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De Soth,

ARTICLE IN 'COMMENTARY'

- Patrick Colgan

... I attach a copy of an article in the August edition of Commentary which may interest the Prime Minister. It is implicitly an answer to our friend Mr Fukuyama, though it makes a number of other points too.

Tom.
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The Dangers Beyond Containment

Patrick Glynn

SINCE the dawn of the 20th century, Western societies have recurrently passed through periods when they imagined that the problems of international politics had either been solved or were imminently on their way to solution. These periods have been times of powerful optimism, bordering on euphoria. They have been marked by certain common themes: a belief in the ascendancy of economic forces over political and military ones; a belief in the obsolescence of major war; and a belief in the unprecedented and irreversible character of contemporary developments, rendering the more sobering lessons of history, even very recent history, irrelevant.

The first such period, extending from 1906 to 1914, culminated in "Norman Angellism," a European-wide political movement on the eve of World War I, animated by the faith that major war had become cost-ineffective and hence irrational in modern times. The second period of high international hopes ran for nearly twenty years, between 1919 and 1939, peaking in 1928 when the major nations—including all the future belligerents of World War II—signed the Kellogg-Briand Pact, forswearing forever the use of war as "an instrument of national policy." The third bout of euphoria was brief—a matter of mere months after the Hiroshima explosion and V-J day in 1945—and was cut short by Soviet moves in Iran, Poland, and elsewhere. The fourth, also brief, arose in the mid-1950's, following the death of Stalin and the first postwar summit meeting, producing the famous but short-lived "spirit of Geneva." The fifth extended unevenly from the mid-1960's (when, for example, strategist Thomas Schelling pronounced the "cold war" to be "dead") until the late 1970's, with a peak under Richard Nixon in 1972. The most recent such period began in the closing months of the Reagan administration and is overtaking us with blinding speed today.

In the past each of these periods has been brought to an end by a major war or a series of grave international crises. Indeed, each has con-

tained within it the seeds of its own destruction. In each case, influenced by their optimism about the international future, Western governments have pursued unguarded policies, destined to make the world a more dangerous place.

Though the present generation seems confident that it can escape this harsh verdict of history—and though one recent writer has even declared an "end to history"—there is every reason to suppose that the outcome in our own time will be the same. Today the conviction is nigh universal that the world is becoming a safer place. But as in the past, this very conviction is helping to make the world more dangerous. For with a blitheness equalling the folly of any earlier generation, we are preparing to disassemble, piece by piece, the structure that has guaranteed peace for upward of forty years.

The proximate source of the current Western optimism, of course, lies in the bold foreign and domestic policies of Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev. But the present Western mood also has specific and complex roots in our own political culture. To understand the reception that Gorbachev has been accorded, we must begin searching closer to home.

In examining the current bout of euphoria, perhaps the most curious and surprising thing we find is that it is coming more from the Right than from the Left. In part, this development is an outgrowth of the domestic political battle. For at least a decade, the American Right has been using the theme of optimism, rather successfully, as a tactic against the American Left. The Reagan presidency was almost synonymous with optimism, and this was no accident. For under Reagan, optimism was more than a mood; it was a political weapon. In 1980, Reagan used optimism to defeat Jimmy Carter, who had alienated many voters by his sour disposition and his famous sermon on "malaise." In 1984, Reagan revived the theme again with the slogan, "It's morning in America." George Bush was careful to deploy optimism, with essentially equal success, against Michael Dukakis in 1988.

As superficial as it might seem at first glance, the debate over optimism and pessimism has not been without seriousness or substance. At a certain level, it has been a debate about the future of the West. At a time when the dominant view among

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NATO and the influence of the United States in Europe, when both were in serious question. Had any one of these issues—or for that matter a number of others—been decided differently, the future of democracy and of capitalism might look very different today.

The point is that the effect of these decisions was to maintain the shield of military power and alliances behind which Western societies are free to prosper. The democratic idea may have triumphed—or at least for the moment survived. But there is a tendency today to forget that this idea has large armies, alliances, and a massive nuclear arsenal to defend it. Without such appurtenances, the democratic idea would unfortunately find itself as defenseless against the dark forces of the age as did the slaughtered Chinese students in Tiananmen Square.

Indeed, as the recent events in China have so dramatically reminded us, endings are not always happy, and trends in the Communist world and elsewhere are not always as predictable as we might hope. Nor is it self-evident that international trends today are universally in our favor. On the one hand, Communist ideology is said to be dying. On the other hand, Mikhail Gorbachev, the avatar of this supposedly dead ideology, may be the most popular man in Europe. On the one hand, the Communist world is in deep turmoil, and the Soviet empire seems shaken to its very foundations. On the other hand, NATO is in deep crisis, narrowly saved from rupture by deft public-relations maneuvering on the part of the President of the United States. On the one hand, Poland and Hungary seem to be edging toward more pluralistic domestic political arrangements. But on the other hand, West Germany, whose strategic position in Europe is far more vital and whose economy is a far more glittering prize than either of these two bankrupt socialist regimes, is edging away from its Western partners and moving toward ever closer cooperation with the Soviet Union and the East bloc. The conventional wisdom is that Communism is disintegrating, but in reality it is an open question which is disintegrating faster: the Soviet empire, or the Western alliance system which has contained this empire for the past forty-plus years.

THE notion that we can easily afford to dispense with this alliance system is among the most dangerous of the many illusions now abroad. One unfortunate consequence of the present euphoria is the emergence of the myth of an “ordinary” or “natural” American foreign policy unlike the one we have pursued for the past forty-odd years. One commentator, for example, predicts the resurgence of a “19th-century-like world,” when the United States “lived rather easily” with the “endless ups and downs” of global politics minus any alliances or extensive military power. Another commentator notes that the large military we have maintained for the past

forty years is “something entirely new in American history.”

True, for most of our history we did not maintain a large military establishment or establish alliances with foreign powers. But for most of our history the average Atlantic crossing took in excess of a week, there were no airplanes, and the Panama Canal did not exist. For most of our history, foreign trade (i.e., merchandise imports plus exports) stood at something less than 8 percent of U.S. GNP. Perhaps most important, for most of our history, Great Britain headed a mighty empire and was capable by itself of guaranteeing the European, and the world, balance of power.

It is a fact that we did not maintain a significant military establishment even after World War I, but to the degree that we failed to do so, it was a massive blunder. The disappearance of American power from Europe at the end of World War I, and the devolution of American naval power in the Pacific owing to ill-advised arms-control agreements in the 1920's and 1930's, were probably the two major, long-term causes of World War II.

We should not forget, indeed, that both world wars of this century originated largely because of the failure of democracies to form and maintain strong alliances—France and Britain before World War I and America, France, and Britain before World War II. In short, nothing is more likely to set the stage for World War III than the slow dissolution of NATO.

To add to our sense of paradox, the crisis in NATO today has been precipitated in large part by heightened West German anxieties about nuclear war. The contradiction implicit in West German worries about short-range Lance missiles, armed with nuclear warheads under the control of the United States, betrays the inconsistency in present-day thinking about the future. On the one hand, such missiles are now said to be less necessary or even unnecessary because we are moving toward a more peaceful world. On the other hand, West Germans are said to be extremely anxious because such missiles would strike on or near their nation's territory “in the event of war.” Yet the only eventuality that would occasion the use of Lance missiles would be a Soviet attack on the Federal Republic of Germany. West German fears are themselves evidence of a certain subliminal undercurrent of doubt beneath all the heady optimism.

There is a real change here from the early 1980's when individual leaders mastered events, reversing seemingly irreversible currents of history. This was true not merely of Ronald Reagan but also clearly of Margaret Thatcher, and even of Helmut Kohl, whose admirable resolve in the face of overwhelming political pressure made possible NATO's successful counterdeployment of INF missiles in 1983. In the late 1980's, however, events are overmastering Western leaders. Nothing showed this more clearly than the NATO summit in late May.

Given the gravity of NATO's crisis, President Bush's surprise proposal linking U.S. troop cuts with more-than-matching troop cuts by the USSR was understandably greeted with relief. Nor was the proposal, in essence, a bad one: it slowed the trend toward denuclearization in Germany by linking further negotiations on theater-nuclear arms to cuts in conventional weapons, and it slowed the trend toward isolationism in the United States by linking cuts in U.S. troops to far greater cuts by the Soviets. But clearly, the President had been compelled, by a combination of West German public opinion and the continuous harassment of the U.S. media, into making a dramatic initiative, which included concessions (e.g., on NATO aircraft) that he would otherwise have probably tried to avoid. Prime Minister Thatcher emerged from that meeting with oddly diminished stature, apparently helpless in the face of developments over which she obviously had no real say or control. The buffeting of Helmut Kohl by public opinion in his own country, meanwhile, was both comic and sad.

SKEPTICS of the present détente sometimes compare it with the détente of the 1970's. Yet the differences—both in the world and in Western consciousness—clearly go much deeper. Of the euphoric periods of the past, the present era bears perhaps the closest resemblance to the 1920's, when Western leaders found themselves similarly helpless before powerful currents of pacifistic public opinion. Then, too, Western economies were prospering. Then, too, there was every reason to believe that humanity's future was bright. Then, too, the West's major enemy appeared to be mellowing, seeking accommodation and integration into Europe. Then, too, détente was promoted by basically conservative politicians—figures like Austen Chamberlain in Britain, and Warren Harding, Calvin Coolidge, and Herbert Hoover in the United States. And then, too, statesmanship was a matter of highly public meetings—a matter of summitry or “conference” diplomacy—that became hopelessly entangled with public relations.

During the late 1920's, as at present, there were leaders—for one, the French Foreign Minister, Aristide Briand—who understood plainly enough the underlying realities of power politics and the military requirements of Western security. However, like President Bush in Brussels, Briand was forced to explicate the problems of arms using the language of disarmament, and to communicate the imperatives of security using the platitudes of peace. The result of all this was that Western diplomats produced effects that were largely the opposite of what they thought they were achieving.

In October 1925, the foreign ministers of England, France, and Germany met in the lakeside town of Locarno, Switzerland—along with delegations from Belgium and Italy—to conclude a

series of pacts guaranteeing the Franco-German and Belgo-German frontiers. As a result of Locarno, Germany was permitted to join the League of Nations. The Rhineland was eventually emptied of occupation soldiers, and the Allied Control Commission which had enforced German disarmament was removed. These were hailed (even by so prescient an observer as Winston Churchill) as moves normalizing relations with Germany. What Locarno really did, however, was inadvertently to open the way to the resurgence and rearmament of Germany by removing some of the key mechanisms that had enforced its disarmament in the wake of the war.

There are striking similarities between the diplomacy of the German Foreign Minister Gustav Stresemann in the 1920's and that of Mikhail Gorbachev today. Celebrated in his time as a great peacemaker and humanitarian—he actually shared the Nobel Peace Prize with Briand in 1926—Stresemann was revealed years later by his private papers to have been pursuing a cynical policy of *realpolitik*, designed to revive Germany as a military force and a great power. One major aspect of this policy was systematic strategic deception concerning Germany's rearmament—including a secret and illegal military collaboration with Soviet Russia designed to set the stage for the reconstruction of German armed forces forbidden under Versailles.

Much as Gustav Stresemann sought to disassemble the Versailles agreement that contained Weimar Germany, so Mikhail Gorbachev is seeking to disassemble the alliance structure that has contained the Soviet Union. Indeed, one great incongruity in Gorbachev's profile as peacemaker has been the intensity of the Soviet campaign against the Atlantic alliance. Over the past several months, the Soviets have done everything imaginable within a framework of détente—and much that seems inconsistent with détente—to disrupt U.S. relations with West Germany.

In mid-May, while on a visit to Bonn, Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze went so far as to threaten deliberate Soviet violation of the INF treaty—halting required destruction of SS-23 missiles—if West Germany permitted NATO to proceed with modernization of the Lance (a missile clearly permitted under the INF agreement). For those who recalled the sustained Soviet campaign of intimidation against NATO during the Euromissile episode of the early 1980's, Shevardnadze's remarks conveyed a peculiar sense of *déjà vu*. Even the White House was moved to observe that the threat made “clear that Soviet ‘new thinking’ has not yet overcome the old.”

What could be behind this Soviet preoccupation with the Lance missile? Are we seeing, amid all the sophistication and “new thinking” of the Gorbachev era, a resurgence of the traditional Soviet neurosis, the legendary and insatiable Soviet sense of insecurity? Yet no one could seriously suppose that 88 Lance missile launchers threaten

the Soviet Union—especially when we know from German complaints that these missiles would strike only West or East German territory anyway. Notably, Shevardnadze continued to harp on the missiles after the NATO summit, and Gorbachev was careful to bring them up during his state visit to Bonn. Why? The only logical answer is that Moscow understands these missiles to be a supreme irritant in West Germany's relations with the alliance. By whatever levers are at its disposal, the Soviet government seems determined to split West Germany off from the protection afforded by NATO and the United States.

GORBACHEV'S metaphor for NATO is the Rape of Europa. "There is an old Greek myth about the abduction of Europe," he writes in *Perestroika*. "The fairy-tale subject has suddenly become very topical today. It goes without saying that Europe as a geographical notion will stay in place. Sometimes, however, one has the impression that the independent policies of West European nations have been abducted, that they are being carried off across the ocean; that national interests are farmed out under the pretext of protecting security."

In Gorbachev's telling of this myth, the United States is cast in the figure of Zeus, stealing away the sovereignty of European states across the Atlantic. But anyone who has seen the great Titian painting of Europa riding the bull might suspect that Gorbachev has at times imagined himself in the god's role—particularly with regard to that quintessential Lady Europa, the Federal Republic of Germany.

To return once more to the 1920's, it is useful to recall that it was cooperation with Germany, then in a victimized condition, that gave the Soviet Union its start in life—not just militarily but economically. In 1922, to the astonishment of the international community, the USSR and Germany concluded the Treaty of Rapallo under which the two nations forgave each other's financial claims and restored normal relations. Suspected even at the time of including secret military and economic protocols, the treaty was a critical turning point in the history of the Soviet regime. At a moment of military weakness and total economic collapse for the USSR, Rapallo inaugurated a nearly decade-long period of economic and secret military collaboration (some Russo-German military activity even predated Rapallo). While America and Europe provided the Soviet Union with food relief to fend off starvation, Germany began the task of restructuring the Soviet economy and equipping the military.*

The gains for Germany were largely illicit. Forbidden under the Versailles treaty to maintain a real military or navy, Germany was able to train the Reichswehr on Soviet soil and produce forbidden weapons in the munitions plants left over from czarist times.

But the gains for the Soviet Union were even greater. The Bolsheviks, having essentially brought the Russian economy to a standstill through arbitrary and foolish economic policies—inflating the ruble to zero, doubling or tripling wages, placing unskilled proletarians in charge of factories, all of which caused a radical drop in productivity and in production itself and prompted skilled managers to flee to the countryside or abroad—were able to draw on German technological and managerial expertise to restart their industry. By the early 1920's, roughly 2,000 German engineers were employed in the Soviet Union. Factories began operating again, and the economy again began to grow.

The great German arms manufacturer Krupp became deeply involved in the effort, sending men and equipment to plough 65,000 acres in the Caspian steppe and providing the Soviet Union with the latest Krupp locomotives. At the same time, Krupp technicians supervised the production of artillery shells at Russian munitions plants. Also, submarine pens were built in Leningrad, and according to at least one source, submarines were constructed. Perhaps the most active production was in military aircraft. Remarkably, the world's first all-metal airplane was built in the Soviet Union, during the 1920's, at the aircraft factory at Fili, under the illegal supervision of the famous German firm Junkers, ten years ahead of equivalent American prototypes. In all, the arrangement amounted to a significant transfer of military and civilian technology to the Soviet Union.

It should not surprise us, therefore, that the Soviet Union, now in another economic crisis, should once again look to Germany for help in recovery. During Gorbachev's recent visit to Bonn, the economic relationship received even more attention than arms control. That relationship is growing. Already West German companies have 70 joint ventures in the Soviet Union. The two countries signed twelve co-production agreements in 1988, bringing the number of such agreements to 30. Mercedes-Benz is negotiating to build a Mercedes 190 plant in the Soviet Union, and programs have been established in West Germany to train hundreds of Soviet managers and engineers.

Once again, too, as in the 1920's, the Soviet Union is playing on German resentment and vulnerability, though resentment and vulnerability of a different kind. As an economic superpower—its GNP nearly two-thirds those of France and England combined—and in a condition of total military dependence upon the United States, West Germany today is moved by both fear and

* See Anthony C. Sutton, *Western Technology and Soviet Economic Development*, 3 vols. (Hoover Institution Press, 1968-73), and, among other sources, Barton Whaley, *Secret German Rearmament 1919-1939* (University Publications of America, 1984).

wounded pride. The fear is linked to the evident unavailability of the American security guarantee, as shown by the INF treaty and America's behavior regarding Pershing Ia's. The pride is a natural expression of West Germany's national character and a natural outgrowth of its economic success. Both forces—fear and pride—are leading West Germany to attempt to use its massive economic wealth to solve its security dilemma (which in the wake of the INF treaty no longer seems soluble by military means) through economic appeasement.

At the root of this policy is the hope that economic power alone can be deployed to democratize Hungary and Poland, and perhaps eventually other nations in Central Europe, and to tame the Soviet Union. Yet freed of its bond with Washington, West Germany will not become stronger. On the contrary, given the wild disparity between its economic and military power, either West Germany will become totally subservient to Moscow, a kind of cash cow to be milked ruthlessly for Soviet and East-bloc economic recovery, or Bonn may overreach, in which case the danger of war would arise again. For in a Europe emptied of U.S. military power, and in which West Germany had become deeply involved in the internal affairs of Poland and Hungary, instability in those latter countries might well lead Moscow to declare—whether with genuine indignation or as a pretext—that the Germans had gone too far, and that the time had finally come to move across the Elbe.

ONE reason we may have not been as concerned as we might be about these developments is that we are by and large neglecting to focus on the economic dimension of Western security. Yet NATO's purpose has not simply been to deter Soviet attack; it has also been to deny the financial and technological resources of Europe to the Soviet military machine. Today opinion leaders in the West are almost certainly underestimating the degree to which Soviet economic development has always been essentially parasitic—i.e., dependent on Western technology, obtained by both legal and illegal means—and the degree to which the confrontation of the Reagan era closed off avenues to this technology.

Not that the technology controls enforced by institutions like the Coordinating Committee (CoCom)—the informal organization including most NATO members that attempts to police the eastward technology flow—were ever entirely or even mostly effective. But there are degrees of success, and clearly it was much more difficult for the Soviet Union to gain access to Western technology during the Reagan years—especially after the tightening of CoCom's policies in the early 1980's—than during the previous decade.

The assumption today is that the Soviet Union must liberalize or at least reform internally to begin to generate its own indigenous technolo-

gies. But even if the Soviet Union does succeed in reforming its technological infrastructure, such reforms will be years in producing real effects. In the meantime, there is a pressing need to obtain sophisticated military technologies and to increase hard-currency earnings in order to keep up with Western military developments and keep the Soviet empire afloat. No wonder, then, that Moscow has thus far shown no real disposition to abandon its old habits of acquiring technology largely from abroad—by both trading and stealing.

According to recent speeches by both the Director of Central Intelligence and the former Deputy Director, Soviet espionage to gain technology has in fact increased under Gorbachev. Thousands of Soviet and East-bloc personnel are involved in operations to gather Western high technology. The Soviet KGB and GRU (military intelligence) actually work from massive and detailed lists, specifying particular items produced by particular companies, for which the central authorities have determined the Soviet military has a need. The methods are old-fashioned—bribery, blackmail, even obtaining goods literally burglarized from firms in Silicon Valley.

Since at least the 1930's, American officials have intermittently entertained ambitions of "opening up" the Soviet Union. Such ambitions seem widespread today. What we are failing to grasp, perhaps in consequence, is the degree to which Gorbachev is seeking in his own fashion to "open up" the West—to gain access to Western capital, Western technology, and even Western military secrets which have been closed off in so many ways as a result of a half-decade of explicit confrontation. If the boundaries between alliances are loosened; if contacts with Western scientists can be expanded; if new joint ventures can be concluded (hundreds of such ventures have already been registered and hundreds more are under negotiation); if Western technology restrictions can be loosened—then the avenues, overt and covert, legal and illegal, through which the Soviet Union can gain access to technology, including the most militarily sensitive technologies, will greatly expand.*

Détente, in fact, serves a threefold goal for Moscow. First, by improving the tone of relations with the West, the Soviet Union is likely to forestall deployment of the new generation of high-tech Western weapons. Second, by opening up the West it will gain direct access to Western technology (and thereby may even begin designing weapons which we ourselves, moved by détente and budgetary considerations, will not deploy). And finally, by disrupting the Western alliance system, it will gain freer access to the rich finan-

* For an assessment of Western vulnerability to such Soviet operations, see David G. Wigg, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Policy Analysis, "Realism and East-West Policy: The Economic Dimension," speech before the American Bar Association Conference on International Economics and National Security, May 10, 1989.

cial and technological resources of Western Europe and perhaps eventually Japan and the Pacific Rim.

OF COURSE it is the conjunction of dramatic external and internal changes that has persuaded many Western observers that what we are confronting is not merely a tactical shift in Soviet policy, however dramatic, but a fundamental change in the objectives of the Soviet state. "If we were simply witnessing a new flexibility and imagination in Soviet foreign policy," Graham Fuller has written, "while life went on as usual back in the gray confines of the Soviet state, then we would be justified in believing that we were simply confronted with much more capable—and dangerous—tactical Soviet skills abroad. But this time, it is decidedly *not* business as usual back in Moscow."

Yet even here our memories may be betraying us. "If one studies the Soviet government under Lenin carefully (and this characteristic has persisted down to our own days)," Adam Ulam noted many years ago, "one will come up with a startling conclusion: *it is in times of crisis, of real emergency, that it has allowed most freedom and tolerated dissent.*"

Periods of internal reform and even liberalization are hardly without precedent in Soviet history. As Edward Jay Epstein reminds us in his recent book, *Deception*, even Stalin instituted a series of reforms which he called "reconstruction" or *perestroika*, in the mid-1930's. At that time the Soviet dictator even promulgated a constitution promising American-style liberties. *Time* then reported: "Last week Russia, having come of age, allowed her people all the fun and trapping of a real national election . . . to vote not in public by a show of hands but in private and in a red-curtained booth, by secret ballot, according to their own convictions."

Still, the period to which Gorbachev has obviously paid closest attention is the period of the New Economic Policy during the early 1920's. It is interesting that in Gorbachev's book *Perestroika* nearly all the references to Lenin's vast corpus of writings are taken from the 1921-24 period. Indeed, there is every reason to believe that this period of Soviet history serves as a conscious model for Gorbachev's own endeavors.

From the West's standpoint, this is not a hopeful conclusion. It is true that the Bolsheviks under Lenin decided that for a time they needed capitalists, both indigenous and foreign, to rebuild their economy. It is true that a certain amount of small entrepreneurship was permitted. It is true that restrictions on civil liberties were markedly loosened. But in the end all this was reversed—the liberties reneged upon, the capitalists (eventually including American firms like RCA, General Electric, DuPont, International Harvester, and Ford) expelled, most of the foreign factories effectively confiscated.

There is a vague sense today among left-leaning Western Sovietologists and certain Communist-party spokesmen in the Soviet Union that if Lenin had survived the NEP would have stayed in place, but there is also a great deal of evidence to suggest that the whole business was designed to be temporary from the first. "This is not an attempt to restore the capitalist class," the *Red Gazette* of Petrograd noted in December 1921, "but to adapt it to our constructive work."

Then as now there was bitter controversy in the party about the reforms. But to conceive the NEP as a temporary compromise, a temporary alliance with the doomed capitalists, was altogether characteristic of Lenin, who after all was preaching in 1920 that the "strictest loyalty to the ideas of Communism must be combined with the ability to make all the necessary practical compromises, to 'tack,' to make agreements, zigzags, retreats, and so on." Indeed, he wrote, "the entire history of Bolshevism, both before and after the October Revolution, is full of instances of changes of tack, conciliatory tactics, and compromises with other parties, including bourgeois parties!" (This may be precisely what Gorbachev means in *Perestroika* by Lenin's inspiration, his "lofty moral strength.") As for the foreign capitalists, "They are a foreign thing in our system," said Lenin, ". . . but whoever wants to learn must pay." "Afterward," he noted, "we shall get it back with interest."

JUST as the Soviet economy has stood in a parasitic relation to the West, so the Communist-party apparatus has stood in an essentially parasitic relationship to Soviet society as a whole; and herein may lie the link between domestic and foreign-policy reforms. The situation of the USSR today can be likened to that of a man whose youthful body was invaded by a powerful parasite which took command of his system, injecting poison and drawing off the body's vital energies as it spread its control. At first, under the influence of this parasite, the young man's body actually grew stronger—as people sometimes do from their battle with a terrible, debilitating disease. Thus it was during the Civil War and later the Stakhanovite period under Stalin, when through forced collectivization, forced industrialization, and a thousand other horrible expedients—plus a good deal of Western help—the Communist party dragged feudal Russia by the scruff of the neck into the modern world. The same basic pattern of strength rising out of tribulation persisted during World War II.

Over time, however, this body has simply worn down. It has aged. The poisoning of the parasite and the drawing off of vital energies have become too much for it. As of now, it can barely engage in productive labor, let alone take on new exertions or challenges. This social debilitation is occurring, moreover, at a moment when other nations of the world—led by the sustained U.S.

recovery of the 1980's—are undergoing rapid growth and blindingly rapid technological transformation.

What is dying, in short, is not so much Communism as the host organism. For seventy years, the Communist parasite has depended upon the body of socialist society for nourishment and to exert its will in the world. Now, to borrow a phrase from W.B. Yeats, it is "fastened to a dying animal." If this animal dies, then it dies.

Consequently, the parasite needs to do two things: to let up on the body, to give it some rest, some fresh air, some respite from the constant poisoning and drawing-off of energy, and, perhaps more crucially, to obtain for it transfusions of vital energy—in the form of capital and technology from the West. There is also an effort to pare down the party itself, to return to the smaller, more dedicated cadres of Lenin's era.

But anyone who thinks that changes like those under the New Economic Policy or under the present *perestroika* mean the end of this party elite is underestimating the coercive power, both external and internal, which the party apparatus maintains at its disposal—and the degree to which the party has historically depended on creating the illusion of hopeful change.

Still, whatever may be the truth about Soviet domestic policy, it is Soviet foreign policy that should directly concern us. The attack on NATO is by no means the only discordant note sounded by Gorbachev. Thus, despite Soviet protestations to the contrary, a recent White House statement indicated that Soviet military deliveries to Nicaragua have continued. Communist insurgent activity in El Salvador has been on the increase. (Western admirers of Gorbachev blame Castro for this, but the fact is that Castro depends critically on economic and military assistance from the Soviet Union to execute such maneuvers.) Every time the brutal Mengistu regime in Ethiopia suffers a defeat at the hands of the Eritrean rebels, Moscow, even in this period of acute economic hardship, somehow manages to send a fresh supply of tanks. And long after its demise was predicted by Western prognosticators, the Soviet-sponsored Afghan government remains in control, sustained by massive shipments of arms from Gorbachev's Soviet Union. In the meantime, Soviet statements public and private continually promise cuts in military production, but the evidence indicates that the cuts have yet to occur. What is perhaps more important is that even with significant reductions in defense spending, the Soviet Union, according to a recent Pentagon analysis, will be outproducing the U.S. through the 1990's.

Moreover, the dual-track methods of Soviet policy, evident since the time of Lenin, appear to

survive. While promoting good relations at the state-to-state level, the Soviet Union continues to spread lies about the United States through its active-measures network—including, most recently, the story, originally printed in *Pravda* in 1987 and assiduously circulated in Latin America during 1988, that Americans are buying Latin American babies so as to use their parts for transplants. And as already noted, Soviet illegal operations to obtain Western technology and efforts to recruit new Soviet agents have actually increased. In other words, while Gorbachev is shaking our hand, he also appears to be picking our pocket.

PERHAPS all this is unnecessarily gloomy. Perhaps democracy really is the wave of the future, even in the Soviet Union. Yet some of the same voices who predict this outcome also predicted not long ago that the Chinese Communist regime would find itself helpless before masses of smiling students in Tiananmen Square. Nor is the present the first time that the West has yielded to the vision of a new Soviet Union and a new world. When in the spring of 1955 the Soviet Union under Khrushchev and Bulganin took the unprecedented step of concluding the Austrian State Treaty and withdrawing its armies of occupation from Austria, even the skeptical U.S. Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, was inclined to believe for a time that the West might actually be beginning to win the cold war. Yet the period 1957 to 1962 proved to be the most dangerous of the postwar era. Two major crises over Berlin sent shudders through Europe, and a climactic crisis over missiles in Cuba seemed to bring the world to the brink of nuclear war.

All of this suggests why the world "beyond containment," to use the phrase President Bush has recently begun to employ, is unlikely to be a safer world. Even if the Soviet Union were a more benign power than it is—a state, say, like Imperial Japan in the 1920's or Weimar Germany—the disassembly of the containment system would carry risks and create ambiguities likely to lead to conflict. But given the peculiar centrality of deception and subterfuge to Soviet policy, the historical ruthlessness of the Communist elite, and the parasitic relation of this elite to its own society and to the West, the dangers are especially great. As it stands, the loosening of barriers between East and West is unlikely either to weaken the hold of the ruling elite in the Soviet Union or to enhance the stability of the world system. On the contrary, the lessons of the not-so-distant past would suggest that such a change is destined to have the opposite effect. Optimism about this uncertain future could be our undoing.