ON EASTERN EUROPE: US POLICY TO EXPLOIT THE OPPORTUNITIES

by

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Scholars and observers of Eastern Europe increasingly classify the socioeconomic and political problems encountered by the socialist states there as systemic problems, rather than temporary aberrations that will be overcome by the developmental process. As pointed out by other analysts, the crises in the region are economic, manifested by declining growth rates, low productivity, waste, excessive use of energy and raw materials, and foreign indebtedness;[1] they are social, insofar as the existing political and economic order has been unable to satisfy the needs of the population in terms of services, while the aspirations of the new classes (and particularly the technical and managerial intelligentsia) are frustrated in a number of areas;[2] they are, finally, political, because the malfunctioning of the rest of the system produces dissatisfaction, dissent, cynicism, and a corresponding drop in political legitimacy, with attendant potential for political instability and perhaps even outright challenges for the political elites and the administrative structures they control.[3] There are important differences between systems, to be sure, but many of the crisis symptoms are found throughout the entire region, leading analysts to conclude that these are problems inherent in the nature of the existing order, rather than country-specific, culturally induced problems.

Systemic crises presumably require systemic responses; in other words, the current problems of Eastern Europe cannot be solved by mere tinkering with the existing order, but demand fundamental reform in a number of areas. Specifically, there is a need for major restructuring of the economic system, reducing the centralized planning establishment and devolving significant responsibilities to regional authorities and individual economic units, expanding the private sector, and providing meaningful material incentives for the worker and the functionary. Similar changes should be brought about in the Achilles' heel of socialist economics, namely agriculture. Furthermore, the political system needs a significant decentralization, or at least increased possibilities for popular participation, with expanded access to leading organs by the societal elites which have emerged as a result of rapid economic and social development in previous decades. In the final analysis, the regimes of Eastern Europe must establish a dialogue with their own populations while improving the economic conditions under which people live. This is a tall order, and scholars tend to agree that meaningful change in all of these crucial realms together amounts to a fundamental restructuring of the existing system—in other words, systemic transformation. Most scholars also agree that

such systemic transformation is highly unlikely, because it would threaten the very survival of the existing political elites and thus would be strenuously opposed by current and future leaders, and, finally, because the Kremlin will not permit it.[4]

If these are indeed realistic conclusions, what are the ramifications thereof for Soviet policy, and, more specifically, for US policy? As discussed in the literature, there are several, and they are of profound importance for the policymaking of each of the global powers, both in relations with each other and in relations with the states of Europe, East and West. First of all, the socialist states of Eastern Europe represent a vital interest to the Kremlin. It has been so since 1944-45, and it is going to remain so for the foreseeable future, regardless of who comprises the Soviet leadership; the only caveat would be fundamental political change in the Soviet Union itself, but this seems rather unlikely in the near or immediate future and would, in any case, so drastically alter the military and political parameters of the region that any analysis based on current conditions would be worthless.

A vital interest is one that will be defended by any means available, up to and including military action. The Soviet leaders have demonstrated their willingness to use military means in Eastern Europe on a number of occasions and in several states, notably East Germany in 1953, Hungary in 1956, and Czechoslovakia in 1968. Furthermore, the *threat* of military intervention, backed by troop movements and other acts of preparation, has been utilized in controversies with the Poles in 1956 and 1980-81, and occasionally during the years of Romanian foreign policy recalcitrance, most notably in the Ceausescu era (1965 to the present). The current force structure, deployment, and equipment of the Soviet armed forces demonstrate the continuing Soviet commitment to defending its perceived vital interest in this region.

Defense of vital interests is not a Soviet prerogative, and not limited to Eastern Europe; the United States has the same level of commitment for the defense of Western Europe, in military terms. The difference between these two commitments is in the nature of what is defined as vital. The United States is a member (and the leading member) of an alliance comprised of pluralistic societies with genuine political competition and mixed economies, wherein private enterprise is the dominant feature. Such an alliance exhibits considerable differentiation, and the US commitment is primarily designed to defend the West European states militarily, thus allowing the systems of the region to develop along lines determined by the local political process, without fear of outside forces subverting and destroying that process.

In contrast, the Soviet definition of vital encompasses all major aspects of societal life, be they political, social, economic, or cultural. In other words, the Kremlin is dedicated to the maintenance of Eastern Europe as a military security zone and to the existing political, socioeconomic, and cultural order there. Specifically, this means that the Soviet leadership will ensure the continuation of one-party rule in each of the socialist states of the region, and the maintenance of the economic order (meaning the preservation of centralized planning, public ownership of the means of production, limited private enterprise, and political control through the performance of the

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economic system). In the field of cultural policy, the Kremlin will attempt to control the expression of artistic and intellectual thought and practice along prescribed lines. The Soviet definition of "vital" is *societal* and *all-encompassing*; the US definition is primarily *political* and *military*.[5]

Second, this all-encompassing Soviet definition of "vital" reflects a pervasive sense of insecurity and a highly developed perception of threat. If you choose to define your interests broadly, as the Soviets do, you are much more vulnerable to external influence, because you are concerned with the whole gamut of human interaction, not just parts of it. This perception, in turn, leads to policies that are aimed at sealing Eastern Europe off from all potentially dangerous contact with the West and then allowing only limited interaction in the fields of science and technology, which are desperately needed by the faltering economies of the region, including the Soviet economy itself. All interactions are vital, all interests crucial; from the Soviet point of view, the West must simply accept that Eastern Europe is firmly and irrevocably imbedded in the Soviet security zone as broadly defined in Moscow.[6]

Third, this kind of definition requires an enormous commitment of resources on the part of the Soviet Union. These resources are political, economic, and social, because the threat is so perceived. Much work has been done on the size of the Soviet subsidy to Eastern Europe in fields such as energy, raw materials, and the provision of markets and the resulting opportunity costs for the Kremlin; numerous analysts are engaged in the difficult task of determining the real cost to the Soviet Union of stationing troops in Eastern Europe and maintaining an order of battle with high levels of readiness; other scholars are grappling with the cost, material and psychological, of perceiving the world as a hostile place and Eastern Europe as a battlefield of ideas and influence.[7] The costs must of necessity be enormous, because the siege mentality cannot allow any area of human endeavor to go uncontrolled and undefended. It is a *tous azimut* outlook on the world, and it is extremely costly.

Fourth, the Kremlin is battling developments in Eastern Europe that may well be irreversible. The modernization process which has been underway in the region has produced complex (if not efficient) economies, a social structure characterized by functional specialization and differentiation, an increasingly assertive technical and managerial intelligentsia—all in political systems that are still characterized by centralized decision-making, bureaucratism, residual ideological screens of perception, and resistance to change. In other words, a relatively modern society is saddled with an archaic political system. This produces tension and instability, which will remain permanent fixtures of these systems as long as the political order refuses to accommodate itself to processes of accelerated socio-economic change initiated by the communist regimes themselves. The only "give" in this situation is in the political realm, but, as discussed above, fundamental changes here are unlikely. Thus, instability in Eastern Europe is a permanent item on the agenda of international relations.

Soviet attitudes about Eastern Europe attempt to limit the United States to a passive policy in the region, interacting only with the states of the area in fields that have been cleared by the Kremlin and are under close scrutiny by the Soviet leadership. No US administration has been satisfied with such constraints since the establishment of Soviet hegemony in that part of the continent. During the Eisenhower era, the United States was committed to "roll-back," while the Nixon policy was based on "bridge building" and interlocking relationships in the context of Kissinger-style realpolitik. Carter made human rights a touchstone of his policy in the region. The Reagan Administration, against a backdrop of heightening tensions with the Soviet Union, has chosen to play an active role in Eastern Europe in some fields, as exemplified by the rather forceful US reaction to the imposition of martial law in Poland. It is highly unlikely that any administration that succeeds Ronald Reagan will accept the Soviet definition of

"vital interests" as all-encompassing, thus limiting Western access and influence to levels which have been predetermined by the Kremlin. Since the Soviet and US attitudes on this question differ so fundamentally, Eastern Europe will be a source of conflict between Moscow and Washington for the foreseeable future. This presents dangers, but also many opportunities, for US policy in the region. In order to avoid the most important of these dangers while enhancing the opportunities for US interests in Eastern Europe, there is a need for an integrated, strategic approach to the region as a whole, and tactical approaches to separate states and individual situations, as they arise.

A strategic approach to Eastern Europe as a whole presupposes knowledge of the problems, trends, and policies that are common to the whole region. Furthermore, there is a need for an understanding of those areas in which the indigenous elites and the Soviet leadership have common or identical interests and thus may be expected to act in conformity with each other, and, conversely, those areas in which there are divergences between the Kremlin, on the one hand, and the East European capitals, on the other hand. Finally, US policy must distinguish between the attitudes, values, and interests of local political elites, the nonpolitical societal elites, and the masses of the population. Only after thorough investigation of these elements can a policy toward the region of Eastern Europe be fashioned.

As indicated above, several developmental trends and problems are present throughout the region of Eastern Europe. The most important of these are:

- The persistence of one-party rule.
- The continuation of basically centralized economic procedures, despite individual country reforms.
- The maintenance of centralized economic structures.
- The continuation of foreign policy coordination with the Kremlin, despite occasional country variations (this statement does not apply to Albania and Yugoslavia on either dimension).
- Continued, indeed expanded, integration of the armed forces of each state in the Warsaw Pact under Soviet leadership (Albania and Yugoslavia excluded, along with the partial exclusion of Romania).
- Continued, if varying, control of artistic and cultural life.
- Continued denial of meaningful political pluralism and corresponding emphasis on ideological indoctrination.
- Low levels of productivity in the economy, particularly agriculture (Hungary is a partial exception).
- Continuation, perhaps expansion, of mass political cynicism and privatization, with corresponding low political legitimacy.
- Increasing feelings of political and economic nationalism, in part directed against the regional hegemon, the Soviet Union.
- Increasing tendencies toward "pan-Europeanism," in which the populations of Eastern Europe emphasize their cultural and historic ties with other Europeans (and not necessarily Russians).
- Increasing dependence on the Soviet Union for raw materials, fuels, and export of finished goods.
- Fear, despite the dependence upon the Soviet Union cited above, of increased vulnerability to trends and problems in the world market.
- Increasing dependence upon technological and financial aid from the West.[8]

While it is quite clear that these trends and tendencies vary from state to state in Eastern Europe, it is equally true that all of the political and socioeconomic systems of the area experience them in some degree. Furthermore, these tendencies are often contradictory, as some pull the region away from Soviet influence, while others help bring it closer to the regional hegemon. US policy toward the region must take these contradictory tendencies into account. Specifically, the persistence of one-party rule, the continued centralization of the economic systems, the foreign and security coordination with the Soviets, the emphasis on political control over the cultural scene and

the denial of real political pluralism, as well as closer economic interaction with, and dependence upon, the Soviet Union are trends that tend to enhance the rule of the Kremlin in the area. Conversely, the growth of nationalism, both among elites and masses, and the East European dependence upon the West for technology and financial aid, as well as the partial integration of the region's economies into the world market, all tend to reduce Soviet influence. "Pan-Europeanist" feelings have similar effects. In addition, the very persistence of autocracies and the low level of legitimacy of these regimes and their economic systems in the general population are factors that tend to reduce the stature and influence of the Soviet Union.

The states of Eastern Europe are not uniform entities, but rather complex systems, in which differences exist between political and other elites, interest groups and groupings, and between the various social classes and strata; furthermore, there are sharp cleavages between elites and the masses of the population. Thus, the political elites, dependent for their survival on close association with the Soviet Union in the political and security fields,[9] and equally devoted to the maintenance of autocracy and political control over the economy, view their relations with the Kremlin differently from those members of the technical intelligentsia who despise the low level of technological penetration in the socialist "fatherland" while, at the same time, expressing profound admiration for all things Western. By the same token, the writers, sculptors, film-makers, and theater directors who chafe under increasingly severe ideological controls admire the intellectual free-for-all and the artistic eclecticism of the "capitalist" systems. And the average citizen, confronted with economic scarcities of various kinds and a bureaucracy that denies much of the individual freedom and expression found west of the ideological dividing line, holds the Soviet Union in a mixture of fear and contempt, but hardly admiration and friendship. These, then, are the regional characteristics upon which US policy must be constructed.

Even though there are several common trends and phenomena in contemporary Eastern Europe, a region as complex as this in terms of history, culture, economic endowment, and political manifestations exhibits a number of variations among subregions and between individual states and nations. These differences, too, must be taken into account when producing a set of policies toward Eastern Europe.

From a policy point of view, one of the most significant distinctions is one implicitly recognized by the Soviets themselves, namely the strategic importance of the so-called Northern Tier (the German Democratic Republic, Poland, and Czechoslovakia) and the somewhat lesser significance of the Southern Tier (Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria) in the Warsaw Pact itself. This distinction carries with it a number of implications, chief of which is the fact that foreign policy autonomy of any kind, as well as domestic deviation from the Soviet-sponsored model of political and socio-economic arrangements, will be considered much more closely, and with greater fear, in the Kremlin if they manifest themselves in the higher priority area, while similar deviations are a little more palatable in the south. This does not mean that Moscow is willing to accept fundamental deviations in the Southern Tier, but the distinction is a fact that should be noted for its potential policy ramifications.

Other variations stem from differences in ideological orthodoxy and the level of political control, economic performance, the level of nationalistic feeling and the definition of cultural heritage, the designation of friends and enemies, and the presence or absence of political legitimacy. US policy, then, should take these differences into account when specific policies are produced.

Despite occasional statements (and misrepresentations of statements) to the contrary, I would posit that it is *not* in the interest of the United States to accept the Soviet definitions of security arrangements in Eastern Europe, which basically implies that the region is the Kremlin's front yard, in which no "outside" interference will be

tolerated. On the contrary, one should expect that any lessening of Soviet control in the area is beneficial to the interests of the United States as well as important segments of the local population, and may indeed be beneficial to (and thus secretly coveted by) elements of the local elite as well. Briefly put, US policy in the region should attempt to lessen Soviet influence and increase Western leverage, without throwing the area into political turmoil that would, in turn, risk Soviet political, economic, or military retaliation.

Such a policy must start with the premise, already discussed, that Eastern Europe is an area of vital interest to the Soviet Union, an area that will therefore be defended at all cost. By the same token, this region is not of vital, but rather of secondary, interest to the United States; it only becomes vital if and when it can be used as a threat (political, economic, or military) to Western Europe, which *is* a vital interest to this country. These realizations are of great importance when specific policies are being fashioned.

Since Eastern Europe is in the Soviet vital security sphere, certain policy options are precluded. This includes a policy based on military threat or actual warfare. Operational techniques such as "Airland battle" are designed primarily to counter a Soviet attack on Western Europe by forcefully attacking areas of Eastern Europe; they do not envision the first use of conventional US forces east of the "Iron Curtain" for the purpose of political gains. The removal of the military option reduces the field of policy toward Eastern Europe to political, economic, and cultural policies.

Within these limitations, Washington's policies should be designed to reduce Soviet influence in the region, thus making it more difficult for the Kremlin to use Eastern Europe as a potential springboard for aggression, and also to increase "the cost of empire" to the Soviet leadership. There are already a number of conditions present in the region that may allow such a policy a measure of success. The following broad policies would seem appropriate, given prevailing conditions in the region:

- *Emphasize national peculiarities and national sovereignty.*

As discussed above, political and cultural nationalism is clearly on the rise in contemporary Eastern Europe, and one of the manifestations of this is anti-Russianism. This phenomenon varies from country to country (see below), but it is present in some degree in all of these states, and a meaningful US policy in the region would be clear cognizance of this fact, making it abundantly clear to the East Europeans that we recognize the "Europeanness" of their cultures and their present systems. Such a policy would tend to enhance already widespread attitudes in Eastern Europe. It could become a powerful tool in the struggle to increase the costs of the Soviet Union in maintaining its "empire" in the region and may thereby indirectly produce greater Soviet willingness to make concessions elsewhere, in non-vital areas of global competition.

- *Utilize the current economic crisis in Eastern Europe for maximum advantage.*

This is a most controversial issue, to which there exist a number of possible approaches, each with different policy implications for the United States and the Soviet Union. On the one hand, reduced economic interaction, indeed clear-cut boycotts of trade and technology transfer in important areas, will reduce the efficiency of the East European economies, deepen the present crisis, and, presumably, force the Soviets to extend further economic and technical assistance, thereby weakening the Kremlin itself in this crucial sphere. On the other hand, selective economic aid may increase Western prestige further and correspondingly weaken the Soviets' position, because such aid would help point out the bankruptcy of the existing economic order and the impotence of the Soviet Union itself.

As usual, there are no clear-cut answers to these policy dilemmas, but US policymakers do not have to face agonizing choices like these in a full-blown manner, because circumstances will not permit such definite

policies. Specifically, existing Western policy in Eastern Europe has already established a strong link of economic interest between many of the principal US allies and a number of East European states, notably Poland, but with several other nations as well. The involvement of West German banks and other West European financial institutions in Eastern Europe is of such a magnitude that a sudden or drastic withdrawal of economic aid to the region would cause serious repercussions in European banking and clearly a major crisis in the Western alliance. Since this alliance is a primary interest for us, whereas Eastern Europe is not, we cannot allow our alliance interests to be seriously jeopardized in the pursuit of elusive goals of economic punishment on the other side of the "curtain." Instead, our economic policy in the region must be based upon differentiation and a thorough knowledge of each state and its economic conditions as well as the interests of our European allies in each particular area.

The need for differentiation in policy formation, so evident in the political and economic realms, is not as compelling in the area of cultural policy. If by "cultural" we mean intellectual and artistic expression, human rights and ethnic rights, the United States can forcefully pursue a policy that aims at the enhancement of freedom of expression, freedom of religion, individual civil and political rights, and proper autonomy for ethnic minorities, for the region as a whole. These are matters of intrinsic value, but they have great political value as well, in that they keep pressure on autocratic regimes to reform their policies toward some common standard of civilized states. Furthermore, such a policy enhances the prestige of the United States as a champion of values that are held dearly by increasing numbers of individuals and groups in the East European states. This clearly adds to the costs of local "enforcement" of regime goals and values, and thus, directly or indirectly, the Soviet cost also increases.

A successful differentiated US policy emphasizing internal sovereignty, bilateral economic relations for mutual advantage, and individual rights in the cultural sphere presupposes US strength in bilateral relations with the Soviet Union; forceful policy expressions based on real or perceived weakness will be ineffectual or detrimental, as demonstrated by the civil rights campaign of the Carter Administration. This campaign seems to have worsened conditions for dissidents and religious believers in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, since Washington made it clear that no real sanctions would be forthcoming if conditions failed to improve. The sense of global retreat on the part of the United States made forceful policy statements unbelievable—statements that could be disregarded at little or no cost. The Reagan Administration, for all its bluster, has shown its readiness to back statements with action on the periphery of the Kremlin's empire, such as Grenada. Such actions are likely to have some effect when Washington communicates its concerns in matters pertaining to the core areas of that empire, namely Eastern Europe. And even if they have no such effect in Moscow, they may have an impact in Pankow, Warsaw, Prague, Budapest, Bucharest, and Sofia, thereby increasing the tensions between the center of the empire and its satrapies. This, in turn, increases the costs of empire—an inherent beneficial effect for the United States.

While the general approach for Eastern Europe should focus on the need to expand the autonomy of the region as a whole from Soviet influence, specific policies toward subgroups of states or individual states may have more options, given the opportunities present in each area. Such policies must be fashioned with a view toward the prevailing political, socioeconomic, and cultural conditions in each case, as well as the *vulnerability* of each regime to US pressure, and, correspondingly, its exposure to Soviet counterpressure. This, in turn, presumes some knowledge of Soviet hierarchies of interests in Eastern Europe, as defined by states and subregions.

Let us look first at politically "vulnerable" states. In contemporary Eastern Europe there are states that have experienced

considerable political problems, due to the performance (or lack thereof) of the regime in the economic field, because of low legitimacy of public support, and/or because of local nationalism and anti-Sovietism. Clearly at the top of this list is Poland, which has experienced an unprecedented societal crisis during the last three or four years, due to economic malfunctioning, the birth and destruction of political pluralism (with resulting blows to regime prestige and legitimacy), and a pervasive anti-Russian and anti-Soviet feeling in the population. The volume of work on Poland is crushingly great, and there is no need to add to it here, except to say that this country warrants a careful and nuanced US policy.

While Poland is clearly the most vulnerable state in Eastern Europe at the present time, a number of other states are also in this category. The German Democratic Republic is politically handicapped because of its peculiar status vis-à-vis the Federal Republic of Germany, which has precluded the development of a genuine East German sense of nationhood. Furthermore, the very close association of the current regime with the Kremlin (by choice or by necessity) is clearly resented by a population harboring long-standing attitudes of cultural superiority over, and political animosity against, the Soviet Union. By contrast, the East German economic performance has been relatively good, and thus represents less of a liability for the regime, except when comparisons are made with the Federal Republic.[10]

Romania is yet another state in the category of political vulnerability. In contrast to the GDR, there is no shortage of nationalism in Romania; on the contrary, a well-developed sense of ethnic value, perhaps even ethnic chauvinism, has been a characteristic of this country and its regime for decades, and it is indeed the nationalism of the current regime that has produced whatever popular support it can muster. On the other hand, the economic performance of Romania at this time is positively abysmal, and there can be little doubt that the continuing economic crisis has eroded the position of the Ceausescu leadership. Furthermore, the nepotism and the irrationality of the current regime under the leadership of the Ceausescu "clan" has made the first couple of the republic into the butt of innumerable jokes and widespread public cynicism. There is little doubt that the current regime displays both excessive centralization and dangerous weaknesses at the same time.[11]

There are also, on the other hand, politically "successful" states to consider. In this category is found Hungary, which has experienced a remarkable political renaissance since the nadir of the 1956 restitution of the communist regime, following the bloody Soviet suppression of the revolution. Economic reform has produced the most successful, consumer-oriented economy in the entire region, one in which agricultural production is a success story and not a failure. Furthermore, relative political liberalism has produced more actual systemic support than anywhere else in the region. Political nationalism and chauvinism are, nevertheless, important ingredients in the culture of Hungary, and herein lies the key to any US policy toward Budapest, whose aim it must be to enhance the relative autonomy of the system, thereby reducing Soviet leverage.[12]

There are also states with a mixed record. Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria fall between the "success" story of Hungary and the vulnerabilities of Poland, Romania, and the GDR. There are economic problems in both states, but they appear manageable, and there is certainly no pervasive tendency toward economic breakdown, as is the case in Romania and Poland, or threats to the nation-building process, which are endemic to the GDR's situation. Bulgaria has traditionally been the Kremlin's closest ally in Eastern Europe, and anti-Russian feelings are less prevalent there than elsewhere in the region. The Bulgarian regime, under Todor Zhivkov, has avoided the nepotism and misrule of the Ceausescu clan to the north, and has managed to open up the political system to recruitment from the expanding technical intelligentsia, thus reducing inter-elite conflict and tension. The economic

performance of the regime has been adequate, and in some fields quite good, so population attitudes are cautiously accepting of the existing order. It would appear that Bulgaria offers fewer prospects for US "advances" than the other states of the region.[13]

Czechoslovakia, on the other hand, exhibits considerable political problems, stemming from pervasive cynicism and outright withdrawal from the existing order into excessive consumerism. These symptoms are, in part, offset by the performance of the economy, which has been tolerable until the last three or four years, and a conscious regime policy of importing consumer goods and foodstuffs, which have reduced the potential for political unrest. At the same time, public attitudes tend to be ambivalent when it comes to the Soviet Union and the West; on the one hand, the Czechs are traditionally oriented toward the West in cultural and economic terms, but on the other hand, their political experiences with the likes of Chamberlain and Daladier have established a great deal of political realism, which tends to accept the geopolitical realities after the failures of 1968. At the same time, the Soviet-led invasion of this country 16 years ago has produced an apparently lasting disenchantment with the Russians among the masses of the people and indeed many elements of the socioeconomic elite.

This review points out the considerable diversity that exists in Eastern Europe, and thus begins to establish the bases of specific US policy. The following guidelines would appear appropriate at this time:

- *Policy toward "vulnerable" states.*

The vulnerability of these systems stems from discrepancies of interests as they are perceived in Moscow and in the local capitals, or in different perceptions at the elite and mass levels (or indeed among various elites), or both of these conditions. Herein lie both the opportunities and the liabilities and dangers for US policy. In Poland, there is a widening chasm between the political elite and the rest of society, including the other societal elites. At the same time, the weakness of the regime has forced the Polish generals to maintain close relations with the Kremlin. Due to the fact that the Soviet leaders consider Poland a crucial element in their security system, and because the Soviets were convinced that the political crisis in that country was a direct challenge to the system itself, events in Warsaw are monitored very closely by Moscow. Under these circumstances, little gain can be expected from exerting pressure to change the present order. US policy, then, should focus on selective economic aid that can help alleviate the hardships of the population. Furthermore, the US needs to continue its protests against the reality of martial law (which continues, despite its official revocation). Particularly important here would be emphasis on the right of the Catholic Church to act as an autonomous element in the political realm and the right of Solidarity and its auxiliary organizations to survive. This kind of moderate policy is in conformity with important West European interests, especially those of the Federal Republic, and can help reestablish some continuity and cohesion in Western policy toward Poland. Massive economic sanctions are not likely to succeed, because other Western actors are bound to provide aid regardless of US policy.

The German Democratic Republic presents another set of opportunities for US policy, but, once again, the key strategic location of the GDR and the peculiar nature of the system itself ensure close Soviet scrutiny of the political and socioeconomic conditions in that country. Little can be expected in the way of changing the close political and security relations between Pankow and Moscow.

On the other hand, there are important cracks and fissures in this political edifice. First of all, East German public opinion remains very receptive to Western influence, due to close ties with the Federal Republic, and because West German television is easily available on most of the GDR's territory. Furthermore, economic ties are close and provide an indispensible source of funds for the East Germans. Important elements of the intellectual elite, as well as the technical-managerial leaders, have close ties with the

FRG. The churches have become active political participants in recent years, especially in matters pertaining to nuclear armaments, and the moral stature of the church has grown considerably. Finally, the youth of the GDR (as indeed the youth elsewhere in the region) are enamored of Western movies and the youth culture here. These are important assets which should be utilized by US policy.[14]

It would be beneficial for the United States to recognize the special ties between the two German states, and to coordinate its policy closely with Bonn on these matters. We need to deal with the East German regime as a political and military reality, but at the same time it is important to emphasize the close ties and cultural and linguistic affinity between the two Germanies. Furthermore, economic and scientific ties that recognize that the East Germans are advanced in the field of technology (and thus really closer to the West than the East in this endeavor) are worth the effort. We need to make it clear that we no longer consider the GDR as merely a *Marionettenstaat* simply because of Soviet control. A more aggressive cultural campaign, based on the admiration for the West which exists in the cultural and scientific elites as well as the general population, would be beneficial. Above all, close cooperation with the Federal Republic in forming a "German policy" would be highly advantageous for the Western alliance and for bilateral relations between Washington and Bonn—a vital US interest.

Romania, the third of the "crisis" states in Eastern Europe, represents a rather different configuration from the other two systems in this category. While in Poland and the GDR the survival of the political regime depends upon a close association with Moscow, the continuation of the Ceausescu clan in power depends upon a certain amount of foreign policy autonomy, Romanian nationalism, and a conscious effort to associate the present leadership with the glories of the Romanian past, as well as efforts to establish a national road to socialism and ideological orthodoxy. This situation, coupled with the fact that Romania, as a member of the Southern Tier, represents less of a security risk to the Soviet Union than do the two other systems in the "vulnerable" category, enhances the policy options for the United States. At the same time, the masses of the population and important elements of the nonpolitical societal elite of Romania share both a strong feeling of anti-Russianism and a dedication to their traditional cultural ties with the West, particularly Latin Europe.[15] All of this makes Romania a country toward which a vigorous US policy should be directed for the purpose of enhancing existing autonomy in foreign and security policy.

Despite these favorable conditions, Romania presents a dilemma for US policymakers. The Ceausescu regime is widely perceived as repressive and corrupt, and there can be little doubt that it represents the area's last real remnant of classical Stalinism in all of its manifestations. Should the United States quietly accept the dismal civil rights record of Bucharest in exchange for continued Romanian autonomy in foreign affairs? The current administration has already answered this question (in my opinion, correctly) by eliminating most-favored-nation treatment for Romania in trade, because of the regime's poor record in the field of minority emigration. Romania's economic position is such that pressure in this field has a real chance of leading to modified policies in specific subfields without altering the direction of Romanian foreign policy in any decisive way. At the same time, a concerted effort to enhance the considerable fund of good will and admiration of all matters Western should be mustered, despite the efforts of the regime to limit the effects of such efforts.

- *Policies towards the less exposed states.*

While the political and socioeconomic conditions of the GDR, Poland, and Romania provide the United States with certain opportunities for expanded influence, the other states of the region offer fewer chances of this nature, but for different reasons. Bulgaria is closely related to the Soviet Union in a number of areas and public

attitudes there seem more supportive of this connection than is the case anywhere else in the region. The economic performance of Bulgaria is acceptable, and prudent lending in the West has precluded the kinds of indebtedness found in Poland and Romania.[16] US policies cannot produce much autonomy or reduction of Soviet influence under these conditions. By the same token, the relative success of the Hungarian New Economic Mechanism (NEM) and the meaningful political reforms that we have undertaken in that country have produced relatively high levels of legitimacy and a set of policies which make Hungary significantly more livable than the other states of the region.[17] It should be US policy to help maintain this relatively good situation in Hungary, both now and in the post-Kadar era.

Czechoslovakia's economic woes would seem to offer certain opportunities for a wider Western influence, yet these opportunities remain decidedly limited, for political reasons. All available evidence indicates that the traumatic events of 1968 ushered in a period of depoliticization, in which the average person and the intellectual (of the artistic or technical variety) tend to withdraw from public activity in a massive risk-reducing strategy.[18] Given the regime's policy of providing adequate amounts of food and consumer goods to stimulate this depoliticization process, the population is not inclined to react to overtures, however limited, from the West. The opportunities for increased US (and Western) influence here seem rather limited, especially since Czechoslovakia belongs to the Northern Tier and thus receives constant, rigid attention from the Kremlin.

The discussion above has made it clear that US policy in Eastern Europe can only hope to achieve limited results, varying from state to state. Such results may seem meager and, to some, not worth the effort. I would argue that even limited success in a few countries is of considerable value in the contest of US-Soviet relations and the momentous, ongoing political and economic struggle between East and West. The reduction of Soviet influence in the area is a goal with direct effect on US interests in the global competition with the Soviet Union. Furthermore, any improvements in the condition under which people live (be they in the field of economics or human rights) must be welcomed on their own merits. A policy toward the region that is coordinated with our major West European allies will improve the cohesion of NATO—a vital US interest. Together, these objectives should help reduce the value of the East European assistance to the Soviet military and economic pressure on the West—another vital interest for Washington. But above all, a more active US policy in Eastern Europe (or in selected countries therein) would help turn the momentum of this competition away from the static and defensive posture of the West so common during the last quarter-century into a situation in which the Soviet leaders find themselves confronted with a competitor who is superior in all but one field (and in this last field, military power, policies have also been undertaken to redress the developing imbalance in the Soviets' favor)—a competitor who can launch limited political offensives in the Kremlin's front yard instead of merely reacting to Soviet initiatives in Western Europe and elsewhere. The peace offensive can cut both ways, as understood by the earnest protesters and clergymen in the GDR; the incompetence and inefficiency of archaic economic systems in the East can be more forcefully contrasted with dynamic developments in the West; we can let the people and elites of Eastern Europe know that we value their individuality and refuse to see them as mere appendices of the Soviet Union; we can forcefully illustrate to them the burdens of their military programs in Ostmarks, Korunas, and Zlotys (they already know something of this burden in terms of long compulsory service, shortages of food, and shoddy consumer goods which are left after the military procurement system skims off the best products). There is no reason to accept the Soviet definition of peaceful coexistence, which basically allows the Kremlin to compete elsewhere, but withdraws the "first circle"[19] of the Soviet empire from

the contest for individuals' "hearts and minds."

It has been argued that such a forward policy toward Eastern Europe is risky, potentially helping to ensure greater Soviet control over the area, not less. Carried to its logical conclusion, it is argued, active policies directed toward this crucial area of Soviet interest may lead to drastic activities and forceful Soviet countermeasures, including military intervention.[20] It should be made clear (again) that the policies proposed above are not designed to foment revolutions and uprisings in the area, but rather to facilitate developments that are already underway there. Furthermore, the alarmists may want to note that the Soviets have demonstrated great reluctance to intervene militarily in Eastern Europe in recent years, particularly in the "vulnerable" countries discussed above, because such a move would be militarily costly (Poland and Romania) and politically devastating for other interests (especially Soviet use of garrison troops in the GDR, which would undoubtedly inflame West German opinion and reduce the influence the Kremlin may have in Bonn in matters such as technology transfer and economic cooperation). We should simply execute our own version of the concept of "peaceful coexistence": no roll-back of the existing political reality, and certainly no military adventurism, but competition for influence in all other fields—social, economic, cultural, and, thereby, political. We should be realistic about what we can accomplish, but optimistic about doing better than we have until now. Above all, the Soviets should learn that they cannot define the area of struggle exclusively on their own terms.

NOTES

1. Jan Vanous, "East European Economic Slowdown," *Problems of Communism*, 31 (July-August 1982), 1-20.

2. Walker D. Connor, "Dissent in Eastern Europe: A New Coalition?" *Problems of Communism*, 29 (January-February 1980), 1-18.

3. For example, Jeffrey Simon, *Cohesion and Dissension in Eastern Europe: Six Crises* (New York: Praeger, 1983).

4. I have discussed the prospects for change in "The Political Order," in Stephen Fischer-Galati, ed., *Eastern Europe in the 1980's* (Boulder, Westview Press, 1981), especially pp. 161-63.

5. This concern has been demonstrated in recent Soviet policy in Poland; see, for example, Richard D. Anderson, Jr., "Soviet Decision-Making and Poland," *Problems of Communism*, 31 (March-April 1982), 22-37.

6. Ibid.

7. Rebecca V. Strode and Colin S. Gray, "The Imperial Dimension of Soviet Military Power," *Problems of Communism*, 30 (November-December 1981), 1-16.

8. I have drawn upon a large literature on Eastern Europe in producing this summary. One overview is presented by Stephen Fischer-Galati, *Eastern Europe in the 1980's*.

9. This close relationship is organizationally based on the Warsaw Pact and a complex system of weapons procurement, training, and doctrine; for a discussion of this, see, for example, A. Ross Johnson, *The Warsaw Pact: Soviet Military Policy in Eastern Europe* (Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, 1981).

10. Arthur M. Hanhardt, Jr., "The German Democratic Republic," *Current History*, 81 (November 1982), 366-71.

11. I have discussed some of these problems in "The Political Order," in Stephen Fischer-Galati, *Eastern Europe in the 1980's*, ch. 5.

12. On Hungary, see Ivan Volgyes, "Hungary: Socialism with a Nervous Tic," *Current History*, 81 (November 1982), 362-66; on Czechoslovakia, see Vladimir Kusin, "Husak's Czechoslovakia and Economic Stagnation; *Problems of Communism*, 31 (May-June 1982), 24-38; and Jiri Valenta, "The Explosive Soviet Periphery," *Foreign Policy* (Summer 1983), pp. 84-101.

13. Jan Vanous, "East European Economic Slowdown."

14. US policy toward the GDR must be seen in the context of the superpower relationship with the USSR and the regional relationships in Europe. For a perceptive discussion of this, see William E. Griffith, *The Superpowers and Regional Tensions* (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1982).

15. Trond Gilberg, "The Communist Party of Romania," *The Communist Parties of Eastern Europe* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1979), ch. 7.

16. For comparative data, see Jan Vanous, "East European Economic Slowdown."

17. The economic performance of Hungary is illustrated in Ibid.

18. Kusin, "Husak's Czechoslovakia."

19. For a perceptive discussion of US policy toward the USSR in Eastern Europe and elsewhere, see Seweryn Bialer and Joan Afferica, "Reagan and Russia," *Foreign Affairs*, 61 (Winter 1982-83), 249-72.

20. Ibid.