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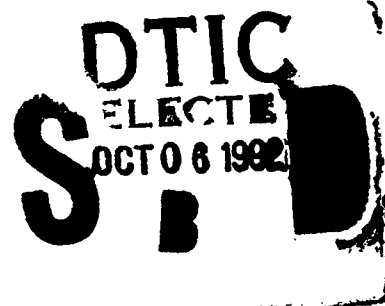


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A RAND NOTE

**The German Question in Moscow's
"Common European Home":
A Background to the Revolutions of 1989**

Eugene B. Rumer



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Eugene B. Rumer

**Prepared for the
Under Secretary of Defense for Policy**

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PREFACE

The RAND Corporation is providing analytical assistance to the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy on the subject of recent developments in Soviet security policy. This two-year effort seeks to identify and explain the major elements of continuity and change in Soviet national security organization, concepts, and goals since the emergence of President Mikhail Gorbachev and his "new political thinking." It looks beyond the rhetoric of *glasnost* and *perestroika* to the underlying motivations that account for the many departures that have lately occurred in such areas as Soviet declaratory policy, operational training, national security decisionmaking, and defense resource allocation.

This Note explores Soviet views on the European security environment on the eve of the momentous events of 1989, which led to the collapse of the Warsaw Pact and paved the way for the unification of the two German states. It focuses on the thinking of the Soviet policymaking community concerning the future political outlook for Western Europe, the U.S. military presence in Europe, the role of the NATO alliance and the "German Question," as well as long-term implications for Soviet security.

The research for this study was completed in the spring of 1989. It thus does not address nor explicitly anticipate the dramatic changes that occurred in Europe in the final months of that year. It does however, describe and analyze what was already a potentially profound evolution in Soviet perspectives on the political environment in Europe. This study is being published now, without updating or changes, to document this evolution on the eve of revolutionary events in Europe.

The research reported here was conducted in the International Security and Defense Policy program of RAND's National Defense Research Institute, a federally funded research and development center sponsored by the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. It should be of interest to members of the United States defense policy community concerned with East-West relations, European security, and Moscow's evolving perspective on the global security environment.

SUMMARY

For many years, the United States and its European allies have based their policies on the assumption of a hostile Soviet attitude toward NATO and the U.S. presence in Europe. Soviet opposition to the deployment of Pershing II and cruise missiles in the early 1980s put considerable strains on the Western alliance and marked one of the chillier episodes of the entire Cold War.

Recent signals from Moscow suggest that prominent members of the foreign policy establishment have deviated from what is commonly believed to be the traditional Soviet stance toward the United States–West Europe connection and the U.S. presence in Europe. They see the United States and NATO as making a positive contribution to European stability, in particular with respect to West Germany. Concerned by what they perceive as the decline of NATO and a U.S. abandonment of its European burden, makers of Soviet foreign policy have sought a formula for preserving the U.S. presence on the continent as a balancing political element and an additional guarantee against the resurgence of a powerful German state in the heart of Europe.

Evidently, the Soviets have found such a formula. It is called a “common European home” and has three key components. The first component relies on the fears of West Europeans about the prospect of a West German hegemony, which is in neither their own nor the Soviets’ interests and which will be controlled, some Soviet observers have suggested, by West Europeans through economic and political integration. The Soviet role here is limited and entails little more than encouragement of these processes and strengthening of ties to the European Economic Community (EEC).

The second component of the formula provides for a more active Soviet role. The concept of a common European home, from the Soviet point of view, must serve as more than a harness on West German ambitions through West European integration. A common European home must be a vehicle for political dialogue and economic cooperation on both sides of Europe and must guarantee the Soviet Union a key role in European affairs. A solid foundation for this endeavor already exists in the Final Act of the 1975 Helsinki Conference, which reaffirmed the “postwar realities” in Europe.

Finally, the Helsinki Final Act offers the advantage of having the United States among its signatories. It allows the Soviets to enlist the most effective twentieth-century means for controlling Germany—the United States—in the process of European integration, but without the burden of NATO. Thus, the Helsinki Final Act ensures Soviet participation in a common European home, guarantees the stability of postwar borders in Europe, *and provides for the United States' balancing presence on the continent.*

These trends in Soviet policy toward West Germany, Europe, the United States, and a common European home are beneficial to the United States and its NATO partners. At a time when the military alliance is faced with a new crisis of unprecedented proportions, when its longstanding *raison d'être*—the threat of aggression from behind the Iron Curtain—is in doubt as a result of Soviet decline, it is presented with a new political platform: a Helsinki-based common European home.

The new platform in effect preserves NATO as a political alliance and gives it flexibility to address military and political issues. This approach is likely to meet with a great deal of domestic support in Europe, most notably in West Germany. From Bonn's point of view, a common European home based on the Helsinki agreements provides a safe avenue for advancing relations with East Germany *and* dealing with "revanchist" claims from the right with the help of an external constraint on great German ambitions.

Finally, this version of a common European home provides a vehicle for the doctrine of constructive engagement of the Soviet Union and its Eastern European satellites, enunciated recently by President George Bush. It offers an opportunity for the West to engage the Eastern bloc in a dialogue across the entire spectrum of the Helsinki accords and to do so on a nonprovocative basis of multilateral contacts—a particularly important condition in these politically volatile times in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

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I. INTRODUCTION

For many years the United States and its European allies have based their policies on the assumption of a hostile Soviet attitude toward NATO and the U.S. presence in Europe. Soviet opposition to the deployment of Pershing II and cruise missiles in the early 1980s almost split the Western alliance and marked one of the chilliest episodes of the entire Cold War. As recently as 1987, Western opponents of the INF treaty warned about the political neutralization of NATO and the decoupling of Western Europe from the United States. Denuclearization of Europe, it was often said then, is a logical first step toward that goal and will be followed by the eventual withdrawal of all American forces from the continent, leaving the European nations open to Soviet political exploitation due to Moscow's overwhelming nuclear and conventional superiority.

One can hear similar arguments today as the Western alliance is once again in the midst of a crisis that appears even more severe than the storm it endured in the early 1980s. Soviet offers to negotiate reductions of short-range nuclear missiles in Europe are seen as all the more provocative against announcements of unilateral troop cuts and sweeping proposals to reduce conventional forces. In an atmosphere of drastically lowered perceptions of the Soviet threat, the temptation to negotiate has put a new strain on the alliance. On both sides of the Atlantic, voices are heard questioning the need for NATO in the post-Cold War era. Cost-conscious congressmen want to bring the U.S. troops back from Europe, while in West Germany low-level flights and military exercises are among the hottest political issues. Against this background, Mikhail Gorbachev's grandiose disarmament schemes revive the same old fears of Soviet intentions to decouple the United States from Europe.

A potential danger to the NATO alliance lies in the very real nature of Soviet initiatives. Such Soviet moves as the announcement of unilateral cuts in its forces by 500,000 cannot be dismissed as mere propaganda. But to many observers, cautious in their assessment of Gorbachev's initiatives, the threat of decoupling Europe from the United States outweighs the benefits derived to date from Soviet concessions. They express fears of Soviet opportunism and eagerness to exploit European public opinion in pursuit of what is believed to be a traditional Soviet goal: destroying NATO and kicking the United States off the continent. Such traditional concerns in

turn are criticized as much too conservative, imbued with old thinking no longer appropriate in the new European environment. The result is a by-now familiar debate of what to make of Gorbachev's policy in Europe: is it new tricks out of an old hat or a fundamental change of course?

Recent signals from Moscow suggest that some prominent members of the foreign policy establishment have deviated from what is commonly believed to be the traditional Soviet stance toward the U.S.-West Europe connection and the U.S. presence in Europe. They see the United States and NATO as beneficial to European stability, in particular with respect to the thorny issue of Germany. Concerned by what they perceive as the decline of NATO and American abandonment of its European burden, which would lead to the emergence of the Federal Republic of Germany as the dominant economic, political, and even military player in the heart of Europe, makers of Soviet foreign policy have sought a formula for preserving the U.S. presence on the continent as a balancing political element and an additional guarantee against the resurgence of a powerful German state.

Evidently, the Soviets have found such a formula. It is called a "common European home" and has three key components. The first component relies on the fears that the FRG's West European partners may have about the notion of German hegemony. Clearly, they are not thrilled by the prospect of West German economic, political, and military domination. Therefore, the reasoning goes, they will use the process of West European integration to restrain whatever "revanchist" tendencies the West Germans might have in the future. The Soviet Union's role here is limited. It would entail little more than encouragement of West European integration and strengthening of ties to the European Economic Community (EEC).

The second component of the formula provides for a more active Soviet role. The concept of a common European home, from the Soviet point of view, has to be more than a harness on West German ambitions through West European integration. The structure must have room for the Soviet Union. A common European home must serve as the vehicle for political dialogue and economic cooperation between both sides of Europe, and it must guarantee the Soviet Union a key role in European affairs. A solid foundation for this endeavor already exists in the Final Act of the 1975 Helsinki Conference, which reaffirmed the "postwar realities" in Europe. The "Helsinki formula," according to the Soviets, provides a proven and constructive vehicle for further development of a common European process.

Third, from Moscow's perspective, the Helsinki Final Act offers the important advantage of having the United States among its signatories. It allows the Soviets to "have their cake and eat it too" by enlisting the most effective twentieth-century means for controlling Germany—the United States—in the process of European integration, but without the burden of NATO. Thus, building a common European home on the foundation of the Helsinki Final Act ensures Soviet participation in a common European home, guarantees the stability of postwar borders in Europe, *and* provides for the continuation of the balancing presence of U.S. forces on the continent.

Although Soviet pronouncements on the subject of West Germany and the U.S. presence in Europe have been relatively few, they have come from highly authoritative sources; it would be a mistake to dismiss them as minority views. They have been expressed by seasoned foreign policy professionals who have persevered through both the years of stagnation and the whirlwind of new political thinking, individuals whose views can be safely considered a powerful current in the Soviet diplomatic and academic establishment.

II. SOVIET CONCERNS ABOUT GERMANY AND EUROPE WITHOUT THE UNITED STATES AND NATO

Soviet policy toward Western Europe and the United States is driven by several factors. Key among them are the perception of an absolutely hopeless domestic economic situation and the growing economic and political power of the FRG as the pivotal state in NATO, the emerging West European union, and potentially the entire united Europe. According to this point of view, economic stagnation and decline at home foreclose the prospects for an effective foreign policy at a time when the FRG is becoming the leading economic power in Europe and the United States is cutting its ties to the continent.

Concerns about the domestic economic situation, its foreign policy implications, and West German political ambitions were expressed by a veteran academic specialist, Radomir Bogdanov, Deputy Director of the Institute for the Study of the U.S.A and Canada. Bogdanov spoke at an interagency conference on foreign policy sponsored in July 1988 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The meeting drew the leading representatives of party, government, and academic institutions to assess the implications of the 19th Party Conference for Soviet foreign policy.¹

Bogdanov declared that Europe is undergoing fundamental transformations of historic proportions. The United States is in the process of withdrawing from the continent. The fact that this withdrawal is taking place may not be obvious to everyone at the present time, he argued, but the British took 20 years to pull back from the territories east of the Suez, and the historic proportions of their retreat were not evident at the time then, either. What transpired in Reykjavik should not, according to Bogdanov, be interpreted as President Ronald Reagan's political naivete or ill-preparedness. It was a sign of a carefully conceived and developed policy of withdrawal from Europe. Another manifestation of this policy was the U.S. willingness to conclude the INF treaty. The American "ruling elite" has made the decision to withdraw from Europe, Bogdanov summed up, in a rather conspiratorial view of the U.S. policy process.

Contrary to widely shared perceptions of Soviet attitudes toward NATO and the issue of the U.S. presence in Europe, Bogdanov suggested that this development

¹*Vestnik Ministerstva inostrannykh del SSSR*, No. 15, August 15, 1988, p. 24; *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'*, No. 10, 1988.

was fraught with negative implications for the Soviet Union. The United States has been in Europe for over 40 years. It has become part of the continent's political structure and, noted Bogdanov, a stabilizing factor in European politics. Most importantly, the U.S. presence has served as a restraint on West Germany's "nuclear ambitions." As soon as the Americans leave, Bonn will demand its own nuclear weapons. It is absolutely clear, argued Bogdanov, that "the French policy of nuclear deterrence has nothing to do with us. This policy is aimed primarily against Germany. De Gaulle understood before anyone else that the Americans were getting ready to leave Europe and that is when the French will need nuclear weapons to balance the colossal economic might of the FRG. . . . [w]hen the West Germans demand their own nuclear umbrella the French must be ready to say: you don't need it, we already have one."²

This grim assessment of the FRG's ambitions and the destabilizing effect of the projected American departure from the European continent was coupled in Bogdanov's address with a bleak analysis of the Soviet domestic economic situation. Recalling the rhetoric of the late 1950s and early 1960s, when victory in the race against the United States and the whole capitalist world seemed imminent, he told his audience that the Soviet Union has not simply fallen behind "them," it is in the process of becoming a "different civilization." Bogdanov predicted that the possibility for interaction and cooperation between the two systems in Europe would soon be foreclosed due to the technological gap between them. He compared them to two gears, with mismatched teeth, that cannot engage each other. The two systems' economic mechanisms are incompatible, and the problem lies in the Soviet economy, which therefore must face the burden of reform. Unless it does, the situation will only get worse.

Bogdanov's pessimistic assessment of the Soviet domestic situation and the challenges in the international arena was evidently not an isolated statement of views by an academic observer. His remarks were given at a crucial conference attended by the most senior and experienced members of the Soviet foreign policy establishment. According to published accounts of that conference, while the audience may not have shared the sense of alarm contained in Bogdanov's address,

²R. G. Bogdanov, "Glavnyy protivnik—inertsia gonki vooruzheniy," *SShA: Ekonomika, Politika, Ideologiya*, No. 10, 1988, pp. 62–63.

his assessment of Soviet interests in the Soviet-U.S.-West German triangle was fully consistent with the consensus view among conference participants.

In summing up the results of the panel on "Priorities in Soviet Foreign Policy," at which Bogdanov had presented his remarks, Deputy Foreign Minister A. Kovalev noted that "one speaker had predicted with confidence the approaching U.S. withdrawal from Europe. His opponent insisted that it would never happen. The consensus was that it would be counterproductive to try to split the United States from western Europe."³

Another statement of concern about the "German question" based on a similar (to Bogdanov's) assessment of the situation on the home front was offered on several occasions by a veteran Soviet diplomat, ambassador to Bonn Yuliy Kvitsinskiy.⁴ He first expressed his views publicly from the authoritative platform of the 19th Party Conference in June-July 1988. Kvitsinskiy's message was clear: in the competition with the capitalist world, the Soviet Union has achieved parity in the military sphere, but in the economic competition between East and West, parity remains a distant goal.

Evidently speaking on the basis of his experiences as Moscow's representative in Bonn, Kvitsinskiy told his audience that a country's standing in the international arena can no longer be measured by the size of its military arsenal. Its influence is determined primarily by economic factors. Many countries' bitter experience shows that economic power is a more useful instrument of foreign policy than military power. In fact, it is what West Germany constantly relies upon in pursuit of its foreign policy objectives. Unless cuts in the Soviet military arsenal are compensated by economic gains, warned Kvitsinskiy, Soviet influence will decline.

Thus, the Soviet international position will depend on the performance of its economy and its ability to become a desirable and active trade partner. But, according to Kvitsinskiy, Soviet foreign trade remains the quintessential reminder of stagnation in the domestic economy. The reputation of Soviet-made goods is so poor that in order to sell them in foreign markets, the label "Made in the USSR" often has to be removed. Machinery and equipment account for merely 1 percent of total Soviet

³A. Kovalev, "Prioritety vneshney politiki SSSR," *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'*, No. 9, 1988, p. 38.

⁴A candidate member of the Central Committee at the time of the conference, Kvitsinskiy was promoted to full membership at the April 1989 meeting of the Central Committee.

exports to West Germany. Soviet trading practices are similar to those of the least developed countries, which export irreplaceable raw materials in exchange for manufactured goods.

Moscow's ambassador to Bonn expressed nothing but pessimism with regard to his country's ability to sustain its international positions through economic growth. Fearing exploitation of Soviet economic inferiority by "the other side," which is striving for political concessions from the USSR, Kvitsinskiy put forth the surprising idea of an international agreement to ban the misuse of economic leverages or even the threat of their use in pursuit of foreign policy objectives. Application of economic power in international relations, he proposed, must be watched closely by a specially designated monitoring authority. Assets exceeding the "normal needs of states and their citizens" will be turned over to the international community. Such an agreement would serve as a political band-aid while "extraordinary" measures are taken to revive the Soviet economy.

Kvitsinskiy's sense of alarm was prompted by more than the immediate danger of pending Soviet decline in the international arena and relations with the FRG. Looking to the Western half of Europe he saw signs of economic, political, and military integration—a process he found disquieting since it was unmatched in the Eastern part of the continent. The ongoing change represented "a serious shift in the allocation of forces." And although the Soviet Union has made some adjustments—the establishment of relations with the EEC—in Kvitsinskiy's view they were clearly not enough. While the complexion of the emerging European Community is largely outside Soviet control, and although the new union could become a mere appendage to NATO, it could also acquire an independent identity and become a vehicle for the establishment of a common European home. A lot depends upon the Soviet Union and its ability to revive the process of socialist integration. Without it, warned Kvitsinskiy, more European states will be drawn into the EEC and through it into NATO. Cooperation between the two systems on the basis of equality will be supplanted by the development of a "Common European branch of the North Atlantic bloc."⁵

⁵A. Yu. Kvitsinskiy, *Pravda*, July 2, 1988, p. 11. Concerns about "centrifugal tendencies" in Eastern Europe in the face of West German and EEC economic preponderance have evidently been raised in the Soviet diplomatic community. See, for example, M. Amirdzhanov and M. Cherkasov, "Etazhi obshcheyevropeyskogo doma," *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'*, No. 11, 1988, pp. 36-37.

Kvitsinskiy's speech at the party conference was remarkable in that it provided a candid insight into the thoughts of a leading and presumably influential Soviet diplomat. In his assessment, domestic economic decline threatens to destroy the Soviet bloc and propel the USSR to the ranks of second-rate powers. If Moscow is not capable of reinvigorating its economic cooperation with its East European satellites, it will lose them to the emerging West European union, whose members, most notably West Germany, do not shy away from applying economic leverage in pursuit of their political interests.

Moreover, no matter how naive Kvitsinskiy's proposal for international redistribution of wealth may be, it provides further evidence that he himself has little faith in the ability of the Soviet economy to pull itself up by its own bootstraps out of the rut in which it found itself after the long "period of stagnation." The call for a ban on exploitation of economic power was nothing but a cry of helpless desperation from one of the USSR's most experienced and distinguished diplomats. The grim picture outlined by Kvitsinskiy of a Soviet Union left at the mercy of aggressive wealthy states appeared in his own analysis more like reality than a distant prospect.

The urgency of his remarks at the party conference is underscored by the *persistence and candor* with which the Soviet ambassador has developed his views on Soviet-West German and Soviet-West European relations since the conference. Writing in a recent issue of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' monthly *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'* (International Affairs), he pondered the future course of Soviet relations with the Federal Republic.

West Germany at 40, wrote Kvitsinskiy, has outgrown the role assigned to it at its creation and then admission to NATO. It is a mature country with greater ambitions in the international arena and an independent foreign policy. Closer ties with the Soviet Union are necessary if West Germany is to play a greater role in world politics. The change in its policy is a product of "objective reality and the [country's] geopolitical situation." But the revision of the FRG's policies need not be interpreted as a flight from the Atlantic alliance. Rather, argued Kvitsinskiy, it is moving toward more balanced relations with both West and East. One should not harbor any illusions about the extent of the shift in West German policies. It remains a committed member of the Western union. In Kvitsinskiy's own words, its position in the West European community is "too cozy" to give up. The limited nature of West Germany's move toward closer ties with the East, incidentally, is fully

consistent with Soviet *strategic* [emphasis added] interests, stated Kvitsinskiy. The Soviet Union is interested in a stable FRG, stable GDR, stable Europe as a whole.⁶

However, despite its positive aspects, the new thaw in Soviet–West German relations has produced a number of challenges that cannot be dealt with easily. One such challenge is, of course, the economy, already mentioned by the Soviet ambassador in his party conference speech. The FRG's interest in the Soviet Union is primarily that of a large exporter interested in developing new markets. According to Kvitsinskiy, the West German business community would like to break up the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) and turn its members, including the Soviet Union, into a "European Latin America."⁷

The other challenge has to do with what has been long referred to in the Soviet media as West German "revanchism." The problem of West Germany's territorial claims cannot simply be wished away, warned Kvitsinskiy. All the treaties and agreements notwithstanding, the official West German position on this subject—the constitutionality of which was confirmed by the federal court in 1973—is that "the German Reich still exists in its boundaries of 1937." A united Germany, he asserted, would not be bound by the Moscow and other treaties and would not recognize the post-WWII borders in Europe—nor would it shy away from using force to restore its territorial integrity.

Kvitsinskiy was careful to stress that there is no cause for panic. Many West German politicians, he wrote, are embarrassed at the sheer mention of such designs. Yet the fact remains that such court rulings are still on the books in the FRG. Every attempt to change them has met with stubborn resistance and eventual defeat.⁸

The situation is not without hope, however. In Kvitsinskiy's pragmatic assessment, the delicate problem of German reunification and the restoration of the German Reich to its 1937 borders does not pose a severe threat to the Soviet Union and its East European clients. At the same time, the latent ambitions of West German "revanchists" cannot be ignored. The solution, paradoxically, could be found

⁶A. Yu. Kvitsinskiy, "Posol'stvo na Reine," *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'*, No. 4, 1989, p. 40.

⁷This comparison is based implicitly on a perception of Latin America as a backward region in effect colonized by U.S. big business, for which it serves as a resource base and a market for exports. However, Ambassador Kvitsinskiy is more optimistic than some of his fellow Soviet observers. A recent Soviet visitor described the extent of economic decline in his country by saying that "we have already lost the race with Latin America."

⁸For a similar assessment of the West German situation see Ye. Shmagin and I. Bratchikov, "Vtoroye dykhaniye," *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'*, No. 8, 1988, pp. 47–56. The authors serve on the Foreign Ministry staff.

in further integration of the FRG into the common European home. West Germany's "cozy" place in the European Community will not only prevent it from "rushing into the Russians' embrace," but will dampen the territorial ambitions that have prompted "understandable concerns" among West Germany's neighbors. These concerns are also understood in the FRG, where "many feel that entry into a common European home will be difficult with such baggage of the past." In short, integration of the FRG into the common European home offers the most convenient vehicle for keeping in check whatever ambitions West German "revanchists" may have left. This solution fits the interests of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, West European nations, and the FRG itself.⁹

Kvitsinskiy's concerns about West German "revanchism" should not be taken at face value. It is certain that Moscow's ambassador to Bonn, a veteran of the anti-INF campaign of the early 1980s, knows full well that although the relevant laws remain on the books, that is precisely where they are virtually certain to remain for the foreseeable future. They are not representative of mainstream West German public opinion or the political parties likely to determine the course of the FRG's policies in the long run. Kvitsinskiy is also far from Bogdanov's alarmist views about the imminent danger of West German nuclear armament. He didn't even mention this contingency in his article.

It is not West German political ambitions, territorial claims, or military might that this experienced Soviet diplomat expects to harness with the help of a common European home. Simply put, he fears West German economic hegemony on the continent, a state of affairs that is not, he maintains, in the interest of West European nations, either. In Kvitsinskiy's own analysis, at a time when economic might has become the leading factor in international politics, Soviet foreign policy has no effective instruments at its disposal other than its military arsenal, and even that is less and less useful. The USSR is therefore in danger of being left virtually defenseless vis-à-vis the increasingly prosperous West Germany, whose economic miracle is likely to translate into political clout and ambition.

Furthermore, while the probability of the FRG's voicing such ambitions in the short and medium term has been exaggerated by the Soviets, and while the immediate direct political challenge to the Soviet Union is negligible, the same cannot be said about Soviet clients in Eastern Europe. A combination of West

⁹Kvitsinskiy, "Posol'stvo na Reine," pp. 41-42.

German economic aid to and cooperation with the region, as well as its mere presence as a model for political and economic development, will inevitably produce a powerful challenge to the Soviet Union as the dominant power in Eastern Europe (as well as to its local client-elites) and is likely to threaten the very existence of the Soviet Union's East European empire.

From the Soviet perspective, additional complications arise from the evolution of NATO as a political and military alliance. This process was accelerated in no small measure by the recently heralded "end of the Cold War," which itself was precipitated by Soviet initiatives in the international arena, domestic change, and economic pressures precluding further competition with the West. As the specter of an aggressive Soviet Union, threatening the continent and the very survival of the free world, erodes in the minds of many Europeans, NATO's mission of ensuring the freedom of Western Europe against Soviet domination has been fulfilled. Therefore, questions are asked on both sides of the Atlantic and, presumably, behind the rising Iron Curtain as well, about NATO's prospects and the American troops in Europe. The latter's withdrawal and the unraveling of the political alliance would, in the eyes of some Soviet observers, upset the existing balance in Western Europe and tip the scales heavily toward the FRG as the dominant economic and industrial power in the heart of Europe, with an independent foreign policy perfectly positioned to project its influence into both halves of the continent.

If one believes that the Soviet threat has until now provided the only rationale for maintaining NATO in its present form, then it is safe to predict that for the foreseeable future the process of fundamental change within the alliance cannot be altered. That process would halt only in response to a drastic reversal in the public's perception of the USSR, which can occur only as a result of a radical retreat toward the Cold War in Soviet foreign policy. While such a shift cannot be ruled out completely, it appears highly unlikely.¹⁰ Soviet commentators' own assessments lead them to the conclusion that the USSR cannot sustain further policies of confrontation toward the West. Therefore, the Soviet Union no longer has effective leverage for influencing the alliance's internal dynamics. In fact, Soviet policies driven by

¹⁰Perhaps the most likely such contingency would involve the Soviet invasion of an East European satellite as a reassertion of the "Brezhnev Doctrine" or a brutal suppression of an ethnic rebellion in one of the Soviet republics. It is hard to predict the impact of such events on West European public opinion and the extent to which they would leave a long-term imprint on NATO's posture and policies toward the Soviet Union. One can speculate, however, that even such aggressive Soviet moves would be of short-term significance for the alliance.

domestic economic considerations and designed to win the good will of Western nations have a negative side effect that some policymakers in Moscow would like to avoid, from the point of view of Soviet-West German relations.

III. A HELSINKI-BASED "COMMON EUROPEAN HOME"—MOSCOW'S SOLUTION TO ITS "GERMAN PROBLEM"

With the side effects of the new foreign policy out of control, some Soviet analysts evidently see one solution to Moscow's West German/European dilemma in the fact that a hegemonic West Germany in the heart of Europe is not in the interest of West European nations, either.¹ This "hands off" approach would rely on the French and other countries' concerns about a powerful German state and their ability to draw them into the new European alliance—a common European home—which would provide an additional guarantee against German "breakout" through a network of multilateral and bilateral arrangements.²

The new policy would require little change from the present course of Soviet relations with Western Europe, the FRG, and the United States. The negative implications of NATO's nuclear modernization, combined with perceptions of the pending decline of the North Atlantic alliance, will ensure vigorous Soviet opposition to what, the Soviets argue, would be a circumvention of the INF treaty. If NATO as a military alliance is perceived to be on the decline, there is no reason for Moscow to fear aggravating its crisis through opposition to nuclear modernization, which also helps prevent a new nuclear threat from the West.

A parallel course of action would entail a series of initiatives intended to bolster the authority and international standing of the West European political and economic alliance. The USSR's first step in this direction—establishment of formal ties with the EEC—has already been made, after having ignored it for decades. It is also evident that Soviet policy toward the common European home is a subject of intense discussions in Moscow.

¹In addition to Kvitsinskiy's article, see M. Amirdzhanov and M. Cherkasov, "Etazhi obshcheyevropeyskogo doma," *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'*, No. 11, 1988, pp. 34–35.

²West European efforts toward military integration and development of a network of multilateral and bilateral alliances have also prompted a negative reaction from some Soviet analysts. According to this line of reasoning, West European military integration is primarily a sign of the weakening U.S. role in the NATO alliance and a result of West European desire for independence from U.S. influence. However, it is argued, military integration has been served to the West European publics under the guise of a remedy for the weakening U.S. commitment to defend Europe against the Soviet threat. As such, it also has a distinctly anti-Soviet aspect and presents a potential threat to the Soviet Union. See, for example, V. Stupishin, "Obshcheyevropeyskiy dom i lozung Soyedinennykh Shtatov Yevropy," *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'*, No. 2, 1989, pp. 96–102.

From the Soviet point of view emerging in recent months, the decline of the Atlantic alliance is not synonymous with the U.S. departure from the European continent and thus an end to its 40-year role as a stabilizing force in European politics. The Soviet position on this issue can be described as "having it both ways"—getting rid of NATO *and* building a common European home that has room in it for the United States. The vehicle they have chosen to achieve this goal is the Helsinki process. The foundation of a common European home, they have argued, was laid in the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference. The East-West dialogue on a common European home must proceed along the guidelines set forth in the Final Act, which was signed by both the United States and the Soviet Union and which provides for their active participation in European affairs, as well as for the preservation of postwar borders in Europe.

The most authoritative endorsement of this approach has come from General Secretary Gorbachev himself. Replying to Henry Kissinger's question during a meeting with the visiting delegation of the Trilateral Commission, the Soviet leader said that "all Europeans need the USSR and the USA to fully participate in the common European process. . . . Developing harmonious relations in Europe is no easy matter. The key now is to guarantee the dynamics of the Helsinki process and scrupulous adherence to those realities which were acknowledged by everyone who signed the Final Act of 1975."³

The whirlwind of diplomatic, administrative, and academic events that have taken place in Moscow suggests that the task of developing a policy toward the European union has moved to the top of the Soviet security agenda and that the "Helsinki formula" has indeed been adopted as its major element. Signs of it have been abundant in recent months.

On February 1, 1989, the Social Sciences Section of the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences held a special meeting devoted to the development of the concept of a common European home. The meeting was attended by Foreign Ministry representatives and reported in the ministry's official publication.⁴ Participants stressed that the task of developing a concrete and viable concept of a common European home has acquired particular urgency in the aftermath of General

³"Vstrecha M. S. Gorbacheva s predstavitelnyami "Trehstoronney kommissii," *Pravda*, January 19, 1989, pp. 1-2.

⁴*Vestnik Ministerstva Inostrannykh Del*, No. 5, March 15, 1989, p. 45.

Secretary Gorbachev's December 1988 speech at the UN.⁵ The concept implies an end to the division of Europe into military, political, and economic blocs and their replacement with an "effective and mutually attractive mechanism for the coexistence of states with different social systems." For Soviet academic specialists, this means that they have to develop scenarios for the development of Europe in a more distant future—when military alliances will cease to exist and European integration will enter a new phase. A useful practical step that would contribute to the emergence of a common European home, it was suggested, would be "a second Helsinki"-type meeting attended by leaders of European countries, as well as the United States and Canada.

Less than a week after the conference, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Higher Diplomatic Academy held another meeting on a common European home. Again, it was attended by ministry personnel and representatives of the Central Committee and academic institutes. While the proceedings of this meeting have not been published, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs *Herald* mentioned that "a number of issues of capitalist and socialist integration, relations between the CEMA and the EEC, military-political aspects of [European] security were considered. Special attention was devoted to issues of conventional force reductions and withdrawal of foreign troops from the territories of other states."⁶

On the same day—February 7, 1989—Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze met with ambassadors of member-states of the European economic and political community. Shevardnadze was full of praise for the European Community in his address to the gathering. He called for a "new quality" in European relations, one which would go beyond the "bloc logic" among European states. The Soviet leadership, he said, is sympathetic to the idea of breaking barriers within the European Community. Moreover, this process should extend beyond the EC and lead to the elimination of barriers between the two halves of the continent. It would result in the affirmation of a new political climate and new common interests in Europe on the basis of the Helsinki Final Act. The Helsinki process should be part of

⁵In this writer's view, this is to say that it is most important to develop a new concept for the common European home now, after Gorbachev's UN speech has undermined, at least perceptually, the rationale for the presence of U.S. troops in Europe and maintenance of NATO's nuclear deterrent—overwhelming Soviet conventional superiority.

⁶*Vestnik Ministerstva Inostrannykh Del*, No. 5, March 15, 1989, p. 46.

the political dialogue with the European Community and is the key to further progress in East-West relations.⁷

In another effort to engage the academic community in the search for a common European home, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Department of Security and Cooperation in Europe held yet another meeting of Soviet scholars and ministry personnel working on European security issues. The purpose of the meeting was to brief the interested researchers on the results of the Vienna conference and the implementation of agreements reached there. According to published reports, meeting participants focused on the issues related to the Helsinki process and on concrete formulation of the idea of a common European home.⁸

Finally, on the bureaucratic front, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs established a special interdepartmental Commission on the Common European Process. Evidently, its task is to manage the dialogue with the European Community, develop the agenda for it, and contribute to the search for a meaningful concept of a common European home. The Commission consists of representatives from the ministry's departments involved in the Helsinki process, implementation of the Vienna Agreements on European Security and Cooperation, and preparation of common European initiatives. It is chaired by Ambassador Yu. Kashlev, who has been given the special rank of Deputy to the First Deputy Foreign Minister, with special responsibility for coordinating issues related to the common European process. The first meeting of the Commission took place on February 24, 1989.⁹

The "Helsinki connection" evident in all of these gatherings and speeches has also found its way into the writings of Soviet foreign policy experts. It is noteworthy that the idea of designing a common European home on the basis of the Helsinki Final Act has been promoted by Soviet analysts irrespective of whether they believe or don't believe that the NATO alliance is in a state of irreversible decline and whether it would or would not be beneficial for the Soviet Union to help precipitate it.¹⁰

⁷*Vestnik Ministerstva Inostrannykh Del*, No. 4, March 1, 1989, p. 24.

⁸*Vestnik Ministerstva Inostrannykh Del*, No. 5, March 15, 1989, p. 46.

⁹*Vestnik Ministerstva Inostrannykh Del*, No. 5, March 15, 1989; No. 9, May 15, 1989, p. 27.

¹⁰See "Yevropeyskiye prioritety," *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'*, No. 9, 1989, pp. 113-116, M. Amirdzhanov and M. Cherkasov, "Etazhi obshcheyevropeyskogo doma," *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'*, No. 11, 1988, pp. 28-38; V. Stupishin, "Obshcheyevropeyskiy dom i lozung Soyedinennykh Shtatov Yevropy," *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'*, No. 2, 1989, pp. 96-102; Yu. Rakhmaninov, "Yevropa na puti k 2000 godu," *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'*, No. 3, 1988,

The attractiveness of the Helsinki Agreement, especially in the light of the "German question," to those who anticipate NATO's approaching dissolution as a result of the U.S. retreat from the continent, was explained in the preceding pages. Such persons see in the Helsinki Final Act additional insurance against the rise of the FRG as the key power in Europe. To those Soviet analysts who think that rumors of NATO's upcoming demise have been exaggerated or that the German question is not an important consideration, the Helsinki Final Act is appealing because it provides a common platform for a variety of diverse and often contradictory interests, it helps bypass their differences, it bonds the Soviet Union to all of, not just Eastern, Europe, and it offers a convenient vehicle for Soviet political and economic initiatives.

Thus, in a recent article published in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' monthly *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'*, two officials of the ministry's Department for Security and Cooperation in Europe, M. Amirdzhanov and M. Cherkasov, outlined their distinctly Helsinki-based formula for a common European home. The attractiveness of the Helsinki Final Act as the basis for a common European home, they say, lies precisely in the fact that it accommodates the widest variety of interests. The key requirement for Soviet policy initiatives in Europe must be realism, stressed Amirdzhanov and Cherkasov. Challenging the wisdom of top-level Soviet political declarations, they noted that attempts to implement grandiose proposals for complete disarmament and dissolution of military alliances would be highly controversial and would have little effect other than to add to the "list of wonderful initiatives with no chance for success in the foreseeable future." Soviet initiatives must be based on a realistic assessment of the current European political situation. Therefore, it would be naive to believe that security arrangements in Europe in the foreseeable future could be based on anything other than the two military blocs. No country will abandon its ties with its partners for the chance of trading them for a new arrangement that is yet to be built. Thus, any designs intended to exclude the United States from a common European home would be unrealistic and counterproductive.¹¹ European countries' ties to the

pp. 46-52; S. Karaganov, "Obshcheyevropeyskiy dom s voyennogo ugla," *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'*, No. 7, 1988, pp. 81-88; S. Vybornov, A. Gusenkov, and V. Leont'yev, "Ne vsyo prosto v Yevrope," *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'*, No. 2, 1988, pp. 29-37.

¹¹This view, incidentally, was also expressed by the editors of *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'*, who wrote in a recent, unsigned article: "It is argued sometimes in the West that [the idea of 'European Reykjavik' put forth by Gorbachev during his visit to Warsaw] can supplant [negotiations in Vienna] and future conventional arms control talks in Europe. Concerns have been also voiced whether [this proposal] conceals the desire to split NATO and 'decouple' the

United States are so strong that any version of a common European home that did not include the Americans would most likely leave this valuable concept stillborn. The Helsinki Final Act accommodates these and other differences generated by the often conflicting interests of its many signatories, and it provides a solid and realistic platform for the construction of a common European home.¹²

U.S. from Europe? Of course it isn't true. . . . [Nobody wants to 'decouple'] the U.S. and Canada from European affairs, [nobody is trying] to isolate Western Europe from its overseas allies. . . . The realities of today's Europe have been fully taken into consideration in Moscow." See "Yevropeyskiye prioritye," *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'*, No. 9, 1989, pp. 115-116.

¹²M. Amirdzhanov and M. Cherkasov, "Etazhi obshcheyevropeyskogo doma," *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'*, No. 11, 1988, pp. 28-38. That such writings by academics and foreign policy experts from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs represent more than just their own views was confirmed recently by General Secretary Gorbachev. Meeting with a visiting delegation of leading West German Social Democrats, he referred to the idea of building a common European home without the United States and Canada as "inconceivable." Moreover, he declared: "Since the West is not ready to dissolve NATO and the Warsaw Pact simultaneously, but their presence preserves military confrontation in Europe, . . . [it would be desirable to find] a political form for relations between these two organizations produced by the 'Cold War.'" See *Vestnik Ministerstva Inostrannykh Del*, No. 8, May 1, 1989, p. 1.

IV. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

These trends in Soviet policy toward West Germany, Europe, the United States and a common European home are unquestionably beneficial to the United States and its NATO partners. It allows the two sides—the United States and its West European allies—considerable room for maneuver and flexibility both in the international arena and domestically. It offers the governments on both sides of the Atlantic a basis other than U.S. troop presence for maintaining the alliance. At a time when the military alliance is faced with a new crisis of unprecedented proportions, when its longstanding *raison d'être*—the threat of aggression from behind the Iron Curtain—is in doubt as a result of the Soviet internal decline, it is presented with a new political platform: a Helsinki-based common European home.

Among its many advantages, this new platform in effect preserves NATO as a political alliance and gives the Europeans and the United States enough flexibility to address political and military issues. Most importantly, this platform is highly likely to meet with a great deal of domestic political support in the alliance's member states, most notably in West Germany, where the public's enthusiasm is sure to make it all the more palatable to the government. From Bonn's point of view, a common European home based on the tried and true Helsinki agreements also provides a politically safe avenue for advancing relations with East Germany and at the same time rebutting "revanchist" claims from the right with the help of an external constraint on great German ambitions.

Finally, a Helsinki-based common European home provides a solid vehicle for a doctrine of constructive engagement of the Soviet Union and its East European satellites, enunciated recently by President Bush. It provides a perfect opportunity for the West to engage the Eastern bloc in a dialogue across the entire spectrum of Helsinki accords and to do so on a nonprovocative basis of multilateral contacts—a particularly important condition in these politically volatile times in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.