THE EXPLOSIVE SOVIET PERIPHERY

by Jiri Valenta

Despite the destructive fallout from the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and from the ongoing turmoil in Poland, few observers regard crises on the Soviet periphery as lasting threats to world peace. Moscow's claim to a sphere of influence in Eastern Europe is widely, if tacitly, recognized. To many, no truly vital American interests seem at stake in the region, and since the world has survived crises in Eastern Europe in 1956, 1968, and 1980, few fear that the periodic struggles of communist countries at the Soviet periphery against domination by Moscow need seriously damage U.S.-Soviet relations over the long run, much less ignite a superpower conflict.

But a closer look at the record suggests that events in Eastern Europe do have more lasting consequences than many realize. In November 1956 the spirit of Geneva that had developed during the 1955 summit meeting between Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev and President Dwight Eisenhower died in the streets of Budapest, Hungary. In the late 1960s the invasion of Czechoslovakia forced more than a year's delay in the beginning of the SALT talks. During this period, the United States and the Soviet Union perfected the multiple independently targetable missile warheads that have so destabilized the strategic nuclear arms race.

Helmut Sonnenfeldt, then counselor of the Department of State, warned a congressional committee in 1976 of the danger of complacency over crises at the Soviet periphery. Arguing that the Soviets' regular need to use brute force to maintain their

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grip on Eastern Europe could threaten European stability and world peace, he recommended that Washington use peaceful means to help Moscow and the countries of Eastern Europe develop a more mutually acceptable, "organic" relationship to replace a security structure that is now based on Soviet military domination.

More recent events have validated Sonnenfeldt's concerns. As long as the Soviet and East European economies remain stagnant, the Polish crisis will simmer on threateningly. The situation could yet culminate in a national uprising and civil war, forcing a direct military confrontation between the Soviets and the Poles, perhaps engulfing other East European countries, and jeopardizing the security of Western Europe, which the United States is bound by treaty to protect. Meanwhile, the conflict in Afghanistan could spread to neighboring Pakistan, which the United States is also obliged by treaty to defend.

In addition, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan effectively killed the SALT II treaty in the U.S. Senate, and the Soviet-backed coup in Poland caused a substantial delay in the opening of new strategic arms reduction talks. Indeed, these two crises have damaged superpower relations more extensively than any of their predecessors.

Although the United States cannot realistically hope to use military force to prevent the reassertion of Soviet dominion over Eastern Europe or to drive the Soviets out of Afghanistan, it can and must try to prevent actual and potential bloodshed that could escalate into wider conflict. The task is not impossible. During the early 1970s, Soviet and American policy makers were able to defuse one of the oldest and most dangerous sources of conflict in central Europe, namely, the status of Berlin. But to draw lessons about the most effective means of preventive diplomacy, it is necessary to review the record of U.S.-Soviet interaction during five selected crises at the Soviet periphery that involved countries under Leninist regimes at the time of the flare-up—Hungary and Poland in 1956, Czecho-

slovakia in 1968, Afghanistan in 1979, and Poland in 1980–1981.

Soviet Crisis Management

In each of the crises, the Soviets appear to have contemplated using force primarily because they concluded that the leaders of the target country were untrustworthy or unable to maintain and exercise control. Nevertheless, they did not decide to use force directly in each case. An important element of Soviet risk calculation has been the probable U.S. response. In each instance of invasion, the Soviets seem to have assumed rightly (Hungary, Czechoslovakia) or wrongly (Afghanistan) that military resistance would be short-lived or nonexistent and that escalation and substantial U.S. responses were therefore unlikely.

Despite this assumption, Moscow followed a strategy of damage control in all five cases. Even before the three invasions, the Soviets tried to achieve a tacit understanding with the United States either directly, by informing U.S. officials of the forthcoming move, or indirectly, by deploying their armed forces in a manner to signal the United States that the operation would be defensive in nature and not directed against U.S. interests.

In 1968 the message the Soviets sent to President Lyndon Johnson on the eve of the invasion of Czechoslovakia typified such gestures. "We proceed from the fact that the current events should not harm Soviet-American relations, to the development of which the Soviet Government as before attaches great importance."

For similar reasons, the Soviets concentrated in these five crises on capitals and other vital centers and, for a while at least, did not try to occupy territories bordering Western or neutral countries. Soviet signals concerning Afghanistan, however, were unavoidably less intelligible as the Soviet troops were invading a country not party to the Warsaw Pact.

In all five cases the United States unilaterally pursued policies designed to limit escalation of the conflict. Given the military

balance in Europe since the end of World War II, Washington concluded that U.S. policies toward Eastern Europe should rest on an understanding of what the Soviets would accept. No administration since World War II has attempted to call into question the legitimacy of Soviet security interests in Eastern Europe. For domestic reasons, however, U.S. administrations were reluctant to state this underlying precept explicitly until the 1970s. Nor did the United States dispute the special geopolitical importance to the Soviet regime of Afghanistan, which is adjacent to the Soviet Union. Yet the United States failed to prevent violent actions in each case.

The decision to invade was made in three instances—Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Afghanistan. The first two countries had each been under communist rule for at least a decade and were formally tied to the Soviet Union in a military alliance. Established political and economic systems were challenged outside the Party in Hungary and inside the Party in Czechoslovakia. But the Soviets were driven to invade in the two cases by their belief both that the local leadership had become unreliable and incapable of controlling the political situation and that the direction of violent as well as peaceful revolutionary change would eventually threaten the Soviet Union itself.

Moscow's November 4, 1956, invasion of Hungary flowed from several considerations. Reform-minded leaders had replaced Hungary's conservative communist rulers during the popular uprising, which began October 23. The freedom fighters were hunting down Hungarian security police. Meanwhile, thanks to Soviet advisers, dispersed Hungarian military units proved incapable of effectively supporting the rebellion in this small country.

The Soviets could also be reasonably sure that the United States would not become involved militarily, several inflammatory Radio Free Europe (RFE) broadcasts notwithstanding. It is true that these broadcasts probably helped to incite the freedom fighters by creating the false impression

that the United States would aid an anti-Soviet revolt. RFE also called for revolution and opposed new reform-minded Prime Minister Imre Nagy even after he introduced policies that were more liberal than those of his Polish counterpart, Wladyslaw Gomulka, who had undergone his own trial by fire with the Soviets a few days earlier.

But the Soviets undoubtedly observed that when events in Poland approached a flash point in October 1956, then Secretary of State John Foster Dulles publicly declared that the United States would not send armed forces into any East European country because that "would precipitate a full scale world war" and "all these people [East Europeans] would be wiped out." Washington signaled the same position on several occasions as tensions mounted in Hungary.

Washington's concern reached beyond Hungary. At the October 26, 1956, meeting of the National Security Council, Eisenhower asked worriedly whether the Soviet Union might not "be tempted to resort to extreme measures, even global war," and advised that "this possibility [be watched] with the greatest care." And several years after the invasion of Hungary, Eisenhower, though noting that Hungary was shielded from the reach of U.S. forces by neutral Austria and Warsaw Pact member Czechoslovakia, admitted that fear of major conflict with the Soviet Union was the main reason for U.S. inaction. Dulles subsequently added that U.S. military intervention in Hungary would have been "madness" because of the danger of nuclear war and the faint likelihood of success. "The only way we can save Hungary at this time would be through all-out nuclear war. Does anyone in his senses want us to start a nuclear war over Hungary? As for simply sending American divisions into Hungary, they would be wiped out by the superior Soviet ground forces."

Similar considerations encouraged Moscow to cut short what is called the Prague Spring of 1968. Soviet leaders believed that Czechoslovak Communist party chief Alexander Dubcek had permitted reform to spi-

ral out of control. And the Czechs and Slovaks indicated clearly that they would not challenge an invading Soviet force.

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The United States, embroiled in the war in Vietnam, domestic racial disturbances, and presidential politics, sought above all to deprive Moscow of any pretext for blaming it for turmoil in Czechoslovakia. In an effort to avoid the empty promises of the 1950s, U.S. policy makers did not make any supportive statements at all during the Czechoslovak crisis. Johnson ignored events in the country entirely. Senior figures in the State Department made only a few cautious references to developments in Czechoslovakia during the early stages of the Dubcek reforms. Indeed, U.S. acquiescence was conveyed to the Soviets unambiguously through public pronouncements in which American leaders expressed a strong interest in beginning the SALT negotiations.

In addition, policy makers, such as then Secretary of State Dean Rusk, considered Czechoslovakia a troublemaker because of its role as a major supplier of North Vietnam during its war with the United States. Thus U.S. officials provided virtually no diplomatic or economic aid to Dubcek's leadership.

Johnson justified the U.S. failure to assist Czechoslovakia by the absence of "treaty commitments." He also argued that since the Czechs and Slovaks were indicating that they would not fight, they would not welcome Western military assistance. The important point, however, is that Johnson, like Eisenhower 12 years before, withheld U.S. military aid because, as he put it, "such involvement could inflame the situation and engulf the United States in a war with the Soviet Union." Since Czechoslovakia bor-

ders North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) member West Germany, the argument about geographical inaccessibility obviously could not be used.

Such extraordinary U.S. caution was counterproductive. Not that a different U.S. policy would have prevented the invasion. It is doubtful that anything the United States could have done would have deterred the Soviet leadership from sending forces into Czechoslovakia. Nevertheless, the Johnson administration's lack of concern was one circumstance favoring the decision to invade. Even the American decision to avoid warnings or any other vigorous diplomatic actions for the sake of SALT turned out to be short-sighted, since the Soviet invasion forced postponement of the SALT negotiations.

Afghanistan posed different problems to Soviet leaders. In December 1979 Afghanistan lay outside the Warsaw Pact, the Soviet Union's traditional security belt. It was a nonaligned Moslem country with only a one-year-old vaguely Leninist government. In 1979 popular uprisings in the countryside threatened this regime, which was perceived by the Soviets as radical and erratic. Additionally, although Moscow may have seen its invasion as a defensive operation comparable to its interventions in Eastern Europe, the move had offensive aspects with serious implications for traditional U.S. assessments of Soviet intentions. Specifically, did the invasion imply that other non-Warsaw Pact countries at the Soviet periphery could be treated in a similar fashion if they experienced a Leninist revolution?

At the same time, Afghanistan shares with previous target countries important features that are frequently overlooked. Like the East European countries, Afghanistan had a Leninist regime at the time of intervention. And while Afghanistan is not in the Warsaw Pact, the Pact was only one year old in 1956, and at that time relatively few in the West viewed permanent Soviet dominion over Eastern Europe as inevitable.

Moving even more skillfully than it had in Hungary in 1956, Moscow defanged potential organized military opposition by disarming the Afghan elite forces in advance. Nor, despite Afghanistan's proximity to the Persian Gulf, did the Carter administration dispute the country's special geopolitical importance to the Soviet Union. After the 1978 coup, on only one occasion did Washington publicly caution Soviet leaders against military intervention in Afghan affairs—when Assistant Secretary of State Harold Saunders publicly declared in September 1979 that direct Soviet military involvement would be "a matter of deep concern" to the United States.

However, U.S. signals during the month preceding the invasion were contradictory and confused at best, reflecting deep divisions within the administration over policy toward the Soviet Union. Moreover, while the Carter administration knew about the Soviet mobilization of November 1979, policy makers, consumed by the Iranian hostage crisis, failed to interpret their intelligence data correctly. By the time the Soviets were warned—only days before the invasion—their decision had been made. After the fact, President Jimmy Carter followed the pattern of past U.S. administrations: quickly making clear that the United States lacked a military option, while declaring that "preventing nuclear war is the foremost responsibility of the two superpowers." His shocked administration, which had anticipated neither the coup nor the invasion, could only impose some hard penalties, such as the grain embargo, and some meaningless ones, such as the boycott of the 1980 Olympic games in Moscow. Modest aid was reportedly provided to the Afghan rebels as well. The Soviets could not have foreseen such sanctions given the absence of clear warnings well before the invasion.

The Polish Crisis

Poland has always been different. Although the Soviets intimidated the Poles in

1956 and 1980–1981 by conducting maneuvers both at the border and on Polish territory, they did not send in invading forces. The expectation of military resistance has repeatedly given Soviet decision makers pause. Poland is the second largest country in the Warsaw Pact in terms of area, population, and military capacity. Moreover, Moscow did not simply fear but knew in 1956 and in 1980–1981 that the Poles would fight if the Soviets used direct military force. In October 1956 Gomulka, backed by the secret service, most units of Polish armed forces, and armed urban workers, communicated this to the Soviets. Politically, Gomulka was more firmly in charge in 1956 than Hungary's Nagy, Czechoslovakia's Dubcek, or Afghanistan's President Hafizullah Amin.

On balance, the U.S. response to events in Poland also differed sharply from its response to the nearly simultaneous crisis in Hungary. The Eisenhower administration welcomed the new Gomulka government and expressed confidence that it would "strive genuinely to serve the Polish people." In marked contrast with Hungary, the United States offered to provide Poland with unconditional economic assistance immediately after Gomulka took power. U.S. diplomats in Europe were instructed to show greater friendliness. And U.S. policy makers tried to coordinate their new attitude and policy with the actions of the U.S. business and labor communities.

Why did the Eisenhower administration's reactions to the Polish and Hungarian crises differ so? Gomulka's swift consolidation of power and clear signals of readiness to resist the Soviet military, compared with Nagy's inability to control fully events in Hungary, surely shaped American responses. In addition, U.S. policy makers may have been more sensitive to internal developments in Poland than in Hungary or any other East European country because Americans of Polish descent constitute the largest East European ethnic group in the United States. Further, the 1956 Suez crisis occurred shortly after the Polish crisis had

subsided but before the Soviets had decided the fate of Hungary.

In August 1980 the ruling power of Poland's Communist party was deeply shaken, a condition that, history teaches, may draw in the Red Army. But the now-banned independent trade union Solidarity injected a new variable into the decision-making equation—an organized and peaceful workers' revolt. As in 1956, in December 1980 Poland's generals signaled their unwillingness to submit to Soviet armed might. According to Polish sources, some Polish generals warned the Soviets that if they attempted to crush the workers' revolt by force, the Polish military would resist and, if necessary, expand the arena of conflict by fighting their way through East Germany to the West.

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The U.S. response to the evolving situation in Poland contains a strong element of déjà vu. Spokesmen of both the Carter and the Reagan administrations conceded that no military option existed. Yet U.S. support of human rights in Poland during the crisis was stronger than it had been in Czechoslovakia in 1968. Principal policy makers tried not to say too much but to reaffirm the traditional U.S. commitment to human rights and democratic values.

The effectiveness of the American response to the evolving situation in Poland in 1980–1981 was clearly enhanced by the unusually long stretch of time Washington had to formulate policies. Yet the U.S. performance demonstrated that American policy makers had the capacity to learn from the mismanagement of past crises.

Fearing the consequences of a Soviet military move, U.S. officials focused their attention and the attention of their Western allies on the crisis almost immediately after labor strife erupted in the Gdańsk shipyards

in August 1980. Convinced that the United States could not afford to repeat the mistakes of the Czechoslovak and Afghan crises, Carter administration officials drew up in October 1980 a list of sanctions to impose on Moscow if the Soviets invaded.

When the Soviets deployed forces along Poland's borders in December 1980 and an invasion appeared imminent, Carter pledged U.S. economic assistance. He further stated that the United States had no desire to exploit the crisis but warned that an invasion of Poland would have "most negative consequences" for U.S.-Soviet relations. Carter also sent the late Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev a direct, private message stressing the serious consequences of an invasion and made clear that if the Red Army moved in, America would transfer advanced weaponry to China.

The Carter administration mounted a worldwide campaign to focus attention on Poland, disseminating information about the Soviet military build-up as widely as possible, and alerting Solidarity leaders about Soviet preparations—of which they were unaware. In his recently published memoirs, former National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski reveals that with Carter's approval, he even consulted with Pope John Paul II, who was no doubt in touch with Solidarity leaders. As a result, the Soviets found it very difficult to achieve the strategic surprise that contributed so heavily to their successes in Czechoslovakia and, initially, in Afghanistan. It therefore seems plausible that U.S. policies contributed to the Soviets' ultimately decisive uncertainties. Moreover, the pre-emptive strategy helped not only to deter the Soviets, but also to calm the situation inside Poland by informing Polish radicals that the chances of an invasion, which they had discounted, were alarmingly high.

The Reagan administration, together with its NATO allies, continued the Carter administration's efforts to deter an invasion both by closely monitoring the movement of Soviet troops and by linking restraint to effective arms-control negotiations and eco-

nomic aid—extending credits, delivering foodstuffs through the Catholic Relief Services, and rescheduling Poland's official debt for 1981. Thus it appears that the Reagan administration's efforts, too, together with other factors, helped to deter the Soviet use of direct force in Poland.

Yet the Soviet-backed operation by Polish military and security forces proceeded. Neither administration managed to design a flexible strategy of positive and negative incentives to promote a truly peaceful resolution of the Polish crisis. Moreover, President Ronald Reagan's decision to lift the grain embargo in spring 1981 contradicted the Carter administration's decision to maintain the embargo until the end of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. The revocation of the grain embargo may have signaled to Moscow that, despite its increasingly strong anti-Soviet rhetoric, the Reagan administration would not continue its harshest, and most costly, penalties for long.

A Policy of Crisis Prevention

What overall lessons can be derived? During the five crises the United States and the Soviet Union have acted in accordance with unstated rules of engagement and have recognized the need to prevent escalation of local conflicts. Thus in the crises involving Eastern Europe, not only has the United States not seriously questioned the legitimacy of Soviet security interests in Eastern Europe, but it also has refused to provide military aid to the local resistance. On the contrary, it has sent signals indicating that it would not intervene militarily. In the case of Afghanistan, where neither the interests nor the intentions of either party were clearly defined and U.S. policy makers thought that their Soviet counterparts had broken an informal understanding, the United States responded differently and reportedly provided some military aid to the Afghan resistance after the invasion. But the superpowers' recognition of the need to limit their involvements in local conflicts cannot be relied on indefinitely.

Both countries need new, imaginative methods to defuse such crises.

The United States must concentrate on preventing spasms of violence on the Soviet periphery that can at the very least seriously damage East-West relations and possibly spark wider military conflict. Another clear lesson is that prior to and during future crises in Eastern Europe, Washington should forswear the empty rhetoric of the crusade for democracy, since it may create the impression, as in Hungary in 1956, that the United States is willing to do more than it actually can in Eastern Europe. But U.S. policy makers should also strive to avoid conveying impressions of indifference (1968) and vacillation (1979). Indecision, weakness, and signs of division within the U.S. government are skillfully exploited by the Soviet Union. Inconsistent signals and policies and improvised responses can harm U.S. interests.

Confrontation can be contemplated only in very extreme cases where vital U.S. security interests are directly threatened, for example, by Soviet nuclear deployments near U.S. borders. In that event, American leaders must be prepared, as they were during the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, to back words with deeds. History suggests that it is more effective to say very little—and even to make the Soviet leadership guess what the response will be—than to be inconsistent. Incoherent policies leave the Soviets with the impression that the United States is neither a formidable rival nor a potential partner.

Since future crises in communist countries peripheral to the USSR are inevitable, the United States must also concentrate on short-term preventive diplomacy. Washington does not have a military option in Eastern Europe, but it does have a number of economic and diplomatic instruments at its disposal. Their skillful application could moderate aggressive Soviet behavior. In addition, the United States urgently needs the best possible collection and evaluation of intelligence. The more warning time the U.S. government has, the more effective its

policies will be, as demonstrated by the performance with regard to Poland of Carter and Reagan in 1980–1981. In spite of its damaging consequences, the Soviet choice to intervene indirectly was less destructive to Poland, as well as to U.S.-Soviet relations, than invasion would have been.

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Although a bilateral policy of crisis prevention will be difficult to achieve given the Soviet Union's refusal even to discuss the issue, some tacit understanding with the Kremlin may be possible. In 1962 at the United Nations, the Soviet Union, Hungary, and the United States worked out such an understanding, ending a political boycott of then Hungarian Premier Janos Kadar's postinvasion regime in exchange for internal liberalization in that country. Subsequently, Kadar's liberal regime became one of the most popular in Eastern Europe.

An effective policy of crisis prevention, however, cannot ignore longer-term measures. The following considerations can provide a framework for American strategies designed to help Moscow's relations with its neighbors onto a sounder footing, starting with Poland.

The United States cannot hope to alter the Soviet East European security system, in which Poland plays a crucial role. The challenge lies in convincing the Soviets that the United States does not intend to try. The Soviets need to be made aware that the turmoil in Poland stems mainly from domestic problems associated with an overcentralized and inflexible political and economic system. The resulting endemic inefficiencies bred the economic and political prob-

lems that reached critical proportions in 1980–1981. The Soviets must be convinced that, left simmering, the Polish crisis could boil over into nearby countries also facing serious economic ills and pose new threats to Eastern Europe's stability.

Conversely, a U.S. policy aimed at exacerbating Soviet problems in Eastern Europe, using punitive measures to undermine "the legitimacy of the Communist regime in Poland," could escalate conflict. Such an approach would only make sense if relations between the superpowers became irreversibly hostile. Since U.S.-Soviet relations truly are a mix of conflict and cooperation—at least in the realm of arms control, where both countries have a stake in avoiding nuclear confrontation—such total hostility is not desirable.

Some might plausibly contend that the Soviet position in Eastern Europe is so vulnerable that a policy of unrelenting antagonism might weaken the Soviet imperium. But success could push the Soviet Union into a corner, precipitate a Soviet backlash, and perhaps bring on an East-West confrontation. A heavier Soviet military and economic burden in Eastern Europe would not hurt the policy makers of the communist countries. Nor would it lead to the economic collapse of the Soviet empire or weaken the Soviet hold over Eastern Europe.

Such an approach would also create problems for the Western alliance. NATO and Japan most surely would refuse to cooperate. Resistance to the U.S. decision in summer 1982 to block the gas pipeline project between the USSR and Western Europe is a case in point. Joint planning concerning credit policies and the exportation of strategic goods, within the framework suggested by the June 1982 Versailles economic summit conference, is necessary for an effective U.S. strategy toward the USSR and Eastern Europe. The leadership change in the Soviet Union may offer the United States an opportunity to reach a wider understanding concerning the countries on the Soviet periphery. Although the

Soviets indicated in December 1982 that they are not yet prepared to seek a face-saving settlement in Afghanistan leading to Afghan neutrality and the withdrawal of Soviet troops, they may change their minds if the struggle continues. Meanwhile, Soviet General Secretary Yuri Andropov may be prepared to compromise on Poland.

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Andropov would not be the first Soviet official with a KGB background to favor looser controls over Eastern Europe. His cruel and much more feared predecessor as KGB chief, Lavrenti Beria, advocated a liberal course in East Germany and Hungary after Joseph Stalin's death in 1953. Andropov's previous experience in East European affairs, notably colored by his support of Kadar's liberalization in Hungary and by his responsibility as KGB chief, has given him a very accurate picture of the depth of the current economic crisis in Poland and elsewhere in Eastern Europe. Like Beria, he may fear that without some liberalization, sooner or later there could be a dangerous explosion in Eastern Europe. The Kremlin is facing the most serious economic crisis in the region since World War II, and for the Soviets this crisis undermines Eastern Europe's effectiveness as a security buffer. The United States has at least marginal leverage over the Soviets now and should not hesitate using it.

In making overtures, the United States should proceed cautiously, open to constructive dialogue yet without grand expectations. Positive incentives for cooperation should be held up side by side with penalties for intransigence. Although this is not the time to ease U.S. sanctions, since martial law was formally suspended only on December 31, 1982, the moment may be forthcoming. Were Andropov seriously willing

to pursue a more pragamatic, moderate course in Poland—leading to relaxation of oppression as well as a Polish government dialogue and compromise with Solidarity and the Roman Catholic church—Reagan should be prepared to move forward with conciliatory measures.

A twofold policy of containment and dialogue—détente with deterrence, or what former President Richard Nixon has called hard-headed détente—might have impact. The Soviets would have to accept a moderate, pragmatic course in Poland and to permit the reform of outmoded systems in at least some East European countries. In return for this flexibility they would obtain less volatile allies as well as indirect Western aid. The former are also in the U.S. interest as well since crises at the Soviet periphery have tended to harm crucial arms-control negotiations and raise international tensions. With stronger East-West economic relations Soviet diplomatic relations with the United States could improve. The reforms would strengthen the East European economies while making them more consonant with Western societies. This development might induce a fuller and freer exchange with the West, advance the domestic liberalization process, and promote greater U.S. objectives in Eastern Europe.

The new Soviet general secretary may reject new U.S. proposals for Poland. If so, they can remain on the table for consideration at a future time when Andropov, who has yet to consolidate his position, or his possible successors may be compelled to compromise. In the meantime, such proposals can put the USSR on the defensive and help rebuild the morale of the Polish people. A new strategy can also demonstrate to the American people, NATO, and Japan that the Reagan administration is willing to break with the dangerous, rigid positions that have damaged the superpower relationship during the last few years. Thus grappling seriously with crises on the Soviet periphery may place a new and more realistic form of détente within reach.