# Soviet Foreign Policy in the 1970s: A Conceptual Overview

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Recognizing how Soviet analysts perceive the current international milieu and the way in which they attempt to derive from these perceptions a coherent conceptual framework to explain international politics contributes to an understanding of Soviet diplomatic behavior. An analysis of the Soviet world-view does not unlock all the mysteries of the Kremlin's conduct in world affairs, but it does help to explain why certain courses of action are chosen over others, the nature of the linkages that connect those actions and the larger purposes and aspirations which the more immediate policies are designed to realize.

The purpose of this article is twofold. The first is to examine those characteristics of the contemporary world political environment that Soviet theorists maintain are of overarching importance. The significance of these characteristics derives from the fact that they have, in theory at least, an important bearing on Soviet decisionmaking. According to the logic of Marxism-Leninism, history unfolds in inevitable and preset patterns and is governed by certain inexorable laws. From this hypothesis it follows that communist theoreticians must correctly identify each historical period and match that epoch with appropriate policies. As part of the process of identification, the predominant features of each period are abstracted and labeled. The first part of this article centers on what Soviet analysts maintain are the distinguishing landmarks of the current age.

The second purpose is to investigate how this historical assessment influences the international activities of the Soviet Union. Unless policies are conducted on an *ad hoc* basis, developed in isolation from one another, it seems reasonable to assume that a more integrated mechanism provides unity to seemingly disparate aims. What that more developed vision entails and how it fosters a sense of coherence in Soviet diplomacy is the subject of the latter half of this article.

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## Characteristics of Contemporary World Politics

In evaluating international affairs in the 1970s, Soviet analysis fastens on three characteristics which are alleged to set this age apart from earlier ones. The first is the proposition that in recent years the world "correlation of forces" has begun to shift in favor of the socialist countries. The second is the contention that the capitalist system is undergoing a crisis of qualitatively new proportions that has severely undermined the ability of imperialist reaction to dominate international political and economic developments. The third judgment is that the influence of the forces struggling for "peace and democracy," namely those groups whose interests coincide with those of the Soviet Union, is on the ascent, particularly in Europe.

### *The Correlation of Forces*

Soviet political theorists attach great significance to the proposition that following the defeat of Hitlerite fascism and Japanese militarism in 1945, the relationship between capitalism and socialism began to change in gradual, but immensely important ways. As Russian political-military power reached into the center of the European continent after the Second World War, Soviet-type governments were established in all the countries of Eastern Europe, spawning the creation of a socialist community of states. With the appearance of this commonwealth, augmented by the addition of China in 1949, the "positions of socialism" in the international arena were powerfully reinforced to the detriment of capitalism. This hypothesis holds that throughout the post-war period, communist strength has continued to increase as Western authority has declined and that this dynamic realignment has produced a fundamentally new distribution of power between the two antagonistic systems.[1]

For example, the late Minister of Defense, Andrei Grechko, attributed Soviet achievements in foreign policy to "the profound changes in the correlation of world forces in socialism's favor."[2] Using almost the identical phraseology, First Deputy Premier Kiril Mazurov stated in late 1973 that the positive shifts in the international arena "are the result of the new correlation in world forces." Mazurov provided a measure of definition to the term when

1. The Soviets do not claim that this "new distribution of power" has come about uniformly or without interruption. The imperialists, Moscow contends, have made repeated attempts since 1945 to reverse their declining fortunes. At times, these attempts have taken the form of armed conflict, as with the French in Indochina and Algeria and, most impressively, with the Americans in Viet Nam. Though ultimately unsuccessful, these "colonialist" and "neocolonialist" wars attest, the Kremlin argues, to the determination of the West to resist the advance of socialism and national liberation by virtually any means at its disposal.

2. Andrei Grechko, *Krasnaya Zvezda,* May 30, 1975, p. 1.

he linked the changes in the balance to "the growth in the economic, political and military might of the socialist countries."[3]

The notion of the balance as a dynamic relationship undergoing constant revision in favor of Socialism often appears in the Soviet press. The struggle between the imperialist states and the international working class, one author wrote, continues to be the most significant worldwide conflict of the present age. He argued that the outcome of that contest was a foregone conclusion because "the forward march of history has been predetermined." Linking that struggle to the correlation of forces, this author contended that contemporary history as a whole and particularly the political history of the working class, "forcefully demonstrate that in the historic confrontation between the two systems, socialism is gaining the upper hand in all major spheres of life."[4]

Of great importance are the ways in which the changing correlation of forces is perceived to have an impact on the international environment. One such consequence, Soviet writers argue, is an increasing ability to frustrate imperialist designs wherever they occur. It is the Soviet view that the steady accretion in socialist power "creates a growing barrier in the way of those who seek to promote interventionist acts and preach the policy of strength."[5] Related to this is the proposition that the capitalist states, compelled to acknowledge the augmented authority of the rival system, undertake fewer provocative actions internationally and demonstrate a more sober respect for communist military and economic capabilities. Thus, a Soviet political analyst wrote in 1975 that the shift in the balance "sets the basis for positive changes in the relationship among European countries," specifically by engendering greater realism among Western European leaders "who understand the necessity of peaceful cooperation with the socialist states." The American government too, it is argued, recognizes that the balance has changed and designs its policies toward the communist countries with that realization in mind.[6]

Finally, the advance of Soviet power impedes the ability of the imperialists to erect viable international structures or "blocs." The concepts of balance of power and multipolarity receive special attention from Soviet authors as they are interpreted as efforts by the West to check the advance of socialism. They characterize balance of power theory as an attempt to preserve the *status quo* in

3. Kiril Mazurov, speech in Kirgiz S.S.R., December 20, 1973 [*FBIS*, "S.U.," January 7, 1974, p. R15].

4. Sh. Sanokoyev, "Foreign Policy and the Ideological Struggle Today," *International Affairs* (Moscow), Number 5, May 1974, p. 78.

5. V. Zhurkin, "Detente and International Conflicts," *International Affairs* (Moscow), Number 7, July 1974, p. 93.

6. A. Chembarov, "Socialist Countries and European Security," *International Affairs* (Moscow), Number 1, January 1975, p. 8.

international politics and "to strengthen reactionary regimes, and [it] is directed against revolutionary changes in the life of the peoples."[7] Western machinations in this regard will not prevail, largely because imperialism's former dominance in the world has been severely undermined. One Soviet analyst contended that the Western theory of multipolarity required that each state concern itself "not with establishing cooperation but with determining anew its place in this redistributed balance of forces. According to this scheme, there have been no qualitative changes in the world, merely the latest realignment in the positions of the leading powers."[8] The author was scoring the West for its failure to acknowledge that "qualitative changes" had indeed transpired, not the least of which was a shift in the correlation of forces.

The argument that a new power relationship is slowly evolving in the international sphere has two central implications for the conduct of Soviet diplomacy. The first is that the "positions of socialism" are steadily improving as greater military, economic and political resources accrue to the communist states, predetermining the ultimate victory of socialist ideals. The second implication, related to the first, is that the capability of the imperialists to obstruct Soviet policies is diminishing over time. This compels the capitalist leaderships to avoid direct confrontation and to seek a degree of cooperation with the opposing system.

### *The Deepening Crisis in Capitalism*

A second feature which Soviet analysts contend is an important characteristic of the modern period is the severe economic and political malaise gripping the capitalist states. This contention is linked to the preceding one, as the decline in the West is but another way of describing the rising fortunes of the East; both processes are consequences of and determined by alterations in the world correlation of forces. Although cognizant of this interdependence, Russian theorists devote separate attention to this phenomenon.

The Soviets feel that the current troubles in the West are of a new and significant magnitude, heralding perhaps the dawn of the final crisis of capitalism. In a speech on January 18, 1974, Boris Ponomarev, a member of the Politburo, seemed to confirm this line. Addressing a conference on the teachings of Lenin, Ponomarev made reference to a "definite crisis of capitalism."

Contributing to this situation, he argued, were national rivalries, currency difficulties, worsening relations between former imperialist powers and their

7. Sh. Sanokoyev, "The World Today: Problem of the Correlation of Forces," *International Affairs* (Moscow), Number 11, November 1974, p. 44.
8. V. Osipov, "Detente: The Only Way," *New Times*, Number 7, February 1974, p. 7.

now independent colonies and a crisis of major proportions in the economic "base" of imperialism, which he characterized as "more than a cyclical recession." In offering this analysis, and specifically by claiming to detect qualitatively new aspects to the economic problems of the West, Ponomarev seemed to be suggesting that capitalism was entering, or about to enter, its twilight phase.[9]

Other Soviets draw a very similar conclusion about the future of capitalism by focusing on the existence of severe political tensions in the West. In discussing NATO, one Soviet author noted that under contemporary conditions increasingly grave difficulties had begun to plague the Alliance, which had been seeking, more or less in vain, to consolidate its unity. This effort reflected "the desire on the part of the capitalist countries' ruling circles to follow a common policy . . . particularly in the international arena so as to preserve the capitalist system itself."[10]

From the Soviet perspective, the United States emerged from the Second World War determined to preserve the capitalist community of states through the protection afforded by American military power and to create a mechanism to retard the advance of socialism. As part of this effort, numerous international institutions were formed, including the International Monetary Fund, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the European Economic Community.[11] But as Western Europe recovered its commercial vitality, the initial spirit of cooperation gave way to conflict as the EEC became more of a rival than a partner to the United States.[12] One Soviet analyst wrote that even with serious efforts to reach a compromise "indications are that industrial and commercial competition between the imperialist powers is deepening and wrangle between the imperialist powers is growing sharper."[13] Another noted that the main tendency "is for the interests of the two imperialist power centers to drift apart."[14]

This propensity for the Americans and the Western Europeans to pursue contradictory and disaggregated policies has also been a characteristic of intra-European relations, Soviet writers contend. Within the EEC, conflicts among the members over economic priorities, currency reforms, agricultural questions

9. Boris Ponomarev, address to the conference on "Lenin's Immortal Teachings and Cause," in Moscow, January 18, 1974 [*FBIS*, "S.U." January 21, 1974, p. R9].

10. A. A. Antonov, "NATO in the Conditions of Detente," *International Affairs* (Moscow), Number 2, February 1974, p. 35.

11. N. Khomutov, "The Atlantic Partnership Twenty-five Years Later," *International Affairs* (Moscow), Number 5, May 1974, pp. 38-41.

12. Yu. Davydov, "U.S.A.-Western Europe: A 'New Relationship'," *International Affairs* (Moscow), Number 1, January 1974, p. 41.

13. M. Kobrin, "NATO's Silver Jubilee," *New Times*, Number 13, April 1974, p. 22.

14. Davydov, *International Affairs* (Moscow), Number 1, January 1974, p. 41.

and leadership roles are taken as proof that the Community is incapable of fashioning a truly integrated framework.[15]

Unwilling to assert categorically that the current capitalist crisis signals the concluding chapter of the imperialist saga, political theorists in the Soviet Union do detect, nonetheless, novel elements of tension and stress in American-European and intra-European relations which have weakened and will continue to weaken the ability of the non-Communist countries to forge genuinely cooperative ventures. These developments are seen to portend both opportunity and danger for the Soviet state. On the one hand, the disintegrative process can serve to advance socialist interests by bringing about political changes on the continent, such as the dissolution of the Atlantic alliance and the EEC, which the Kremlin regards as compatible with Soviet objectives. On the other hand, the imperialists could resort to various foreign policy and domestic "adventures" as they attempt to arrest at almost any price the decline in their fortunes.[16] Clearly, it is in Moscow's interest to encourage the former tendency while striving to retard the latter.

### *The Rising Influence of the "Peace" Forces*

Soviet specialists on international politics cite the growth in the number and power of the "progressive, democratic and revolutionary forces" as one of the preeminent characteristics of the present age. The rise of leftist parties in the West, Moscow feels, has been abetted by the Soviet detente policy. The contemporary international environment, having as its central features the relaxation of tension and the avoidance of armed conflict between the two opposed world systems, assists the cause of the proletariat as it serves to restrain or, at least, inhibit imperialist repression. Suslov propounded this view in July 1975 before a conference in Moscow on the future of communist movements. He argued that the policy of detente not only creates a new political situation in the world but

> influences the situation in the capitalist countries; the crisis of anti-communism and anti-Sovietism is heightened, more favorable conditions for the development of the working class and democratic movements are created.
>
> Thus, the most important factors of present day development attest to the further widening and strengthening of the world revolutionary proc-

15. V. Kuznetsov, "EEC: Papering Over the Cracks," *New Times,* Number 25, June 1974, p. 11.

16. See General Boris Popov, "Vigilance Is Our Weapon," *Kommunist Voorushennyx Sil',* Number 18, September 1974, pp. 38-45.

> ess. New possibilities for the struggle for peace, democracy and socialism are, naturally, connected with this.[17]

The ability to utilize the leftist, "progressive" forces in the West is a critical issue for the Kremlin.

The Soviet Union's greater interest in the working classes of and revolutionary groups within Western countries appears in several recent journal articles. Academician Timofeyev wrote a detailed piece which investigated the non-communist proletariat with special attention to revolutionary potential and the problem of alliances. Judging the possibilities for social change in Western societies to be great, he advocated the close cooperation of working class organizations, the "peasants" and even the most impoverished elements of the middle class.[18]

Soviet analysts anticipate concrete benefits from, first, the increased visibility and militancy of these "progressive" forces, and second, greater communist cooperation with such movements. The perceived advantages center on the notion that a more assertive and powerful working class, imbued with socialist ideals and ideologically at odds with the conservatives in each society, could be a very effective tool in checking manifestations of "anti-Sovietism" among Western European governments. With the undermining of the popular consensus around which most non-communist European foreign policies are based, the Kremlin could witness the evolution of policies more complementary to its own. For example, one Soviet author claimed to find a new sense of realism in capitalist diplomacy, linked in part to the people's struggle for peace and democracy. These "realistic trends" in foreign policy, he wrote,

> have contributed to the transition from confrontation to detente and [have] facilitated a revision of many odious doctrines and concepts which were leading the policies of the Western powers into a blind alley and put a brake on progress toward mutual understanding between states with differing socio-economic systems.[19]

This analysis clearly illustrates the significance that Moscow attaches to the relationship between internal political developments in the West and Soviet foreign policy interests. Should the political power of revolutionary and proletarian organizations within the capitalist countries continue to rise at the expense of more moderate groups and should these "peace and democratic"

17. Mikhail Suslov, address to the conference on "The Communist Movement in the Vanguard of the Struggle for Peace, for Social and National Liberation," July 4, 1975 [*FBIS* "S.U." August 31, 1973, p. A7].

18. See T. Timofeyev, "On Some Worker Movement Trends in the Contemporary State of Capitalism's General Crisis," *Rabochii klass i sovremenii mir,* Number 5, September-October 1975, pp. 21-35.

19. N. Kapchenko, "Socialist Foreign Policy and the Restructuring of International Relations," *International Affairs* (Moscow), Number 4, April 1975, p. 8.

forces prove susceptible to guidance from the Kremlin, the ability of the Soviet Union to influence the process by which foreign policies are formulated in the Western countries would almost certainly be enhanced. The critical question then becomes to what extent can Moscow hope to exercise meaningful control over the activities and policies of the Left, especially in non-communist Europe.

These three developments, changes in the worldwide correlation of forces, the emergence of a qualitatively new phase in the crisis of capitalism and the rising power of Leftist organizations, most notably in Europe, constitute what Soviet theorists believe are the most important features of the contemporary historical period. As a consequence of these trends, the Soviets allege that the imperialist countries, plagued by domestic turmoil and a deepening sense of paralysis in the international realm, have been placed on the defensive; no longer are they as effective as they once were in realizing their foreign policy goals. In contrast, the "positions of socialism" have improved dramatically in recent years. As Soviet leaders sense this gradual shift in the balance of power from West to East, they are beginning to adopt policies which in their view correspond more closely to this fundamentally new international environment.

## Peaceful Coexistence and Detente

The concept of peaceful coexistence and the policy of detente reflect the dual nature of Soviet foreign policy. Evolving from a Marxist-Leninist interpretation of world politics and yet firmly tied to the state interests of the USSR, they provide the theoretical and structural guidelines for the conduct of Soviet diplomacy. Peaceful coexistence is portrayed as a set of norms designed to serve as the model for state-to-state relations. Detente represents the policy or series of policies intended to secure the realization of those norms. Together they form the framework, the strategic vision from which Moscow's international political initiatives derive.

### *Peaceful Coexistence*

The concept of peaceful coexistence is intended to function as a foundation for diplomatic intercourse. Soviet spokesmen have gone so far as to state that it is the only reliable and appropriate basis for the conduct of foreign policy. In its most elementary form, peaceful coexistence refers to the practice of normalizing relations with all non-communist countries without regard for the political complexion of those regimes.

The concept is firmly rooted in Leninist doctrine. As it became evident shortly after the First World War that the communist revolution had failed to extend beyond the borders of the old Tsarist empire, the new Russian leadership was compelled to seek a truce with the capitalist states or face continued intervention and instability. Lenin authored peaceful coexistence as a short-

term device to prevent the imperialists from attempting to overthrow the socialist experiment and to provide a period of calm that would enable the Bolsheviks to consolidate their power. As the young Soviet state embarked on the New Economic Policy in 1922, the concept was refined to allow not simply for the avoidance of war but also for the normalization of diplomatic relations with the outside world and greater international economic interaction. The capitalist states were encouraged to invest in Russia; Lenin and later Stalin argued that such investments were beneficial to Western entrepreneurs and to the economic development of the USSR. At no point in time did the Kremlin label this a long-term policy. It was viewed as a temporary phase to be jettisoned as the revolutionary tide once again approached. Additionally, peaceful coexistence did not signify capitalist intervention in the affairs of state. The Bolsheviks were determined to preserve the purity of their system, to isolate the society from Western influence and to retain effective political authority in their hands.

Since the 1920s, the concept, while remaining superficially the same, has undergone substantial revision. The present version of peaceful coexistence emerged in the immediate post-Stalinist period, as Khrushchev began his rise to preeminence. For a variety of reasons, not the least of which was the fear of a preemptive war against the USSR by the West, the Soviet leadership reintroduced this model for interstate relations and in a series of pronouncements indicated its willingness to enter into regular cooperative relationships with a host of capitalist and non-aligned states.[20] A "thaw" in the Cold War ensued, symbolized by the 1954 Geneva conference, which for a time settled the Indochinese conflict, by the conclusion of the Austrian State Treaty in 1955 and, perhaps more importantly, by the reception in Moscow, also in 1955, of the West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer. The Chancellor's visit to the USSR underlined the extent to which the Kremlin was prepared to overlook old animosities in order to demonstrate its attachment to peaceful coexistence. It was also during this period that Soviet-American relations warmed somewhat and "detente" made its first post-war entry into the superpower dialogue. What distinguished this version of peaceful coexistence from its antecedent during Lenin's tenure was the time element. Its temporary nature, with which the theory was justified in the first decade after the communists came to power, yielded in the 1950s to a new interpretation that stressed the long-term utility of the model.

The retooled concept of peaceful coexistence was not rejected by the new Soviet leadership as one of Khrushchev's "hare-brained" schemes when the

20. See Adam B. Ulam, *Expansion and Coexistence: Soviet Foreign Policy 1917-1967*, New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970, pp. 539-571, 607-609.

colorful First Party Secretary fell from power in October 1964. On the contrary, it became one of the most prominent tenets of Soviet foreign policy, enshrined in virtually all major treaties and international agreements concluded by the USSR. Most notably since the Twenty-third Party Congress in 1966, the Kremlin has struggled to have its rules for the conduct of foreign policy adopted by all capitalist countries with which it has diplomatic relations. It is no longer a defensive tactic, to appease and placate the imperialists. Rather, it is an activist concept, employed to facilitate the achievement of Soviet ambitions. Its purpose is to exploit the changing world correlation of forces.

As it has evolved since its reintroduction in the mid-1950s, the concept of peaceful coexistence has five central precepts. The first is based on the conviction that a major conflict between the socialist and imperialist camps would almost certainly escalate to a general war,[21] and that war must therefore be avoided. Thus, Soviet spokesmen stress the usefulness of *peaceful* coexistence as a long-term guide for the conduct of inter-state relations. The late Defense Minister Grechko, writing in March 1975, labeled this thesis a "constant and determining factor of the foreign policy activity of the CPSU Central Committee and the Soviet state"[22] and followed this up two months later by saying that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was struggling to establish these principles "as the norms of relations between states . . ."[23] One Soviet leader has gone so far as to elevate the concept to "something close to international law."[24] Peaceful coexistence is seen to be applicable over the longer run, to prevent the realignment of forces underway throughout the world from exploding into a nuclear confrontation.

Second, Moscow contends that the character of a country's political system is largely an internal affair and should not preclude the existence of normal diplomatic interaction. While not forsaking its obligations to assist revolutionary forces in all parts of the world, the Soviet Union argues that at a minimum a "correct" relationship with even the most reactionary of regimes is possible. As one Soviet author put it, while the current international situation continued to be marked by "irreconcilable contradictions and differences in the ideologies and social systems of capitalism and socialism . . . the only alternative to a destructive war is peaceful coexistence among countries with different social systems."[25]

21. See General V. D. Sokolovsky's *Military Doctrine,* Voenizdat, Moscow, 1968 (3rd edition), for Soviet views regarding the escalatory properties of general conventional warfare in the nuclear age.

22. Andrei Grechko, "The Great Victory and Its Historical Lessons," *Problemi mira i sotsializma,* Number 3, March 1975, p. 3.

23. Grechko, *Krasnaya Zvezda,* May 30, 1975, p. 1.

24. Andrei Kirilenko, address to the Leningrad electoral district, June 10, 1975, [*FBIS,* "S.U." June 19, 1975, p. R14].

25. L. Tolkinov, untitled article, *Kommunist,* Number 13, September 1975, pp. 96-104.

Brezhnev developed this argument to its logical conclusion in July 1973 when he said that the mere avoidance of war was not enough; relations between socialist and capitalist states should be built not on antagonism but on a more positive grounding. He stated that although the opposition of the two camps in the "international arena" continues, "[t]he whole point is not to let this process develop into armed clashes . . . [I]t should not prevent the development of mutually profitable cooperation between states with different social systems."[26]

A central precept of peaceful coexistence is that the systemic hostility between East and West will intensify with the passage of time but that durable international linkages are acceptable and, in fact, desirable between capitalist and socialist countries in order to reduce the likelihood of war. The Kremlin obviously feels that its interests are not materially advanced by rushing to the brink of the nuclear abyss.

Third, the Soviets contend that the scope of cooperation can transcend mere diplomatic correctness. More substantive collaboration and, in particular, greater economic interaction, is held to be an important consequence deriving from the observance of the principles of peaceful coexistence. Franco-Soviet relations are accorded considerable attention by Soviet commentators as an exemplary case of mutually beneficial cooperation between a capitalist and a socialist state. For example, after praising French "realism" in world politics, its role in promoting detente and its respect for the concept of peaceful coexistence, one Soviet commentator volunteered the view that Moscow and Paris "have shown how relations between the socialist and capitalist sides of the continent should develop."[27]

The Federal Republic of Germany is frequently lauded for its willingness to promote deeper and more extensive ties with its powerful neighbor to the East. Bonn's relapses into the "Cold War syndrome" aside, Moscow stresses that with the advent of warmer relations the bonds drawing the two countries together have multiplied over the past decade. A *Kommunist* editorial in June 1973 claimed that Brezhnev's visit to West Germany a month before "testified to the existing, growing and strengthening reality of the peaceful and mutually advantageous relations of cooperation between the Soviet Union and the FRG and the aspirations of both sides to infuse the [1970 Soviet-West German] treaty with life and to work consistently to improve and develop relations springing from the treaty."[28] Trade between the two nations has grown

26. Leonid Brezhnev, address to the Ukranian Communist Party Central Committee, in Kiev, July 26, 1973 [*FBIS*, "S.U." July 27, 1973, p. J9].

27. V. Kuznetsov, untitled radio commentary, June 23, 1973 [*FBIS*, "S.U." June 25, 1973, p. F2].

28. "An Active, Purposeful Policy," *Kommunist*, Number 6, April 1973, p. 7.

markedly over the last ten years, the Soviet Union having become one of the best trading partners of the Federal Republic.[29]

Increased economic activity is not the only kind of cooperation perceived to flow from peaceful coexistence. The political competition between East and West notwithstanding, the Soviet government sees singular opportunities in the current international environment for the partial resolution of such complex issues as European security. When Brezhnev addressed the delegates to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe at the concluding session in Helsinki on July 31, 1975, he linked the success of the thirty-five nation meeting to the largely implicit acceptance by all participants of the principles of peaceful coexistence.[30] The Soviet leadership seemed to feel that the European security conference provided graphic proof of the success of its policies, most notably its contention that good and equally advantageous relations were indeed possible between states ideologically and politically in opposition.

This determination to draw the West into a series of joint economic and political ventures is nowhere better illustrated than in the superpower relationship. At the very center of the Soviet-American detente is both countries' official support for the view that "in the nuclear age there is no alternative to conducting their mutual relations on the basis of peaceful coexistence." Building from this proposition, the United States and the Soviet Union have pledged to "promote actively" the growth of commercial and economic ties,[31] have signed several accords to control the size and composition of their strategic nuclear arsenals[32] and to prevent the outbreak of nuclear war.[33] They have, in addition, established a number of commissions to study a wide range of international and bilateral problems.[34]

Soviet leaders are apparently of the view that the fundamental "irreconcilability" between East and West need not preclude far-ranging collaboration in a variety of fields. Increased trade and commercial interaction should characterize this *modus vivendi* as well as an inclination to seek agreements that

29. Y. Zakharov, "USSR-FRG: Five Years of the Moscow Treaty," *International Affairs* (Moscow), Number 9, September 1975, pp. 30-38.

30. *Tass* report, remarks of Leonid Brezhnev in Helsinki, Finland, July 31, 1975 [*FBIS*, "S.U." July 31, 1975, p. BB5].

31. United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, *Selected Documents Relating to Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions,* Disarmament Document Series Ref. #611; "Basic Principles of Relations Between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, May 29, 1972," p. 159, 160.

32. *Arms Control, Readings from Scientific American,* W. H. Freeman & Company, San Francisco, 1973, pp. 260-270.

33. United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, *Selected Documents Relating to Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions,* Disarmament Document Series Ref. #619; "Agreement Between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Prevention of Nuclear War, June 22, 1973," pp. 28-30.

34. U.S.A.C.D.A., *Selected Documents,* DDS Ref. #611, "Joint American-Soviet Communique, May 29, 1972," especially pp. 164-167.

touch on more sensitive, security-related matters such as military capabilities. The Kremlin supports these undertakings not from altruistic motives, but because in its judgment such activities serve its own interests. By averting a direct confrontation with adversaries and by obtaining desired economic and technical assistance through trade, the Soviet Union can more easily accomplish the task of socialist and communist construction.

Fourth, spokesmen and analysts for the USSR constantly and clearly emphasize that the concept of peaceful coexistence does not in any way allow for an end to the international class conflict nor for an amelioration of the ideological contest between the two world systems. In fact, the contrary is held to be the case; the antagonisms will deepen and intensify with time. It is argued that normalized, friendly relations are conceivable with capitalist countries, complete with economic and political links, while at the same time an acute struggle proceeds in the realm of ideas. The Kremlin contends that it is obligated to lend whatever aid it can to revolutionary and "democratic" forces that share its ideology, regardless of the nature of its agreements with a state or group of states in the West.

The reasons for this attitude are several. In part, it is based on Marxist-Leninist doctrine. The Soviet Union views itself as the fatherland of socialism and the foremost power of the communist camp and, as a consequence, it must fulfill its duty as spiritual and political leader to the best of its ability, including the rendering of material aid. Additionally, it is extraordinarily sensitive to Chinese claims that it has forsaken the progressive movements around the world through its detente policies; thus, it feels some compulsion to reassert its leadership role by proclaiming its undiminished support for international communism. On a more practical level, by proclaiming the "class" as opposed to national character of its policies, Moscow retains strong transnational linkages with Leftist groups and parties outside the socialist camp and is thereby able to conduct a dual-aspected foreign policy: on one level, regular state-to-state diplomacy and on a second level, a separate and distinct party-to-party relationship.

Soviet leaders, authors, and journalists do not try to camouflage the idea of systemic antagonism inherent in peaceful coexistence, nor do they see this fact as eliminating the prospects for improved relations. Mikhail Mitin wrote in *Izvestiya* in 1973 that since socialism and capitalism are in competition, "ideological struggle between them is inevitable, such is the law-governed pattern of our epoch." But he saw no reason why this should hinder the establishment of equally beneficial cooperation "on the basis of the principles of peaceful coexistence."[35]

35. M. Mitin, "Detente and the Struggle of Ideas," *Izvestiya,* November 24, 1973, p. 3.

This potential for harmony does not extend to relations between social groups any more than it does to ideology. An article appearing in the Army newspaper, *Krasnaya Zvezda* in August 1973 noted that the inter-systemic tension "has been and remains the main contradiction of the modern era" and continued that the principle of peaceful coexistence "is inapplicable to the class struggle within the capitalist countries or to relations between exploiters and exploited, colonialists and their victims."[36]

Fifth and finally, it is argued that stable and productive relations with capitalist countries further the ultimate goal of socialism, namely, the defeat of imperialism. This rather self-evident objective was proclaimed by *Krasnaya Zvezda* in September 1973 when it drew attention to the fact that peaceful coexistence had as its eventual aim, "the complete triumph of socialism and communism — a system which leads to the elimination once and for all of the use of force or the threat of force from international relations."[37] One of the ways in which this strategy insures the victory of communism is by inhibiting the most dangerous activities of the imperialists, especially the resort to war. As *Isvestiya* commented in September 1973, peaceful coexistence, "by limiting the freedom of the most reactionary, aggressive circles of the bourgeoisie, widens the possibilities of a successful struggle for social change both in the citadels of imperialism and on its periphery."[38]

Regardless of how it appears to Western observers, from the perspective of Soviet theorists, peaceful coexistence is an internally coherent line of analysis that derives from and corresponds to the current historical period. It is held to be of a "consistent and principled nature" that is neither expedient nor temporary.[39] It is propounded as a long-term and reliable basis for policy. Drawn from an image of the changing correlation of forces throughout the world, the essence of peaceful coexistence is not to preserve the political and social *status quo* but to assist materially the eventual triumph of socialism over capitalism. It calls for cooperation with the West within proscribed limits, including most importantly, good diplomatic relations and tightly controlled economic and technical interaction. It seeks accommodation rather than reconciliation. The determination to continue and, in fact, intensify the class and ideological contest indicates how restrictively the cooperative aspect of the construct is defined by the Kremlin. Peaceful coexistence is neither a selfless guide to interstate diplomacy nor is it an ingenious communist plan to deceive the Western countries. It is, rather, a set of norms for the conduct of world politics that envisages

36. Z. Mirskiy, "Peaceful coexistence is a Form of the Class Struggle," *Krasnaya Zvezda,* August 30, 1973, p. 2.

37. N. Shumkin, "Socialism and International Relations," *Krasnaya Zvezda,* September 13, 1973, pp. 2-3.

38. A. Bovin, "Peace and Social Progress," *Izvestiya,* September 11, 1973, p. 4.

39. Mirskiy, *Krasnaya Zvezda,* August 30, 1973, p. 2.

the uninterrupted advance of the power-political aims of the USSR and those of its allies.

*The Policy of Detente*

Intimately connected to the concept of peaceful coexistence is the policy of detente, or, as it is also known in the Soviet vocabulary, the relaxation of international tensions. It has been argued in the previous section that the USSR perceives the former largely as a collection of principles, as generalized rules that all countries, without regard for their individual socio-political organization, should follow in their diplomacy. The latter is the policy or policies intended to make that code of conduct operational. Peaceful coexistence is the doctrinal antecedent of detente. And detente is the term applied to the international actions of the USSR which allegedly develop from these principles. In a sense, the purpose underlying the Kremlin's advocacy of the relaxation of tensions is to compel the West to base its relations with socialist states on the twin precepts of cooperation and conflict, as those terms are defined by the Soviet Union.

Because detente is the functional equivalent of peaceful coexistence, it flows logically that their objectives are identical, namely, the normalization of relations between opposing states, the pursuit of limited economic and political cooperation, the continuation of social and ideological competition and the final victory of communism. The relaxation of tensions portends neither genuine amity between the two systems, nor even the establishment of an effective mechanism for the management of international crises. The transcendent purpose of detente is to prevent confrontations of such severity that a nuclear exchange could be the outcome. It is characterized by what might be labeled controlled, though still intense antagonism. Cooperative ventures are deemed desirable to the extent that the solidarity and strength of the socialist commonwealth are not endangered. Detente is not entente.

When Soviet authorities discuss detente, they highlight three features in particular. The first is the contention that detente is the only acceptable foundation on which to base a country's foreign policies. This applies with equal validity to capitalist as well as to socialist states. *Izvestiya* noted in February 1975 that the overriding requirement in the contemporary world was to improve international security and that it was in this capacity that detente "acts as an essential precondition for effective and mutually advantageous cooperation and for the solution of the whole complex of global problems . . . Political logic prompts a simple conclusion: no other alternative exists in our time."[40]

40. A. Bovin, "Facets of Detente," *Izvestiya,* February 6, 1975, p. 4.

Whether an individual country favors or opposes the relaxation of tensions is virtually irrelevant because detente, according to one Soviet observer, "has its own history. And its own dynamics. And this dynamism is not determined by the good intentions of particular politicians but by objective realities. In our time these are such that the countries of the globe cannot allow themselves to renounce cooperation . . ."[41]

In promoting the utility of detente, commentators in the Soviet Union simultaneously dismiss Western alternatives. "Deterrence" is subjected to especially harsh criticism. Deterrence is not simply dangerous, but a "politically abortive policy" that "cannot be an instrument for developing constructive relations between East and West."[42] Conceptions of multipolarity and of the balance of power are scored as "archaic" and "out of step." If pursued, they will only compound the likelihood of a deadly confrontation between the two systems.[43]

A second feature that is frequently stressed is that the relaxation of tensions, like peaceful coexistence, is neither a tactical feint nor is it temporary in nature. Brezhnev dealt with this theme at some length in a speech in August 1973. The General Secretary praised the recent improvements in the East-West political atmosphere and the greater inclination to focus on cooperative rather than competitive or antagonistic ventures. He added that "all this allows one to hope that the present detente is not just a temporary phenomenon but the beginning of a fundamental reconstruction of international relations."[44] This sentiment was echoed in an article in January 1975 in which the author refuted the argument that detente was losing its momentum; rather, the "positive shifts in the international situation are not only indisputable, but also have a clearcut trend toward further development."[45]

Part of the reason for the assertion that detente is more than a tactical deviation is the conviction that to abandon the policy would be to undermine the benefits that have to date been realized. Brezhnev voiced this view in March 1975, remarking that the relaxation of tensions "is a ceaseless process, which requires constant progress. To stop on this path would mean endangering what has already been achieved."[46] In this comment lies, perhaps, the primary reason why detente is purported to be of such long-range usefulness; the

41. Osipov, *New Times,* Number 7, February 1974, p. 8.

42. A. Fedorov, radio commentary, "NATO Hierarchy Fails to Heed Pentagon Doubts on Deterrence," June 8, 1973 [*FBIS,* "S.U." June 14, 1973, p. E1].

43. Osipov, *New Times,* Number 7, February 1974, p. 8.

44. Leonid Brezhnev, speech in Alam Ata, Kazakhstan S.S.R., August 15, 1973 [*FBIS,* "S.U." August 16, 1973, p. J8].

45. V. Kuznetsov, "Detente: Deep Roots," *New Times,* Number 5, January 31, 1976, p. 4.

46. Cited in an editorial, "On the Foreign Policy of the C.P.S.U. and the Soviet State," in *Kommunist,* Number 17, December 1975, pp. 3-15.

political and economic agreements that have been enacted are believed to advance, in a very concrete way, the aims and interests of the Soviet Union.

Related to this second point is the third feature of detente that is accorded special attention by the Soviets. It is alleged that the entire process must not only continue, but that the achievements of the policy must be safeguarded and rendered permanent. Nikolai Podgorny sounded the key phrase in regard to this when, in December 1973, he urged all "peace partisans" to seek "to improve further the political climate in the world" and "to render irreversible the positive shifts which have recently taken place. . . ."[47] A central task of Soviet foreign policy, a Soviet analyst has written, is to make detente "a steady, irreversible phenomenon."[48]

Increasingly, Soviet officials have contended that the relaxation of tensions has attained this desired permanence. It has been suggested that if approached from a broad historical perspective, the improvement in interstate relations would "inevitably gain strength, embrace new geographic regions and draw more countries into its orbit."[49]

These three features of detente — its unique suitability to the contemporary historical period, its long-term applicability and its approaching "irreversibility — when combined with the objectives of the policy, provide a detailed if less than comprehensive definition of the term. Determined to avert a cataclysmic world war and yet eager to ensure the final victory of socialism, Soviet leaders endorse the relaxation of tensions as a way to facilitate intersystemic cooperation in selected areas which, at the same time, permits unabated competition between East and West in the realm of ideology and politics. It is a design that emphasizes movement rather than stability, advance rather than retrenchment.

### *Political and Military Detente*

Soviet sources divide detente into two parts, drawing a rather precise distinction between the political and the military aspects. *Political detente* refers to all areas of interstate relations other than those having to do with armed forces and the capability of a country to wage war. Within this classification fall diplomatic, economic, scientific and technical negotiations between capitalist and socialist states, as well as consultations and conferences to formulate bilateral and multilateral principles of conduct, such as mutual guarantees with respect to sovereignty, non-interference in internal affairs and the peaceful set-

47. Nikolai Podgorny, speech in Riga, Latvia, December 26, 1973 [*FBIS*, "S.U." January 3, 1974, p. R11].
48. B. Svetlov, "Detente: A Test of Durability," *Moskovskaya Pravda*, December 4, 1973, p. 3.
49. Kapchenko, *International Affairs* (Moscow), Number 4, April 1975, p. 7.

tlement of disputes. Taken as a whole, these agreements and declarations of intent form a kind of international political matrix which the Soviets seek to enshrine in an official and quasi-legal framework.

*Military detente* concerns those issues which, broadly defined, are linked to the role of force in world politics. The Kremlin labels the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the 1972 strategic arms limitation agreements and the negotiations for a reduction of armed forces in Central Europe as military detente. The term is not synonymous with arms control as that concept is understood in the United States. Proposals for nuclear-free zones, the placement of observers at military exercises and prior notification of troop movements do not, from the Western perspective, contribute significantly to international stability and thus are not, in the strictest sense of the term, arms control measures. By the Soviet definition, however, military detente encompasses these concepts. By Moscow's reasoning, all international dialogues that touch on the question of armed forces are logically subsumed under this rubric. In the words of one Soviet analyst, the "nucleus" of military detente is "the ending of the arms race and the transition to the gradual, consistent and systematic reduction of armed forces and armaments." In reference to Europe, the objectives also include a lessening of the confrontation between NATO and the Warsaw Pact and the "gradual surmounting of Europe's division into opposing military blocs."[50]

How does the Kremlin perceive these two forms of detente to be interrelated? The question is more complex than it might seem at first glance. In the United States, negotiations to control nuclear and conventional weapons are deemed worthy of pursuit in and of themselves, although their eventual success is heavily dependent on political factors. There is no strict rank ordering of priorities wherein diplomatic, economic or technical agreements must be secured prior to the consideration of military issues. The relationship is fluid and pragmatic. The two sets of problems are divisible; failure to achieve progress in one forum does not, inevitably, doom the initiatives in the other.

The Soviet perception is quite different. The two forms of detente are understood to be organically and, in fact, causally linked. Soviet theorists conceive of the political and military aspects as distinct threads of a single policy. Neither can progress without the continued development of the other. Yevgeny Primakov noted this symbiotic tie in August 1975 *New Times* article in which he wrote:

> In the process of easing international tension, political and military aspects are interconnected. Indeed, military detente is impossible without

50. A. Yefremov, "Problems of Military Detente in Europe," *International Affairs* (Moscow), Number 12, December 1975, pp. 34-35.

> political detente but the latter cannot be sufficiently successful and reliable either unless it is accompanied and supplemented by specific steps and measures in the sphere of military detente.[51]

Thus, steps to improve political relations between states must precede moves to control competition in the areas of weaponry and armed forces. One of the benefits of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), according to the Soviet analysis, was that it made possible negotiations on military questions, most notably the force reduction talks in Central Europe.[52] The notion of causality operates in the opposite direction as well. Primakov contended that the relaxation of tension "cannot successfully develop further without the implementation of military detente and without radical measures helping to curtail the arms race." He added, in a significant aside, that the improvement in political relations did not automatically lead to lower levels of armament, "it merely creates favorable conditions for this."[53]

The Soviets attach such a high priority to the achievement of military detente because in their view agreements to limit armaments "anchor" the relaxation of tensions by imparting to the process a measure of substance. An editorial in *Izvestiya* in August 1975 focused on this relationship when it noted that "it is precisely the materialization of detente which is the essence of everything which must make peace in Europe truly stable and irreversible. It is necessary to make the maximum efforts to supplement political detente with military detente without of course harming the security of anyone."[54] A *Pravda* article in October 1975 conveyed the same message by emphasizing that the "materialization of detente is crucial. . . . [T]he achievement of this goal can only assume the carrying over of detente into the military sphere."[55] When Brezhnev spoke in Havana in January 1974, he said that the primary task of the force reduction negotiations in Vienna was to ensure for Europeans "the concrete fruits of detente."[56]

The role attributed to arms control agreements by the Kremlin underlines the extent to which military detente, when detached from its political counterpart, has no independent or self-sustaining rationale. It serves to buttress what has been achieved diplomatically and to propel the relaxation of tension forward. It is one of the tools employed to realize a larger design, the others being

51. Ye. Primakov, "Disarmament: Paramount Task," *New Times,* Number 33, August 1975, p. 22.

52. D. Proektor, "Urgent Problem of Security and Cooperation in Europe," *International Affairs* (Moscow), Number 6, June 1974, p. 70.

53. Ye. Primakov, "Political Detente and the Disarmament Problem," *Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya,* Number 10, October 1975, pp. 3-12.

54. "The Historical Success of the Peace Policy," *Izvestiya,* August 8, 1975, p. 1.

55. "For the Sake of Peace and For the Good of the Peoples," *Pravda,* October 26, 1975, p. 4.

56. Leonid Brezhnev, speech in Havana, Cuba, January 30, 1974, [*FBIS,* "S.U." January 30, 1974, p. N10].

political and economic levers. That it is a very important lever seems beyond doubt. Since the conclusion of the CSCE, the Soviet press has persistently argued that an unregulated accretion of nuclear and conventional armaments is in basic contradiction to the relaxation of tensions.[57]

International political accords create the preconditions for the control and eventual reduction of the implements of war. Military detente, in turn, "concretizes" achievements in the diplomatic field. Each process spurs and reinforces the other; the two are described as acting in concert. To deny movement in one area is to interfere with progress in the other. Soviet spokesmen contend that to ignore either facet it not simply to diminish the utility of detente, but to endanger the viability of the policy as a whole.

## Conclusion

This article has attempted to explain how the influence of Marxist-Leninist doctrine combines with more discernible power-political interests to impart to Soviet diplomacy its distinctive character. With alleged scientific precision, the foreign policies of the USSR are said to derive from a comprehensive analysis of the contemporary historical period. The distinguishing characteristics of the present age, as described by Soviet sources, are a dramatic shift in the "correlation of forces" in favor of socialism, a decline in the political, economic and military power of the capitalist states and a rise in the number and authority of the "peace and democratic" forces in the West. These three factors, working in concert, are believed to portend the opening phase in the final struggle between imperialism and socialism, a contest that will end in the eventual triumph of the "progressive" forces and the complete defeat of reaction. This vision is rooted in what Soviet spokesmen argue is a dispassionate and objective evaluation of current international political conditions.

This conviction that the fortunes of socialism are on the ascent gives an offensive quality to Soviet diplomacy that is revealed in the concepts of peaceful coexistence and the policy of detente. The former is seen as a set of norms on which to base international relations, calling for limited and strictly defined inter-systemic cooperation and the intensification of the class and ideological

57. The Soviets have not, however, seen fit to reduce either their nuclear or their conventional military forces unilaterally, pending the outcome of current arms control negotiations. In spite of their rhetoric, they have continued to augment and to modernize both their strategic arsenal and their theater armed forces at a rate the Western countries regard as excessive. The Kremlin justifies its actions by alleging that the buildup is merely in response to the "war-like preparations" of the imperialists. Although the United States and its European allies have taken steps over the last decade to upgrade their military capabilities, their efforts in this area have been less impressive, and less extensive than those of the Soviet Union.

contest. Detente is the policy or policies designed to actualize those norms. To secure Western adherence to these formulations, Soviet writers and officials contend that the relaxation of tension is not a temporary hiatus but a long-term condition and that it is, in fact, the only reliable foundation for interstate relations as it seeks to avoid general nuclear war and to promote equally beneficial diplomatic and economic interaction. A preeminent goal of the USSR in world politics is to make detente irreversible in order to preserve and extend the advantages which Moscow believes flow from the policy.

To underpin firmly and to lend substance to the relaxation of the international environment, the Soviet Union advocates measures to control armed forces and armaments, or what it terms "military detente." The Kremlin stresses that without its "materialization," the viability of the entire detente process is endangered; arms agreements, it is argued, are required to "concretize" what has been achieved in the political realm and are also necessary to ensure further progress along the path to normalized relations. Forward movement along both planes, the political and the military, is deemed essential in order to build an international order which conforms to the ideological predispositions of the Soviet leadership and which, simultaneously, serves the more tangible and immediate diplomatic interests of the USSR. Thus, the two forms of detente are joined in a kind of lock step wherein neither aspect is sustainable in an ultimate sense without the parallel development of the other.