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University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

607 South Mathews Street Urbana IL 61801 217/333-7086

## *Occasional Paper*

### **From New Thinking to the Fragmentation of Consensus in Soviet Foreign Policy: The USSR and the Developing World**

**Roger E. Kanet**

Director, International Programs and Studies  
Program in Arms Control, Disarmament, and  
International Security and  
Department of Political Science

with

**Garth T. Katner**

Department of Political Science

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**Roger E. Kanet** is associate vice chancellor for academic affairs and director of International Programs and Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign. He received a Ph.D. from Princeton University in 1966, taught at the University of Kansas and was a senior fellow at Columbia University before joining the faculty of the University of Illinois in 1973. Since 1978 he has been a professor of political science and served as head of the department from 1984 to 1987. He is also a member of the Russian and East European Center and the Program in Arms Control, Disarmament, and International Security. Kanet has won a number of teaching awards, including both the Campus and LAS awards for undergraduate teaching in 1981, the Department of Political Science award in 1984, and the Burlington Northern Foundation Award for Faculty Excellence in 1989. His research and publications have focused on the foreign and security policies of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. He has authored more than one hundred scholarly articles and edited a dozen books, the most recent of which have been *The Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and the Third World* (Cambridge, 1987), *The Limits of Soviet Power in the Developing World* (Thermidor in the Revolutionary Struggle) (Macmillan, London, and Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989, with E. A. Kolodziej) and *The Cold War as Cooperation: Superpower Cooperation in Regional Conflict Management* (Macmillan, London, and Johns Hopkins, Baltimore, MD, 1991, with E. A. Kolodziej).

**Garth T. Katner** is Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Political Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign. He received his B.A. from the College of Wooster and his M.A. from the University of Illinois. Katner is a 1990/91 recipient of a dissertation fellowship supported by a grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation from the Program in Arms Control, Disarmament, and International Security. He is currently conducting research in Europe and the Middle East for his dissertation, *Cultural Determinants of Terrorism in the Middle East*. He has coauthored with Roger Kanet several journal articles, including "Soviet Non-Capitalist Development: the Case of Nasser's Egypt by Esmail Hosseinzadeh" in *Studies in Comparative International Development* and "Die USSR, Asien und die Dritte Welt: Rezension neuer englischsprachiger Publicationen" in *Osteuropa*.

# From New Thinking to the Fragmentation of Consensus in Soviet Foreign Policy The USSR and the Developing World<sup>1</sup>

Roger E. Kanet with Garth T. Katner

In the spring of 1985 when Mikhail S. Gorbachev assumed the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, relations with developing countries were still at the center of Soviet foreign policy. Despite growing evidence of a reconsideration of this emphasis among Soviet analysts, the USSR remained deeply involved in regional conflicts across the entire spectrum of the Third World—from Cambodia and Afghanistan in Asia to the Horn of Africa and Angola in Africa and Nicaragua and El Salvador in Central America. Western analysts asserted that the role of the Soviet Union as a global power was based almost exclusively on its military capabilities, including both command over ever more sophisticated nuclear and conventional armaments and expanding military involvement in Third World regional conflicts. Moreover, in their view, the military stalemate in US-Soviet relations had deflected Soviet superpower aspirations toward the Third World.<sup>2</sup>

After 1985 the Soviet Union underwent revolutionary changes in both its domestic and its foreign policy. In the foreign policy area the initial focus of these changes emphasized the reduction of conflict with the West, especially the United States, as an essential element of the overall reform of Soviet society. The result was a series of agreements on arms limitations and a dramatic improvement in the international political atmosphere. In addition, developments in the Soviet-Eastern European relationship throughout 1989 and 1990 were of historic importance and resulted in the collapse of Soviet-imposed Marxist-Leninist regimes in East-Central Europe and the emergence of independent states, as well as structural changes in the entire political security balance in Europe.

Changes of great importance have also occurred in Soviet policy in Asia, where relations with the Peoples Republic of China and with the Republic of Korea have been normalized. Although changes in Soviet policy toward and relations with developing countries have been less dramatic than those in Europe, they have nonetheless been of very visible and growing importance. During the first six years after Gorbachev's rise to political prominence, Soviet troops were withdrawn from Afghanistan; the USSR supported and actively encouraged the withdrawal of Vietnamese and Cuban troops from Cambodia and Angola respectively; and Soviet support for the Nicaraguan elections of spring 1990 facilitated the shift of political power in that country. In brief, without abandoning its chief Third World partners, the Soviet Union initiated far-reaching shifts in its perceptions of the place of the Third World in international politics, of its long-term objectives in the region, and of the costs that it is able and willing to bear in pursuing those objectives.

It is the purpose of the present essay to examine the shifts in Soviet policy toward the Third World that have occurred since 1945, with special consideration given to Soviet involvement in regional conflicts.<sup>3</sup> The gist of the argument presented is that the Soviet leadership has recognized its basic

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1 This paper was originally prepared for presentation at the annual meetings of the International Studies Association, Vancouver, BC, Canada, 19-23 March 1991. It will appear as a chapter in an edited volume by Roger E. Kanet, Deborah Nutter Miner, and Tamorah J. Resler, *The Soviet Union in the International Political System*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (in press). The authors wish to express their appreciation to Deborah Nutter Miner and Paul Marantz for their perceptive critiques of an earlier version of this paper.

2 See, for example, Paul D. Dibb, *The Soviet Union: The Incomplete Superpower* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), passim.

3 Two recent publications that trace these developments in detail are Edward A. Kolodziej and Roger E. Kanet, eds., *The Limits of Soviet Power in the Developing World: Thermidor in the Revolutionary Struggle* (London: Macmillan; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1989) and Roger E. Kanet and Edward A. Kolodziej, eds., *The Cold War as Cooperation: Superpower Cooperation in Regional Conflict Management* (London: Macmillan; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1991). Substantial recent literature

inability to mold the international environment to meet its own objectives Soviet new thinking concerning the Third World since about 1987 and Soviet behavior in the Third World since approximately 1989 indicate that much of what in the past was called the Soviet Grand Design has been abandoned in official policy The demands of domestic economic and political reform and the failures of earlier Soviet foreign policy activities are at the root of the changes that have occurred This applies to shifts in policy toward the Third World including regional security conflicts as well as in policy toward the USSR's erstwhile enemies in the industrialized world

The Soviet Union under Mikhail Gorbachev has been in the process of entering the international political economic system from which it had attempted to isolate itself and to whose overthrow it was committed ever since the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 It is abandoning its decades old commitment to a "class based" foreign policy which has proven to be dangerous largely ineffectual and inordinately costly An integral part of this shift in Soviet perspective and policy on international politics involves a shift in perspective and policy concerning the developing world in general and Third World regional conflicts in particular

However at the very time that these new interpretations and objectives emerged in official Soviet policy the consensus that underlay Soviet foreign policy visibly eroded Throughout 1990 for example former Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze responded most vehemently to those within the Soviet hierarchy who charged him and President Gorbachev with virtual capitulation to the West and giving away Soviet positions in Eastern Europe and throughout the Third World<sup>4</sup> The current lack of unity in foreign policy perspectives in the USSR and the dramatic moves away from reform by President Gorbachev by early 1991 make it far more difficult to project likely future Soviet policy Without this ability to predict the specific directions which might arise it becomes especially important to examine the general tendencies which may significantly influence future Soviet policy toward the Third World as well as the West.

#### The Brezhnev Legacy and the Gorbachev Reforms

At the height of the Brezhnev era in the mid 1970s Soviet optimism peaked concerning both the direction and pace of international developments and prospects for the expanded role of the USSR Developments of the prior decade tended to support this viewpoint The Soviet Union had closed the nuclear gap with the United States and had achieved strategic parity This parity and by extension Soviet equality as a global power had been recognized in a series of agreements negotiated at Vladivostok Moscow and Helsinki The conventional forces of the Soviet Union in Europe as well

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exists that examines aspects of Soviet involvement in Third World conflicts Among these are Roy Allison and Phil Williams eds *Superpower Competition and Crisis Prevention in the Third World* (Cambridge New York Cambridge University Press 1990) Bertel Dune r *The Bear The Cubs and The Eagle Soviet Bloc Interventionism in the Third World and the US Response* (Aldershot, UK Brookfield, VT Gower 1987) Karen A Feste ed *American and Soviet Intervention Affects on World Stability* (New York London Crane Russak, 1990) Francis Fukuyama, *Gorbachev and the New Soviet Agenda in the Third World* (Santa Monica, CA RAND Corporation, 1989) Galia Golan, *The Soviet Union and National Liberation Movements in the Third World* (Boston London Unwin Hyman, 1988) Jiri Valenta and Frank Cibulka, eds *Gorbachev's New Thinking and Third World Conflicts* (New Brunswick, NJ London Transaction Publishers 1990) and Jeanette Voas *Preventing Future Afghanustans Reform in Soviet Policymaking on Military Intervention Abroad* (Alexandria, VA Center for Naval Analyses 1990)

- 4 See for example the comments of Foreign Minister Shevardnadze Vystupleniia na plenum TsK KPSS *Pravda* 8 February 1990 p 3 See also recent articles by Andrei Kortunov Director of the Department of General Problems in Foreign Policy of the Institute for the Study of the USA and Canada A Kortunov What is Meant by State Interests in Foreign Policy *Literaturnaia gazeta* 11 July 1990 p 14 [translated in the current *Digest of the Soviet Press* vol 42, no 30 (1990) pp 9 11] and A Kortunov and A Izyumov Clarifying Our National Interests in *The Literary Gazette International* vol 1 no 14 (October 1990) pp 20 21

as its expanded ability to project military power beyond its immediate borders had been enhanced by the modernization of Warsaw Pact forces and by the creation of an ocean going navy and long distance air transport capabilities

The West's acceptance at Helsinki of the postwar status quo in Europe the *de facto* defeat of the United States in Vietnam and the coming to power of self proclaimed Marxist Leninist national liberation movements throughout the Third World—often with direct Soviet support—gave further evidence of the expanded role of the Soviet Union in world affairs. In the international economic realm the Soviets envisaged the establishment of a socialist international division of labor that would first counter and eventually replace the dominant capitalist world market.<sup>5</sup> Domestically economic growth rates though they had slowed since the immediate post war period still enabled the Soviet leadership to fulfill its promises to meet growing consumer demands and simultaneously to maintain the expanding military and economic commitments necessitated by its new role as a global power

Despite this Soviet optimism of the early 1970s and the apparent reality that underlay it, a decade later the Soviets increasingly found themselves internationally on the defensive. The detente with the West, especially the United States had collapsed into a new cold war complete with economic embargo revitalized US military spending and a new US assertiveness in foreign policy. Despite Soviet blustering Western European NATO states had agreed to the deployment of intermediate range nuclear weapons and the Reagan Administration had committed itself to the development of the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI or Star Wars). In short, a new round in the postwar arms race had begun

In the Third World the USSR had been in effect, frozen out of participation in key developments in the Middle East and a number of its new allies/clients (Afghanistan, Angola, Ethiopia, Kampuchea and Nicaragua) had failed to create stable political economic systems and were increasingly challenged by domestic insurgencies supported by the United States and others. The result was a growing demand for Soviet military and economic support including the direct takeover by Soviet troops of responsibility for the security of the Marxist Leninist regime in Afghanistan. Along with this came criticism of Soviet intervention by a large number of developing countries. In yet another area the Soviets found that the political attractiveness of their socio-economic political model had weakened dramatically. The unity of the Soviet led World Communist Movement had shattered long ago. In Western Europe communist parties had either lost domestic support or had asserted their independence from Moscow or both. In the Third World a growing number of Marxist regimes—e.g. those in Benin, Guinea Bissau and Mozambique—were modifying their commitment to socialism and reestablishing or strengthening economic and political ties with the West.

These problems arose at the very time when the weaknesses of the Soviet economy were becoming most apparent. By the beginning of the 1980s economic growth rates had in the words of General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev "fallen to a level close to economic stagnation." The technological gap between the Soviet economy and the economies of its major competitors including a number of Newly Industrialized Countries (NICs) was expanding.<sup>6</sup> After decades devoted to catching up with the

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5 Alexei Kosygin, *Direktivy XXIV S'ezdu KPSS po piatiletnemu planu razvitiia narodnogo khoziaistva SSR na 1971-1975 godu* (Pravda 7 April 1971) p. 6. For comprehensive discussions of the place of national liberation movements in Soviet Third World policy see S. Neil MacFarlane, *Superpower Rivalry and Third World Radicalism: The Idea of National Liberation* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press) pp. 198-5; Golan, *The Soviet Union and National Liberation Movements in the Third World*; and Wayne P. Limberg, "Soviet Military Support for Third World Marxist Regimes," in Mark N. Katz, ed., *The USSR and Marxist Revolutions in the Third World* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990) pp. 51-118.

6 Mikhail S. Gorbachev, *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World* (New York: Harper and Row, 1987) p. 19. See also the analysis of Abel Aganbegyan, Gorbachev's Chief Economic Advisor in 1986-87, in *The Economic Challenge of Perestroika* (Bloomington/London: Indiana University Press, 1988) pp. 1-3. Aganbegyan argued that growth actually ceased in the period. See

West in a wide range of fields and of establishing themselves as a global power the Soviets now faced the prospect of stagnation and decline

Briefly the situation inherited by Brezhnev's successors was one filled with contradictions. Although the Soviet Union had emerged as a global superpower with wide ranging interests and capabilities this position was based largely on military power. The nuclear stalemate with the United States, the renewed activism of US policy, and the expanding role of other countries in global affairs, however, precluded turning this enhanced military position into effective political gains. The weaknesses of the Soviet economy raised questions about the possible overextension of international commitments and limited the relevance of the USSR for many of the most pressing of international problems—economic development, international trade, and hard currency debts.

After assuming leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) Mikhail Gorbachev spoke repeatedly of the domestic and foreign policy problems facing the USSR. He committed himself to a major reform of the entire Soviet socio-economic political system as a means of resolving these problems. The basic argument that he presented initially to support this reform can be summarized briefly as follows. First, the economic problems of the Soviet Union and the technology gap between the Soviet Union and the West were expanding and implied a decreasing ability of the Soviet economy to support the legitimate needs of the population or to insure the military security and global standing of the Soviet state in the twenty first century. Second, economic reform within the framework of socialism was essential in order to overcome the economic problems and technological weaknesses that threatened to undermine the USSR's international status, required as well as a precondition for economic reform, is a reform of the political process which will make officials more responsive to the needs of economic rationality.<sup>7</sup> Third, to overcome entrenched bureaucratic forces within the Soviet Union which would resist change, a more open but still controlled political system that encourages criticism and "rationality" in support of reform was required. Finally, policies were needed which would permit the Soviets to benefit more fully from advances in the international economy and to accomplish, primarily by means other than military, major Soviet foreign policy objectives. In other words, soon after coming to power, Gorbachev and his advisors laid out the justification for *perestroika*, *glasnost* (or openness) and democratization of the political process; they also noted the interdependence of domestic reform and changes in Soviet foreign policy.

In sum, the primary objectives of Gorbachev's campaign of *perestroika* and *glasnost* were based on the recognition that the position of the USSR in the world depended upon a dramatic improvement in the functioning of the Soviet economy. In his report to the 27th Party Congress in early 1986, he expressed this point most forcefully. In a word, Comrades, acceleration of the country's economic development is the key to all our problems, immediate and long term, economic and social, political and ideological, domestic and foreign."<sup>8</sup> *Perestroika* became Gorbachev's call for major reform with the goal of revitalizing the economy, closing the technology gap, and turning the USSR into a fully competitive global superpower—not, to use Paul Dibb's term, the incomplete superpower, lacking virtually all but military power as an instrument to influence world developments.<sup>9</sup>

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also Kazimierz Poznanski, "Competition between Eastern Europe and Developing Countries in the Western Market for Manufactured Goods," in *Joint Economic Committee Congress of The United States East European Economies: Slow Growth in the 1980s*, Volume 2, *Foreign Trade and International Finance*, edited by John P. Hardt and Richard F. Kaufman (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1986), pp. 162-90.

7 Two well known Soviet analysts have developed precisely this argument. See Alexei Izyumov and Andrei Kortunov, "The USSR in the Changing World," *International Affairs* no. 8 (1988), pp. 46-56.

8 Mikhail S. Gorbachev, "Politicheskii doklad Tsentral'nogo Komiteta KPSS XXVII S'ezdu Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soiuza," Doklad General'nogo Sekretaria TsK KPSS Tovariishcha Gorbacheva M. S. 25 Fevralia 1986 goda, *Kommunist* no. 4 (1986), p. 29.

9 Dibb, *The Soviet Union: Incomplete Superpower*.

As is clear from the vantage point of early 1991 the expectations of General Secretary Gorbachev and his advisors concerning their ability to turn around the Soviet economy have not been fulfilled. The economy has continued to deteriorate. *Glasnost* and democratization contributed both to the opening up of Soviet domestic politics and to the possible disintegration of a unified Soviet state and are now under relentless attack from conservative political elements. In the foreign policy area although Gorbachev and his former foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze accomplished many of their objectives of improving relationships with the United States, Western Europe, and China, these goals have been accomplished, at times at substantial political cost. They have also resulted in widespread opposition on the part of more conservative elements within the Soviet political system of the type that resulted in Shevardnadze's resignation. In the remainder of this essay we shall examine the evolution of Soviet policy toward the developing world from 1985 to 1991.

### Gorbachev's Third World Policy: From New Thinking to Foreign Policy Fragmentation

Between Gorbachev's rise to power in 1985 and 1991 Soviet policy toward the developing world went through three basic stages. In the first period, which can be labeled the period of great expectations lasting from 1985 until approximately 1988, the promotion of new political thinking did not really coincide with a comparable change in policy or behavior. The dominant Western response during this period was that new thinking was largely tactical and did not represent a break with the grand design that had underlain Soviet policy in the past.

The second period, which was characterized by a flurry of new foreign policy initiatives from Cambodia in Southeast Asia to Nicaragua in Central America, lasted from 1988 until mid 1990 or so. It was during this period that the reality of the structural changes in Soviet policy in the Third World was increasingly recognized in the West—as well as the reality of changes in other aspects of Soviet foreign and domestic politics.

The third period of Soviet Third World policy began in 1990 and continues to the present. In effect this is the period in which any consensus on Soviet foreign policy has fragmented, in which individual republics of the Soviet Union have attempted to assert their autonomy, and in which the Soviet leadership has been forced to focus almost exclusively on domestic as opposed to foreign policy concerns. Although new thinking continues to dominate official policy statements, growing evidence has emerged of substantial opposition to various aspects of the new foreign policy, including that in the developing world. The resignation of Foreign Minister Shevardnadze in December 1990 and the hard line anti-Western attack on Western banks by the new prime minister Valentin S. Pavlov in February 1991 were evidence of this shift away from the roots of new thinking.<sup>10</sup>

### The Period of Great Expectations

Before beginning our assessment of the implications of current developments in Soviet domestic and foreign policy for future Soviet behavior in the Third World, it is essential to trace in more detail the evolution of Soviet policy during the three periods since Gorbachev's selection as head of the CPSU in March 1985. Although President Gorbachev dramatized the problems facing the Soviet Union in both the domestic and international arenas, he was neither the first nor the only important Soviet personality to outline the need to turn the USSR around.<sup>11</sup> Already in his report to the 27th Party Congress in

10 See Francis X. Cline, "Kremlin Accuses Banks in West of Plot," *New York Times*, 13 February 1991, p. 13.

11 In the foreign policy area analysts such as Karen Brutents and Evgeny Primakov, and others, had questioned the assumptions of Soviet policy. In the domestic area the need for dramatic reform was noted by Abel Aganbegyan, Tatiana Zaslovskaya, and others. See for example Elizabeth K. Valkenier, *The Soviet Union and the Third World: An Economic Bond* (New York: Praeger, 1983), p. 26; the article by Tatiana Zaslovskaya that was first published as "The Novosibirsk Report," *Survey*, vol. 28 (1984), pp.

February 1986 Gorbachev gave some indication of the content of new political thinking when he raised issues seldom if ever discussed publicly by Soviet political leaders in the past. The major points that he mentioned included recognition of the existence of global problems affecting all humanity that required cooperation on a world wide scale, explicit stress on the interdependence of states, the argument that it is no longer possible to win an arms race or nuclear war for that matter, and strong criticism of the infallibility complex that had characterized previous foreign policy.<sup>12</sup>

New political thinking in the foreign policy area as interpreted early in the Gorbachev era, contained three basic components. The first was a revitalization of Soviet foreign policy by rejecting the rigidity and the aggressiveness of Brezhnev's foreign policy and by appealing for greater flexibility in the implementation of policy and the reduction of the role of ideology in determining policy. The second was the introduction of new concepts or issues on the agenda of the top leadership, e.g. global problems and interdependence. Third was a reevaluation of the sources of national security which led to the conclusion that 1) military, especially nuclear, parity would soon cease to be a factor of political/military restraint, 2) national and international security had become indivisible, 3) a multi-faceted approach to problems of international security was required, and 4) international security was mutual or positive-sum in nature.

Gorbachev's views drew heavily on those of academic analysts who already in the 1970s had begun discussing most of the issues that were to be placed on the agenda of the top political leadership after 1985. New thinking as these views were termed by Gorbachev became an integral element of Soviet assessments of developments in and policy toward the Third World. While the 1961 Party Program had spoken with great optimism about prospects for liberation and the role of the USSR in supporting the national liberation struggle, the 1986 Program emphasized the revitalization of neo-colonialism and imperialism in the Third World and referred only to the fact that the CPSU supports the just struggle waged by the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America against imperialism.<sup>13</sup> Progressive states were informed that the tasks of building a new society were primarily their own responsibility, although the Soviet Union would continue to render assistance where possible.<sup>13</sup> The three major concerns raised about the Soviet involvement in the Third World related to the escalating costs borne by the Soviet Union in supporting clients, the poor record of those clients after independence in creating stable political systems and functioning economies, and the negative impact that involvement in the Third World had on other Soviet policy concerns—in particular, relations with the United States.

Thus, by early 1986 the apparent official Soviet intention to reduce direct Soviet commitments to Third World clients was evident. In addition to raising the issue of the cost of supporting Third World allies, the Soviets now questioned the long-term viability of some of their client states and increasingly criticized the policies of some of these states. Even such a strong supporter of the model of revolutionary democracy as Rostislav Ulianovskii, long-time Deputy Director of the International Department of the CPSU, now emphasized the extended and tortuous path that the building of

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88-108. See also the discussion of early calls for reform in Ed A. Hewett, *Reforming the Soviet Economy: Equality versus Efficiency* (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1988), pp. 256-302.

12. Gorbachev, *Politicheskii doklad*, pages 18-19, 36 and 41. For authoritative elaborations on new thinking see A. N. Iakovlev, *Dostizhenie kachestvenno novogo sostoiianiia sovetskogo obshchestva i obshchestvennye nauki*, *Vestnik Akademii Nauk SSSR* no. 6 (1987), pp. 51-80, and Eduard Shevardnadze, Report by Member of the Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, Eduard Shevardnadze at the Scientific and Practical Conference of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *International Affairs* no. 10 (1988), pp. 3-34. A. Dobrynin, *Za bezradernyenyi mir navstrechu XXI Veku*, *Kommunist* no. 9 (1986), esp. pp. 22-25. E. Primakov, *Novaya filosofia vneshnei politiki*, *Pravda* 10 July 1987, p. 4, and A. Bovin, *Novoe myshlenie—novaya politika*, *Kommunist* no. 9 (1988), pp. 115-125.

13. *Programma Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soiuza*, *Pravda* 2 November 1961, p. 3, and 'The Programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union: A New Addition', *New Times* no. 12 (1986), p. 43.

socialism would entail<sup>14</sup> This new concern about Soviet policy in the Third World had an important impact on a reconceptualization of regional conflicts and the most appropriate Soviet response to those conflicts In the past, Soviet analysts and politicians had charged that Western imperialism was the primary source of regional conflict The Soviets themselves it was argued had an obligation to support progressive groups throughout the Third World who were opposed by domestic opponents supported by the United States and its allies

Early in the Gorbachev era a new interpretation began to dominate official Soviet interpretations Gorbachev himself argued that regional conflicts in Asia Africa, and Latin America are spawned by the colonial past new social processes or recurrences of predating policy or by all three The objective according to Gorbachev is to find a political not a military solution to these conflicts<sup>15</sup> Gorbachev went on to argue that every country has a right to determine its own political orientation and that neither of the superpowers should intervene in domestic conflicts<sup>16</sup>

Thus new thinking in relationship to the Third World as it emerged early in the Gorbachev era, implied 1) the demilitarization of regional conflicts and the search for political solutions to those conflicts 2) the de idealization or secularization of interstate relations and the basing of those relationships on mutual interests and 3) the refraining from violating the sovereignty of other nations including interference in domestic political debates

The initial Western reactions to new thinking as it applied to East West relations as well as to Soviet policy in the developing world was one of "wait and see" of cautious optimism For example Francis Fukuyama, who wrote extensively on this topic was very cautious in his conclusions about the long term implications of the new rhetoric that was applied to Soviet foreign policy<sup>17</sup> The dominant initial Western interpretation of new thinking about the Third World could be summarized as follows at the level of public debate Soviet academic analysts and highly placed officials presented a much less optimistic and more complex interpretation of the Third World than that which had characterized expectations expressed during the Brezhnev years yet, the question remained whether this reassessment represented more than a mere tactical modification of Soviet doctrine or whether it could be interpreted as the external manifestation of a learning process in which the Soviet leadership was increasingly aware of its basic inability to mold the international environment to meet its often expressed objectives The question raised by most Western analysts therefore concerned the actual implementation of policy initiatives by the Soviet leadership that would move away from past policy

By 1987 the intellectual foundations for a shift in Soviet policy had been established however the question that then arose concerned the degree to which that new assessment influenced actual Soviet behavior It is necessary therefore to do a brief assessment of the second period in Gorbachev's foreign policy toward the Third World, that in which the USSR engaged in a flurry of activity that resulted in a significant retrenchment of Soviet involvement and commitments Throughout 1988 and 1989 the Soviet leadership initiated a number of important modifications in Third World policy aimed at 1) reducing areas of conflict with the West 2) limiting the drain on Soviet resources and 3) extricating the USSR from regional conflicts in which the prospects for success seemed virtually

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14 Rostislav Ul'ianovskii O natsionalnoi i revoliutsionnoi demokratii Puty evoliutsii *Narody Azii i Afriki* no 2 (1984) p 16

15 Gorbachev *Perestroika* pp 173 174

16 *Ibid* pp 117 187 Evgenyi Primakov a key foreign policy advisor to Gorbachev throughout the entire period since 1985 warned against viewing regional conflicts through a prism of American Soviet confrontation Evgenyi Primakov XXVII S'ezd KPSS i issledovanie problem mirovoi ekonomiki i mezhdunarodnykh otnoshenii *Mirovania Ekonomika i Mezhdunarodnye Otnosheniia* (hereafter *MEMO*) no 5 (1986) p 12

17 See for example, Francis Fukuyama, Gorbachev and the Third World, *Foreign Affairs* vol 64 no 4 (1986) pp 715 731 The present author was also cautious in conclusions which he drew from the on going debate See Roger E Kanet Reassessing Soviet Doctrine New Priorities and Perspectives in Kolodziej and Kanet, eds *The Limits of Soviet Power in the Developing World* pp 416-417

nonexistent. During this period there was seemingly widespread support within the USSR for the implementation of new policies—at least there did not exist overt criticism of “new thinking” or of the modification of foreign policy behavior associated with “new thinking.” Politically the new interpretation maintained that Brezhnev’s policy in the developing world had perpetuated confrontational elements in U.S. Soviet relations and had thereby contributed dramatically to the deterioration of the superpower relationship.<sup>18</sup> Secondly there was general agreement that Soviet commitments to client states throughout the Third World had resulted in escalating costs that contributed to the overall financial problems challenging the very foundations of the Soviet economy.<sup>19</sup>

During 1988 and 1989 the Soviets moved forcefully on a variety of fronts to modify important elements of their past policy throughout the Third World. Chief among these changes were the reassessment of security and economic commitments to radical Marxist Leninist regimes—as those in Afghanistan, Angola and Ethiopia—that were challenged by internal opposition (often supported by the United States) as well as the economic assistance that had been committed to radical governments without seemingly having any positive impact on long term economic growth. Finally questions were raised about the long term benefits to the USSR—or to recipients—for that matter—of the major arms transfer programs of the Soviet state.

#### New Foreign Policy Behavior

We turn now to a brief examination of the actual changes in Soviet Third World policy that occurred during 1988-1989. By far the most dramatic and significant of the changes in Soviet involvement in the Third World was the decision made in early 1988 and implemented by spring 1989 to withdraw Soviet combat troops from Afghanistan. After initial efforts to pacify the country by conquest and to exert greater pressure on Pakistan to accept the new status quo in the region, it soon became clear that the communist government of Afghanistan, despite massive Soviet economic and military support and the direct involvement of well over 100 thousand Soviet troops, was not capable of defeating the anti-communist rebels. The costs involved, both the military and the political costs as the USSR attempted to normalize relations with both the United States and China and the growing unrest at home in the face of escalating Soviet casualties, contributed dramatically to the decision to withdraw. It must be noted, however, that the Soviet Union did not abandon the government of Najibullah, which it considered capable in the long term of stabilizing its control. The communist government of Afghanistan has continued to receive large amounts of economic and military support and has managed to stabilize its position for two full years after the departure of Soviet troops.<sup>20</sup>

In Southeast Asia, the Soviets contributed to the Vietnamese decision to withdraw combat troops from Cambodia by late 1989.<sup>21</sup> In Angola the Soviets have contributed to the resolution of the conflict. For example, they played an important behind the scenes role in the negotiations which

18 See for example Viacheslav Dashichev, “Vostok Zapad Poisk novykh otnosheniĭ. O prioritetakh vneshnei politiki Sovetskogo Soiuza,” *Literaturnaya Gazeta* 18 May 1988, p. 14.

19 See for example Charles Wolf *et al.* *The Costs of Soviet Empire* (Santa Monica, CA: The RAND Corporation, 1983), p. 19. See also Boris Ponomarev, “Real Socialism and the Liberated Countries,” *Slovo Lektora*, no. 3 (1984), translated in *Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) Soviet Union*, no. 3, 14 June 1984, pp. 2-6 (annex) and comments by then Politburo member Gaidar Aliev during a visit to Hanoi. See *Pravdnik narodov pobratimov*, meeting of the Soviet-Vietnamese friendship, *Pravda*, 1 November 1983, p. 5.

20 For a discussion of this issue, see Marvin G. Weinbaum, “Superpower Cooperation in Southwest Asia,” in Kanet and Kolodziej, eds., *The Cold War as Cooperation*, pp. 310-340.

21 For details on recent Soviet policy in Southeast Asia see Sheldon Simon, “Superpower Cooperation in Southeast Asia,” in Kanet and Kolodziej, eds., *The Cold War as Cooperation*, pp. 341-368. See also Suzanne Crow, “Will the Moscow-Hanoi Alliance Survive Aid and Arms Cutbacks?” *Report on the USSR*, vol. 2, no. 45 (1990), pp. 14-17.

resulted in the Cuban decision to withdraw more than two-thirds of their troops from Angola.<sup>22</sup> Initially as in Afghanistan the Gorbachev leadership had apparently hoped for a military solution to the civil war. However when it became obvious that the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) was unable to assert full control over Angola the Soviets pushed strongly for the negotiations that resulted in a ceasefire and the significant reduction of Cuban troops in Angola.<sup>23</sup>

To a substantial degree Soviet policy in Ethiopia paralleled that in other Marxist Leninist states where civil war challenged the central government authorities. Although Soviet military aid to Ethiopia was not significantly reduced as of early 1991 Soviet officials had announced their intention to reduce their involvement in the Ethiopian civil war.<sup>24</sup>

In Central America a parallel development occurred as the Soviets first encouraged the Sandinistas in Nicaragua to permit an open and competitive election and later accepted what, for them were the very negative results of that election.<sup>25</sup> Overall during 1988 and 1989 the Soviet Union either encouraged or accepted a series of developments in relationships with Marxist Leninist client states throughout the Third World that resulted in their military withdrawal the beginnings of a negotiated solution to a long standing conflict or the reduction of their overall military and economic commitment to a client regime.

In many respects the parallels to developments in Eastern Europe are striking. Moreover the motivations for the shift in Soviet policy parallel those at work in Eastern Europe. First the decision had been made by the Gorbachev leadership that the costs of empire—that is the economic and political costs of maintaining a dominant position in Eastern Europe and/or areas of the Third World simply outweighed the benefits to be achieved. This motivation for permitting the collapse of communist regimes in East-Central Europe was made clear by former Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze.<sup>26</sup> The motive has also been evident in relations with Third World clients which were among the weakest and least stable of governments throughout the developing world. Moreover continued involvement in regional conflicts are now viewed as one of the key inhibiting factors to a normalization of relations with the industrialized West and the entrance of the USSR into the international political and economic community. The latter has been viewed by Soviet reformers as an essential element of the overall reform process and the revitalization of the economy.<sup>27</sup>

Closely associated with the shift away from strong support of and major involvement in regional conflicts has been the questioning of the cost and long term value to the USSR of both the military and economic relationships that have been established ever since the mid 1950s. For example an editorial in *Izvestia* in early 1990 provided specific information on the size and nature of the debt to the USSR. Of the total 85.8 billion rubles owed to the Soviet Union through 1 November 1989 37.2 billion was owed by socialist developing countries and an additional 42 billion rubles by other developing countries.

22 See Kubintsy ukhodyat iz Angoly *Izvestia* 3 September 1990

23 See Richard Weitz, Moscow and its African Allies *Report on the USSR* vol 3 no 6 (February 8 1991) pp 8-11. See also Vladimir I. Dikhomirov 'The USSR and South Africa: An End to 'Total Onslaught'? *Africa Report* vol 34 no 4 (1989) pp 58-61.

24 See for example Richard O. Regan, Soviets Fed up With Bickering Will Quit Arming Ethiopian War *The Atlanta Journal and Constitution* 5 March 1990 p A 9. Jane Perlez, Ethiopian Government Seen as Fighting to Survive *The New York Times* 17 April 1990 p A 5.

25 See W. Raymond Duncan, Superpower Cooperation in the Caribbean and Central America, in Kanet and Kolodziej eds *The Cold War as Cooperation*, pp 245-246.

26 See for example Shevardnadze Vystupleniia na plenum TsK KPSS p 3.

27 For a discussion of changing perceptions of the USSR on regional conflicts see among others Andrei I. Kolosovskii, Regionalnye konflikt i globalnaia bezopasnost *MEMO* no 6 (1988) pp 32-41 and Aleksandr K. Kislov, Novoe politicheskoe myshlenie i regionalnye konflikt *MEMO* no 8 (1988) pp 39-47.

TABLE 1 Outstanding Debts Owed to the USSR as of 1 November 1989

<i>Countries</i>	<i>In millions of rubles</i>
Socialist countries	
Socialist developing countries (Cuba, North Korea, Laos Mongolia, Vietnam)	37 156 8
Other socialist countries	6 649 1
Subtotal socialist countries	43 805 9
Developing countries	
Progressive countries (Angola, Afghanistan, Benin, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, Nicaragua, South Yemen )	9 469 8
Major non socialist developing countries (Algeria, Egypt, India, Iraq Libya, Syria)	25 783 6
Other developing countries	6 786 3
Subtotal developing countries	42 039 7
Total outstanding Debt	85 845 6

Source Unikalnyi dokument *Izvestiia* 1 March 1990 page 3

The article made clear that the amounts owed to the USSR were not likely to be repaid quickly enough to help the Soviet economy. Another Soviet author writing in *Izvestiia* in mid 1990 noted that the amount owed to the USSR was the result of economic ideological and military political miscalculations. This author was highly critical of past Soviet policy and interpreted a July 1990 decree of President Gorbachev calling for the implementation of the principles of mutual advantage in economic relations with the Soviet Union with all partners as a move in the right direction.<sup>28</sup>

There have been those who have for all practical purposes argued that the USSR should abandon virtually all commitments throughout the Third World and focus exclusively on the solution of domestic problems. This is the position taken for example by Andrei Kolosov who has complained that, although Soviet partners tend to be authoritarian political leaders not committed to the peaceful resolution of conflict they continue to receive Soviet political military and economic backing. Kolosov concludes that the USSR must encourage these leaders to negotiate the settlement of internal conflicts and should also move away from relying almost exclusively on military support to Third World clients and establish relationships in which economic expediency not ideological and political preferences should become the determinant for developing economic ties with the Third World as well.<sup>29</sup>

On the other hand there are those who strongly criticize the extreme position of Kolosov and others. For example Andrei Urmov Deputy Chief of the International Department of the Central Committee of the CPSU criticizes Kolosov for his extreme position and argues that although one might criticize past aspects of Soviet foreign policy one simply cannot accept Kolosov's view that all Soviet allies are venal or that their opponents (such as Pol Pot in Cambodia, RENAMO in Mozambique or the Eritrean separatists in Ethiopia) are morally superior.<sup>30</sup>

In sum from 1988 until sometime in early 1990 the Soviet Union pursued a number of policy changes which resulted in a reorientation of its policies in key conflict regions throughout the Third

28 Elena Arefeva, *Miloserdie ili vse zhe ideologua?* *Izvestiia* 24 July 1990 p 1

29 Andrei Kolosov, *Reappraisal of USSR Third World Policy* *International Affairs* no 5 (1990) pp 34-42 citation from p 41

30 Andrei Urmov, *The Third World and the USSR* *International Affairs* no 8 (1990) pp 69-73. See also L. Z. Zevin and E. L. Simonov, *Pomoshch' i ekonomicheskoe sotrudnichestvo SSSR s razvivaiushchimisya stranami: uroki problemy i perspektivy* *Narody Azii i Afriki* no 2 (1990) pp 5-17. Zevin and Simonov see good prospects for the expansion of beneficial economic relations for the Soviet Union in trade with developing countries and argue that it would be foolish for the USSR to isolate itself from the long term benefits possible from these relationships.

World. It began as well to reduce commitments to some of its established allies. New thinking had indeed evolved into new behavior patterns. But were these behavior patterns really that new? Can one really argue that the Soviet Union was on the verge of withdrawing from the Third World? In responding to these questions, one must take into account the fact that the apparent foreign consensus on foreign policy that characterized the USSR in the first two periods of the Gorbachev era broke down during 1990 and has been immersed in the increasingly vitriolic debates that have characterized Soviet political processes, whether they concern economic reform, constitutional changes, ethnic relations, or virtually any other aspect of domestic politics in the Soviet Union.

#### Fragmentation of Foreign Policy Consensus

It is ironic that at the very time when the USSR could expect to begin benefiting from the changes it had initiated in its foreign policy, the domestic consensus on that policy had already begun to fragment. Soviet policy in Asia, Africa, and Latin America during the last years of the 1980s resulted in a rapid reassessment in the West of the nature of Soviet foreign policy and the prospect of the USSR entering the international community as an equal and beneficial contributor to the emergence of a new international order. While political leaders and political analysts in the West praised the Gorbachev leadership for its pragmatic and beneficial approach to regional conflicts and other foreign policy concerns—witness especially the early stages of the Persian Gulf conflict—voices emerged in the Soviet Union that condemned Gorbachev, his foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze, and other reformers for a foreign policy of capitulation. Thus began the third stage of Gorbachev's policy toward the Third World, a period of growing internal confrontation within the USSR itself and a period of division concerning the very roots of foreign policy and of a gradual weakening of the position of reformers that, prior to the end of 1990, resulted in Shevardnadze's resignation.

Throughout 1990 the debate on Soviet foreign policy became extremely vocal and heated. Shevardnadze, the architect of much of this new foreign policy, was the target of extremely critical comments by those who charged him and Gorbachev with having abandoned the security interests of the USSR in Central Europe by permitting, even encouraging, the demise of Marxist-Leninist regimes and unilaterally committing the Soviet Union to the withdrawal of its troops from the region. Elsewhere, Shevardnadze and Gorbachev were accused of abandoning the interests of their allies throughout the Third World.

The conservative attacks on Gorbachev's internal domestic and foreign policy reforms that emerged by early 1990 did not signify a unified opposition. Rather, they derived from a variety of groups whose interests did not always coincide, except increasingly in the fact that they opposed the reforms being considered or implemented in domestic economic and political relations, as well as in the foreign policy arena. To a substantial degree, Gorbachev and the reform leaders ignored the initial and sporadic offensive of the conservatives—those who opposed domestic decentralization and democratization, the emergence of political pluralism, the reduction of Soviet international commitments, and the decrease in Soviet military capabilities.<sup>31</sup> By 1990, however, these attacks became so frequent and all encompassing that responses were required. Aleksandr Iakovlev, one of Gorbachev's three primary lieutenants, noted that the primary danger to the successful introduction of *perestroika* came from the conservatives.<sup>32</sup> Shevardnadze responded that the conservative criticisms of Gorbachev's foreign policy had the objective of discrediting the entire leadership and undermining the foundations of reform in the USSR.<sup>33</sup>

31 To be sure, there were those who criticized the Gorbachev leadership for moving too cautiously in reforming both domestic and foreign policy.

32 See the interview with Aleksandr Iakovlev in *Literaturnaia gazeta*, no. 1, 3 January 1990.

33 Eduard Shevardnadze, "V mire vse miniaetsia s golovokruzhitel'noi bystrotyu," *Interviu na bortu samoleta*, *Izvestia*, 19 February 1990, p. 5.

This opposition to new political thinking and Gorbachev's foreign policy has fallen into three broad groupings<sup>34</sup> The first, who can be called "statists" consist of members of the party apparatus and the dogmatic wing of the party as well as some senior military officers and writers A second group the "national Bolsheviks" also find their supporters in the party apparatus and within the military The third group the "Russian nationalists" include members of the Russian intelligentsia who range from moderate nationalists to the extremists associated with the right wing organization "Pamiat." Though none of these groups has a well developed, integrated foreign policy perspective or program nor an organizational structure they are highly critical of recent developments in Soviet foreign policy—in particular of the collapse of Marxist Leninist regimes in Eastern Europe and the implications that this might have for the erosion of internal authority within the USSR itself The views of all three groupings are influenced both by positive perceptions of the Russian/Soviet imperial past and by fears of the dangers to Russia/the USSR that emanate from the outside world

In fact, from the very beginning there were within the party apparatus some who did not accept the underlying principles or assumptions of "new thinking" For example there were those within the Party apparatus who opposed the replacement of class interests with universal human values as a basis for the foreign policy of the USSR<sup>35</sup> While the earlier criticism occurred at the level of Marxist philosophy and ideology and appeared in specialized publications more recently the criticisms by noted Russian writers of new thinking and behavior in the foreign policy area has occurred in the mass circulation press For example one Soviet writer sees in the concept of general human values a "terrible mistake" that contributed to the dangerous developments in Eastern Europe<sup>36</sup> Another has argued that "new thinking" abandoned the interests of the socialist state and abandoned efforts to oppose bourgeois imperialist expansion throughout the Third World The idea of integration into Europe is presented as dangerous for the very existence of the USSR<sup>37</sup>

In response to the charge that the USSR was abandoning the Third World Foreign Minister Shevardnadze noted in an interview in spring 1990 that it was true that the Soviet Union was in the process of reducing the intensity of some of its Third World contacts He argued, however that without solving its domestic economic problems the Soviet Union would be in no position to help developing countries in the future He noted as well that in most of the regional conflicts to which the USSR had been a party military solutions simply did not exist<sup>38</sup>

Shevardnadze's resignation announced at a meeting of the Congress of People's Deputies on 20 December 1990 brought to an end what two well known and influential Soviet analysts have called the "creative destruction stage of Gorbachev era foreign policy"<sup>39</sup> Once again Shevardnadze responded to the attacks of conservative critics who charged him with contributing to the demise of socialism though he also noted his concerns about the erosion of democracy and reemergence of dictatorship within the USSR<sup>40</sup> In responding earlier in the year to charges by CPSU conservatives that Gorbachev's policies had resulted in the "loss of Eastern Europe" Shevardnadze had stated

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34 The following discussion benefits from Olga Alexandrova's "Konservative Opposition gegen das neue politische Denken" *Aktuelle Analysen* no 22/1990 21 March 1990 Bundesinstitut für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien

35 See for example I. Usachev "Obshche-chelovecheskoe i klassovoe v mirovoi politike" *Kommunist* no 11 (1988) pp 109-118

36 Anatoly Saluzki in the discussion "Kakoi byt Rosii?" *Sovetskaya Kul'tura* no 8 (24 February 1990) p 4

37 Aleksandr Prokhanov "Tragediia centralizma," *Literaturnaia Rossiia* no 1 (5 January 1990) pp 4-5

38 Press konferentsiia E. A. Shevardnadze *Pravda* 27 March 1990 p 5

39 Alexei Izyumov and Andrei Kortunov "The End of New Thinking" *Newsweek*, 31 December 1990 p 54

40 Shevardnadze Resigns at 20 Dec Congress Session, Moscow Radio domestic service in Russian, 1200 GMT 20 December 1990 translated in *FBIS Sov* 20 December 1990 pp 11-12

'Perestroika is not responsible for the destruction of the political structure of Europe. It was destroyed by the will of peoples no longer willing to put up with oppression. The undermining of faith in socialism based on suppression and violence began in the 1940s, not in 1985.'<sup>41</sup>

By 1990, the debilitating problems of a deteriorating economy, a chaotic society, and the inability of government or party to deal with either, resulted in growing attention on the part of Gorbachev to domestic developments. At the same time, the consensus on foreign policy, insofar as it had existed, began to fragment. No longer was there agreement on the goals of Soviet foreign policy or the means by which to implement them.<sup>42</sup> In addition to the divisions on foreign policy noted above, there emerged autonomous foreign policy constituencies and actors, such as the autonomous Union Republics that, by 1990, had begun to pursue their own foreign policy interests—often at odds with those of the all Union government. In addition to the foreign policy activities of the Union Republics, various branches of the bureaucracy and the armed forces began to express their idiosyncratic concerns as these related both to domestic and foreign affairs.<sup>43</sup>

It is essential to recall that two forces have driven the Soviet Union to its current impasse in the foreign policy area, including its policies toward the Third World. The first is the growing domestic crisis which requires Gorbachev and the leadership increasingly to disengage from the international arena, particularly throughout the Third World, in order to concentrate more time and resources on internal problems. The key element of Gorbachev's response has been his gradual shift to the right, as he has searched for supporters among conservative elements within the party and state apparatus. Secondly, the forces of *glasnost* and *perestroika* which were initially unleashed by Gorbachev to provide solutions to deep-seated economic and political problems, have increasingly fragmented the domestic and foreign policy process. This, in turn, has eroded Gorbachev's ability to formulate and implement coherent and consistent foreign policy. A good illustration of the shift in Soviet policy can be seen in the USSR's position on the Gulf crisis—from wholehearted support for the U.S.-led international coalition in August 1990 to more conditional support and the effort to pursue autonomous policies by the time actual fighting broke out in January/February 1991.

#### Future Prospects of the USSR's Third World Policy

The end of the Cold War, the substantial reorientation of Soviet foreign policy over the last three years, as well as the internal political and economic upheavals within the USSR and the fragmentation of the consensus on foreign policy, all make it extremely difficult to provide any specific projections about likely developments in Soviet policy over the next decade and beyond, into the next century. However, several issues appear to be relatively clear as they impinge upon Soviet foreign policy, including that toward the countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. First, the collapse of an internal consensus on foreign policy and the reemergence of extremely conservative voices of those who view the policies of the recent past largely as a form of capitulation and self-initiated defeatism do not augur well for a continuation of the type of cooperation in U.S.-Soviet relations that emerged during 1989-90. In the wake of the Gulf War, for example, there have been those within the Soviet military establishment who have advocated a significant increase in the commitment of Soviet resources to weapons development to counter the apparent superiority of U.S. and Western weapons systems to Soviet weapons, at least when employed by Iraqi military forces. Moreover, there have been those who have argued that former Foreign Minister Shevardnadze tied Soviet interests far too closely to those of the United States. In his first months in office, Aleksander Bessmertnykh, Shevardnadze's successor,

41 E. Shevardnadze, *Vystupleniia na plenum TsK KPSS*, p. 3.

42 See, for example, Kortunov and Izyumov, "What is Meant by State Interests in Foreign Policy."

43 For a discussion of the fragmentation of Soviet foreign policy constituencies, see Tamara J. Resler, "National Assertiveness and Foreign Policy in the USSR," unpublished paper presented at the annual meetings of the International Studies Association, Vancouver, B.C., 19-23 March 1991. See also Jan Arveds Trepan, "Baltic Foreign Policy in 1990," *Report on the USSR*, vol. 3, no. 2 (1991), pp. 15-18.

attempted to distance himself and the USSR from such close association with the U S —especially in the Gulf War

Do these and related developments imply that the Soviet Union is on the verge of entering into a new round of active and expansionist involvement throughout the Third World or more generally that the USSR may well reemerge over the next decade as a direct challenger to US and Western interests as it had been for more than forty years after the conclusion of World War II? The answer to this question is by no means clear. Yet there are factors that seem to mitigate against a renewal of large scale Soviet support for radical regimes and revolutionary movements throughout the Third World. First, the political conditions in the Third World itself do not appear conducive to prospects for Marxist revolution on a level with what occurred during the 1970s. European colonialism, a primary contributor to past revolutionary activities, has largely disappeared. Moreover, the socialist model of socio economic development has lost its appeal, given the fact that it has failed to accomplish its objectives anywhere in the world. Moreover, economic privatization and political democratization are attracting more support throughout the developing world than they have in the past. Thus, the political conditions throughout the Third World at the beginning of the 1990s do not seem conducive to the reemergence of radical Marxist movements on a broad scale.

A second set of issues that will influence Soviet foreign policy concerns the state of relations between the USSR and the United States. So long as the Soviet leadership is committed to a policy of economic revitalization which depends heavily upon cooperation in the economic realm with the United States and other Western industrial countries, widespread support for radical movements in the Third World is highly unlikely. The demise of the Cold War has meant that regional conflicts are not likely to lead to increased U S Soviet tension and the detente in U S Soviet relations has been viewed as an essential element in the overall revitalization of the Soviet economy. Cordial relations—or at least non hostile relations—with the West, and the United States in particular, should remain an essential component of an overall foreign policy strategy of any Soviet government over the next decade, as the USSR attempts to bring its domestic economic and political situation under control. Thus, it would appear that no Soviet leadership—even a conservative one—would be interested in pursuing a policy that would result in a dramatic deterioration of East West relations or the possibility of a reemergent Cold War.

A third set of developments that will greatly influence Soviet foreign policy during the 1990s including that toward developing countries, will be the political and economic situation within the USSR itself. Presently, political fragmentation and economic collapse must be the primary factors on which any Soviet leadership will concentrate. Involvement in overseas adventures will be highly unlikely, given the attention and resources that must be devoted to rebuilding the Soviet state—if the continued existence of that state is still a possibility. This does not mean that, should a hard line conservative faction come to power within the Soviet Union, relationships with the West might not deteriorate. What it does mean is that even a hard line conservative Soviet government would likely not have the resource base, in the foreseeable future, from which to reinstate the kind of expansionist and aggressive policies that characterized Soviet policy in the last decade of the Brezhnev period.

Thus, the overall conclusion that we reach is that domestic and foreign costs will continue to enter seriously into considerations whether or not to pursue particular “opportunities” for the pursuit of Soviet interests overseas. Given the present domestic crisis, four types of opportunism are envisaged. First, low cost, high return opportunism, involving behind the scenes efforts to resolve conflicts, to pressure allies or clients, to join the bandwagon of international opinion, and to establish new relations with states that can promote Soviet domestic prosperity without alienating traditional allies or clients who remain valued assets. To some extent the Soviet efforts during the Gulf Crisis to maintain ties with Iraq, to strengthen relationships with the government of Iran, while still providing general support for the U.N. coalition, seem to fall into this category. A second category might be termed, no cost, high profile opportunism, in which the USSR would pursue global and regional initiatives or calls geared to peace and cooperation. The mediating role that the USSR played at the conclusion of the Indo Pakistani War of 1965 is an illustration of this type of policy.

There is also a question of "lost opportunities" if the Soviet foreign policy process continues to fragment in terms of both domestic participants and the orientation of Soviet foreign policy. It is important to recognize that this process fragmentation could result in a foreign policy process akin to that of the United States where pluralism leads to compromise and consensus. On the other hand, it could also result in anarchy and chaos and in the overall undermining of the authority of any unified Soviet state. In either of these two cases, however, the issues to be decided will involve whether or not "new thinking" in the foreign policy area can offer a viable alternative to the old Soviet "Grand Design." Finally, there will be "opportunities that the Soviet leadership simply will not be able to ignore" because they will contribute directly and clearly to strengthening the national sovereignty of the Soviet state or they represent opportunities to be gained with little or no cost.

It appears evident that throughout the Soviet political spectrum, almost independent of political orientation, there exists a recognition that future Soviet involvement in the Third World must be more cost-effective and must contribute directly and immediately to the interests of the USSR. Even those within the Soviet establishment who have opposed the call for virtually complete Soviet withdrawal from the Third World, recognize the inordinately high costs of past Soviet involvement and the modest returns that the USSR has derived from those involvements.

The USSR will not likely make commitments to revolutionary movements or regimes throughout the Third World on a par with those made in the past. However—and this is a point that must be kept in mind—even during the high point of "new thinking" during 1988-1989, the USSR did not abandon all of its Third World commitments. Although the Soviet leadership has reassessed its Third World commitments, it has not abandoned fully formed Leninist governments such as those in Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Ethiopia. Soviet military and economic support has continued to flow to these regimes, although direct involvement has been reduced (especially in Afghanistan).<sup>44</sup> What the USSR has done is reduce its commitments to regimes considered unlikely to achieve any degree of stability, especially in situations where continued direct involvement and support was likely to undermine the attempt to improve relations with China and/or the United States.<sup>45</sup>

In conclusion, the position from which the USSR will pursue its interests in the Third World has changed dramatically since the period in the 1970s when the Soviet Union appeared to hold a significantly advantageous position versus the United States because 1) revolution was rampant throughout the Third World, 2) the United States was immobilized in the aftermath of its disastrous experiences in Vietnam, and 3) the acquisition of nuclear military parity by the Soviet Union created an environment that contributed to a strengthening of Soviet expansionist drives.

In all of these areas, the situation has changed dramatically for the USSR. The 1990s will likely see the Soviet Union—whether directed by political leaders committed to a continuation of domestic reforms or by a more hard line leadership attempting to restore central controls over both the economy and the polity—pursuing policies of modest involvement that will contribute to the strengthening of the domestic Soviet economy.

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44 See Janus Bugajski, *Perestroika in the Third World, The Fletcher Form of World Affairs*, vol. 15, no. 1 (1991), pp. 93-110. Bugajski concludes that the disintegration of communist regimes throughout the Third World cannot be considered either universal or inevitable (p. 103). For similar conclusions see Marian Leighton, "Moscow's Third World Empire," *Global Affairs*, vol. 5, no. 2 (1990), pp. 133-156, esp. at pp. 152-153, and William E. Griffith, "Gorbachev's Policies Toward the Third World," in Mark N. Katz, ed., *The USSR and Marxist Revolutions in the Third World* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 142.

45 On the issue of continued Soviet support to established Marxist-Leninist regimes, see S. Neil MacFarlane, "L'URSS et les Régimes marxistes-Léninistes au Tiers Monde en Afrique Subsaharienne et en Amérique Latine," in *La Politique Étrangère Soviétique à L'Aube des Années 90*, ed. by Claude Basset (Québec: Centre québécois de Relations Internationales, Collection CHOIX, 1990), pp. 128-136.

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