized, retreat from empire — at least from beyond the Soviet frontier. But this retreat should not be immediately identified as a tendency toward isolationism, any more than German unification should be seen as a prelude to the Fourth Reich. At least as until the waves emanating from East-Central Europe which formed our three concentric circles subside, old animosities and suspicions will continue to reside in the hearts and minds on both sides, right along with respect and hope. At the same time, it is likely that both powers realize they have little to gain, and much to lose, from the future use of military force to settle whatever issues may arise between them. They must know that their cooperation is critical not only for their own benefit and security, but also for that of Central Europe and Europe as a whole.

Having said that, we must admit that when an empire is imploding and an alliance is crumbling, it is not overly pessimistic to suggest that anything can happen. Even the apparent understanding between the regional superpowers in no way guarantees the long-term stability of the territory between their frontiers. The revolutions of 1989 and the resulting disintegration of the Warsaw Pact and Comecon as meaningful organizations removed the last shred of legitimacy from all elements of the formerly communist regimes in the erstwhile Soviet satellite states, including the police, the military and the judicial, to say nothing of the economic, systems. This gave birth to what one observer labeled a "political San Andreas fault ... between the Baltic, the Adriatic and the Black Sea."[1] The new democratic regimes in East-Central Eu-

1. *Ibid.*

rope are struggling with this legacy left by the Soviet occupiers, and are having an extremely difficult time of it. Moving quickly to a truly pluralist, democratic political system while simultaneously jettisoning the skeleton of the command directive in favor of a functioning market economy is proving to be far more difficult than anticipated. In many cases, in order to limit the already critical levels of unemployment and economic dislocation, the new governments have opted for measures that only go half-way. Whether this turns out to be the correct path will be for history to decide. In the mean time, the peoples' expectations are continually going unsatisfied, and in many cases this dissatisfaction leads to a frustration that is not averse to looking for a target on which it can be vented, or for a scapegoat on which all evils can be blamed. It is at this point where elements domestic tensions and instability can take on a life of their own and, in the worst case, bleed over borders, threatening the stability and even the security of neighboring states. It is for this reason that some caution that the West should not immediately stack arms in the belief that Eastern Europe is irreversibly on a peaceful path back to Europe.[1]

Although the picture painted here is of gloom and doom, and is virtually a forecast that bad things will happen in East-Central Europe, some analysts believe that we have little reason to fear that any eventual internal or intra-regional conflagration could precipitate a direct, face-to-face conflict between Germany and the USSR — or worse yet, bring in other Western European or North American countries. In any case, they say that the relatively small size and insignificant military and economic clout of the countries in our inner circle limit the scope of the problems which might emanate from the region.[2] More pessimistically, however, others argue that it may happen that disputing smaller states, democratic or not, could find it in their interests to entangle a larger partner from their western or eastern border as a patron, potentially bringing Germany and Russia into a confrontation that neither wants, nor can avoid. At the

1. See, in addition to Mearsheimer, Steven Rosefielde, "Market Communism at the Brink," *Global Affairs*, Spring 1990, p. 104.
2. Ullman, pp. 104-5; and, Hassner, p. 475.

very least, rampant instability in the area could threaten stability in the rest of Europe. A security or stability challenge from the East would not have to be as serious as during the Cold War for there to be a requirement for vigilance in the West — a requirement that could divert precious resources from the urgent tasks of integration and unification.

To their possible detriment, some Western countries have lost sight of the importance of this part of the continent. They look at the region as having lost its appeal as 'the flavor of the month,' since the task many in the West saw for themselves of freeing Eastern Europe from the Soviet yoke has been accomplished.[1] As noted by Thomas Kielinger, "[l]ike a tidal wave, the demise of socialism has swamped the free world with horrendously difficult problems. To duck them is to doom yourself to becoming the victim of a rising level of unrest in your neighbor's back yard."[2] The perpetuation of such a 'hands-off' approach in the West would be shortsighted indeed. As we have seen, Germany, at least, can not afford to turn its back on East-Central Europe. Because it must become involved, it may also be shortsighted to dismiss the 'German question' as being behind us — it will exist as long as Germany's neighbors perceive it exists. Finally, due to the negative influences which could bleed into Central Europe from a convulsive Soviet Union, it would clearly be a serious mistake either to write off Russia as being a 'has-been' superpower that will no longer play a significant role in European affairs, or to give it a greater say in those affairs than its economic, political and military clout (with a deemphasis on the latter) earns it.[3]

All of these factors — in order of concern, Soviet chaos, East-Central European instability, and the German question — are, then, key variables in the European security equation. The volume of ink expended on these topics seems, however, to be in reverse order,

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1. See Gati, p. 143.
2. Thomas Kielinger, "Waking Up in the New Europe — With a Headache," *International Affairs*, April 1990, p. 253.
3. Some have even recommended the Soviets be associated with the economic summits of the seven Western industrial nations. But it is much too early for this, because it would give Russia far more economic prestige and legitimacy, and hence more influence in world affairs, than it presently deserves. The idea certainly has merit for the future, however, in order to involve Russia not only in the benefits of the Western system, but also in the responsibilities that come along with them.

leading the casual observer to the false conclusion that problems associated with the external aspects of the unification of Germany are most likely to have an unsettling effect on peace and stability in Central Europe; that East-Central European instability is in some way a problem, but only for the locals; and, that the chaos in the Soviet Union, if confined to the steppes, can be mitigated in its negative impact on the continued progress toward European integration. In fact, none of these issues, when considered in isolation, is of overriding importance. It is, rather, the way in which they interrelate that will determine the common path into the future.

"Central Europe, [or *Mitteleuropa*,] a vision that has regularly recurred since the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire"[1] will, for the foreseeable future, remain just that — a vision. It has not developed into that harmonious region which, although a buffer between Germany and Russia, can use this position, based in domestic and cross-border solidarity and self-confidence, to play these powers off against each other. The countries of East-Central Europe will have to press on and work their way, often unassisted, through a labyrinth of internal, intra-regional and extra-regional problems. Simultaneously, they will have to do what they can to limit the impact of negative forces from the east and, if they exist or are perceived to exist (such as the specter of German irredentism and neocolonialism), from the West, without inadvertently blocking out positive forces, which will likely emanate, for the most part, from Germany. In any case, the backdrop for the development of the conditions for stability in the region, if they are to be given any chance whatsoever, will remain the relationship between Bonn and Moscow. Whether these ties develop into more than merely a paper partnership, or possibly simply a tacit understanding of non-interference, or, in the worst case, a relationship marked by the competition and confrontation that has led so often to tension and devastation in the past, remains to be seen. One thing is, however, certain: Germany, the country upon which the entire region depends for its major contribution to the development of the conditions for stability, is doing its best to mold the relationship along positive lines. After all, we are

1. See Christoph von Marschall, "The Ghost of Habsburg Hovers Over Central European Meeting," *The German Tribune*, 12 August 1990, p. 2. Translated from *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 3 August 1990.

reminded that, "given its new ... role [in Central Europe], ... [Germany] has an overriding interest in maintaining what have always been 'close ties with St. Petersburg' regardless who [holds] power in the Russian capitol."[1]

1. Glinski, p. 3.

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