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Ideology and the Cold War

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Abstract. Western scholars have long disagreed about the role that ideology played in the Cold War. The release of crucial documentation from the former East-bloc archives has shed new light on this question, but no consensus is likely to emerge. Even if all the archives are eventually opened, the new evidence will not—and cannot—provide full vindication for either realism or an ideology-based approach. A key task for scholars will be to reexamine the broad and often unspoken assumptions on which specific US and Soviet policies were based.

Introduction

Was the Cold War a contest of two ideologies—liberal democracy and Marxism-Leninism—or was it driven mainly by considerations of power and material interests? No definitive answer to this question has yet emerged. Indeed, deep divisions remain among Western analysts about the precise role of ideology in the making of the Cold War.

On one side stand those who argue that conflicting ideologies were of little or no relevance and that both sides simply used rhetoric to conceal their real interests and intentions. This understanding of the conflict is based in the last analysis on Kenneth Waltz's theory of neorealism. Waltz, not surprisingly, says little about ideology and relies instead on two 'structural' features of international politics to explain the interaction between states in general and the superpowers in particular: the unequal distribution of capabilities, and the anarchic nature of the international system.[2] Ultimately, in Waltz's view, there are recurring patterns of foreign policy behaviour that flow naturally from these two features. Other variants of realism offer different, but related, predictions. Realists of a more 'neoclassical' persuasion, for instance, insist that great-power behaviour cannot be properly understood without taking account of at least one or two domestic-level factors such as perceptions of external threats or relative power.[3] However, they agree with Waltz that the anarchic nature of the international system and the unequal distribution of capabilities constrained and, in some cases, even determined US and Soviet foreign policy decisions.

[1] I am very grateful to Michael Cox for his expertise and valuable assistance when I condensed this article from a much longer paper. I would also like to thank James Hershberg for his comments on an earlier version of the paper.

[2] Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979).

[3] For a cogent overview of the distinctions between neorealism and neoclassical realism, see Gideon Rose, 'Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy: Review Article', *World Politics*, 51:4 (October 1998), pp. 144–72.

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On the other side of the debate are several scholars, now including John Gaddis, who claim that the conflict arose because of incompatible ideologies and ended only when Soviet ideology lost its hostile and antagonistic edge. These scholars deny that, in the absence of clashing ideologies, structural conditions alone would have been enough to spark a fierce US–Soviet rivalry. Hence, according to Richard Rosecrance and Arthur Stein, 'assessments focusing only on the narrow constituents of realism—material power, changes in its distribution, and external threat—are radically incomplete, and do not account for what [the Soviet Union and the United States] actually did' after 1947.[4] Similarly, John Mueller contends that Marxist-Leninist ideology shaped Soviet foreign policy, and that liberal democratic values were intrinsic to US goals.[5] In his view, 'the Cold War . . . and the bipolar structure of postwar international politics sprang from a contest of ideas, from an ideological conflict.'[6] This perspective implies that ideological considerations overshadowed the two superpowers' concerns about the balance of power.

Naturally, this simple binary opposition has its limits when we attempt to understand historical complexity. Although we think we might know why policy-makers did what they did, we have to be aware that motives are seldom clear-cut. Even the most secret documents do not necessarily reveal why US and Soviet leaders acted as they did. It is also hard to tell whether the documentary record reflects the actual decision-making process. Leaders after all may choose not to put their real motives down on paper. It is even possible that the leaders themselves are not always sure why they did certain things at different times. Furthermore, policies can often be interpreted in very different ways. Take containment: Was it an attempt to balance Soviet power, in accordance with Waltzian theory, or was it an ideological response by the United States designed to counter Moscow's quest to overthrow capitalism? Finally, we can hardly ignore the possibility that perhaps neither structure nor ideology accounts for superpower behaviour between 1947 and 1989. Other explanations might be equally plausible, including the cognitive responses and mind-sets of US and Soviet officials, the importance of advisers, culture, bureaucratic politics, the role played by interest groups, and differences in state structure.

With these caveats in mind, this article attempts to explore the problem of ideology by drawing on recently declassified materials and new analyses from both East and West. Some of the new evidence has been invoked by scholars to support an ideologically-inspired reading of the Cold War. Ideology in this very special sense has made an intellectual comeback, and the discussion here is intended as a contribution to the ongoing debate about the role of ideology in postwar international politics.[7] The aim is simply to see whether an ideology-based explanation can go beyond an interest or power-based explanation. If it cannot, the

[4] Richard Rosecrance and Arthur A. Stein, 'Beyond Realism: The Study of Grand Strategy', in Richard Rosecrance and Arthur A. Stein, *The Domestic Bases of Grand Strategy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 5.

[5] John Mueller, 'The Impact of Ideas on Grand Strategy', in Rosecrance and Stein, *The Domestic Bases of Grand Strategy*, pp. 48–62.

[6] Mueller, 'The Impact of Ideas on Grand Strategy', p. 49.

[7] Ideology is defined here as a set of doctrinal principles, shaped by language, which cumulatively determine how an individual views, understands, and acts in the world. Widely shared precepts form the core of a state ideology, serving as a broad guide to state actions. For a somewhat different but compatible approach, see Walter Carlsnaes, *Ideology and Foreign Policy: Problems of Comparative Conceptualization* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986).

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likely reason is that ideology is of little or no relevance to our understanding of the Cold War, and that we need to look elsewhere. But if it can be shown that ideological considerations spurred the superpowers to behave differently from the way they would have otherwise, that will lend greater credence to the argument that ideology was a defining element of the Cold War.

The only way to try to resolve these issues is by examining concrete cases. Five important issues in the history of the conflict are explored here: Josif Stalin's role in the outbreak of the Korean War; Leonid Brezhnev and the crisis with Czechoslovakia in 1968; the nature and purpose of the two opposing military alliances in Europe; US and Soviet foreign economic policies; and the end of the Cold War. The first two are key Soviet foreign policy decisions that some scholars (drawing on new archival evidence) believe flowed very directly from ideology. They are also useful examples to explore because both were different types of Soviet 'intervention' outside the territory of the USSR. The third and fourth topics raise the question of whether ideological analysis adds anything to a realist explanation of Cold War structures. The final event focuses on the drastic reorientation of Soviet foreign policy in the late 1980s, culminating in the dissolution of the Eastern bloc. Some scholars aver that the reorientation of Soviet foreign policy stemmed mainly from a change in the East-West balance of power, or at least from a change in *perceptions* of the balance of power. Others maintain that the real cause was a basic shift in Soviet ideology. Each of these possibilities will be considered below.

Stalin's approval of North Korea's attack

In 1949 the North Korean leader, Kim Il Sung, repeatedly sought Moscow's permission to launch a military attack against South Korea, but Stalin consistently refused.[8] In January 1950, however, Stalin suddenly offered to meet with Kim in Moscow to discuss how 'such an important matter as what [Kim] wishes to undertake in South Korea' could be 'carefully prepared . . . and organized so that the risk would not be so great.'[9] Soon thereafter, the Soviet Union began secretly providing large quantities of heavy weapons, support equipment, and planning advice to North Korea.[10] When Kim travelled to Moscow in April 1950, Stalin finally agreed to condone an attack by the North, which began on 25 June.[11]

This decision has been cited by both John Gaddis and Odd Arne Westad to support their contentions that Marxism-Leninism was of crucial importance in

[8] See various publications by Kathryn Weathersby, including, most recently, 'The Korean War Revisited', *The Wilson Quarterly*, 23:3 (Summer 1999), pp. 91–5.

[9] 'Shifrtelegramma', from Stalin to T. F. Shtykov, Soviet ambassador in North Korea, 30 January 1950 (Strictly Secret), in Arkhiv Vneshnei Politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii (AVPRF), Fond (F.) 059a, Opis' (Op.) 5a, Delo (D.) 3, Papka (Pa.) 11, List (L.) 92.

[10] 'Shifrtelegramma' from Soviet foreign minister Andrei Vyshinskii to T. F. Shtykov, 9 February 1950 (Strictly Secret), in Arkhiv Prezidenta Rossiiskoi Federatsii (APRF), F. 45, Op. 1, D. 346, L. 76; 'Shifrtelegramma', from T. F. Shtykov to Soviet defence minister A. M. Vasilevskii, 23 February 1950 (Strictly Secret), in AVPRF, F. 059a, Op. 5a, D. 4, Pa. 11, L. 48; and 'Shifrtelegramma', from T. F. Shtykov to Andrei Vyshinskii, 16 March 1950 (Strictly Secret), in APRF, F. 45, Op. 1, D. 346, Ll. 133–140.

[11] Sergei Goncharov, John W. Lewis, Xue Litai, *Uncertain Partners: Stalin, Mao, and the Korean War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), pp. 143–5.

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Soviet foreign policy. The explanations they offer, however, are mutually incompatible. What is more, the newly available evidence does not conclusively show that ideological considerations were in fact dominant in Stalin's calculus.

Gaddis argues that the establishment of Communist rule in China in 1949 sparked euphoria and 'uncharacteristic aggressiveness' on Stalin's part:

> [Stalin] interpreted Mao's victory as evidence that the revolutionary tide, contained in Europe, had shifted to Asia. He [Stalin] fell, as a consequence, into a kind of geriatric romanticism, encouraging the Chinese to support insurgencies elsewhere and authorizing Kim Il-sung to attack South Korea.[12]

Stalin's 'geriatric romanticism', according to Gaddis, 'made him a naive and sentimental as well as a brutal old man', who was 'trying to recapture his revolutionary youth' by encouraging the Chinese and North Koreans to promote Communist uprisings. Stalin, Gaddis writes, was akin to an 'ageing Ponce de Leon in search of an ideological Fountain of Youth.'[13] Whatever the specific merits of Gaddis's characterization of Stalin, the point to be emphasized is that Gaddis believes that Stalin enthusiastically backed Mao Zedong.

A very different assessment of Sino-Soviet relations in the leadup to the Korean War has been presented by Westad. He writes that 'Stalin may have given up his earlier caution because a new state had appeared within the world Communist movement—Mao's China.'[14] Far from having enthusiastically supported Mao, Stalin—according to Westad—was unnerved by the Chinese Communist victory: 'To Stalin, the defense of his revolutionary credentials within the movement [against Mao] was more important than the foreseeable consequences of war in Korea'. Westad's view is in line with a position expressed earlier by Vladislav Zubok, who argues that 'Stalin and Mao Zedong were rivals from the beginning'.[15] According to Zubok, 'Stalin gave his reluctant nod to an attack on South Korea only when he realized that the Chinese Communists would support Kim with or without him. He did not want to be "less revolutionary" than Mao.'

The contrast between these two interpretations is of broader importance because both Gaddis and Westad cite Stalin's approval of the North Korean attack as evidence for their shared view that ideology was of crucial influence on Soviet foreign policy. Gaddis claims that ideological enthusiasm spurred Stalin into a euphoric embrace of Mao's revolutionary ambitions, whereas Westad argues that ideological jealousy prompted Stalin to try to eclipse Mao by condoning North Korea's action.

Even with the large volume of documentation now available, it is impossible to discern Stalin's motives with great certainty, but overall the latest documentary evidence gives no solid basis to conclude that he was acting impulsively on an ideological whim. Stalin's decision seems quite explicable from a realist or even neorealist perspective. Having determined, in the wake of the 1948–49 Berlin crisis, that military probes in Europe would be too hazardous, Stalin sought to expand

[12] John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 290.
[13] Ibid., pp. 290–1.
[14] Odd Arne Westad, 'Secrets of the Second World: The Russian Archives and the Reinterpretation of Cold War History', *Diplomatic History*, 21:2 (Spring 1997), p. 267.
[15] Vladislav Zubok, 'Russia', in Ernest R. May (ed.), *American Cold War Strategy: Interpreting NCS 68* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), p. 191.

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Soviet influence in a region where there would be much less risk of a confrontation with the United States. Asia was the natural venue. Because the United States had not intervened to prevent a Communist takeover in China, Stalin by late 1949 had come to suspect that 'the Americans are afraid of a war' in East Asia.[16] Before deciding whether to permit a North Korean invasion, however, Stalin wanted to find out more about the situation on the Korean peninsula and the nature of US military commitments in the region.[17] The timing of a speech delivered by Secretary of State Dean Acheson at the National Press Club in Washington on 12 January 1950 thus proved crucial.[18] After perusing the text, Stalin concluded that the US 'defence perimeter' in East Asia was limited to Japan, the Ryukyu Islands, and the Philippines, and that the United States would be unlikely to send troops to defend South Korea 'against military attack.'[19] The speech was by no means the only thing that gave Stalin this impression—reports along these lines had also been coming into Moscow from Soviet intelligence sources, including Donald Maclean and John Cairncross—but there is little doubt that Acheson inadvertently contributed to Stalin's growing sense that the United States would not go to war over Korea. Soon after the speech, on 30 January, Stalin offered to meet with Kim in Moscow.

In the weeks leading up to Kim's visit in April, Stalin sought additional assurance that there would not be 'too great a risk' of US intervention on behalf of South Korea. When Stalin met with Kim, he warned him that 'if you get kicked in the teeth [by the United States], I will not lift a finger to help you'.[20] Kim reassured the Soviet leader that the United States would not respond with force. Kim argued that if the Communist takeover in China had not been enough to provoke US intervention, there was no chance that events in a much smaller country like Korea would spur the United States to act: 'America lost a giant, China, but still did not intervene. America will not take part in such a small matter as a war on the Korean peninsula'.[21] Kim also stressed that the North Korean army could seize the whole of South Korea within a few days, well before any US military action would be feasible; and he claimed that 200,000 Communist Party members in South Korea were ready to start an uprising in support of the North Korean troops, creating a *fait accompli*. These assurances gave Stalin greater confidence that a US military response would be highly unlikely.

As a further precaution, however, Stalin did his best to ensure that Chinese troops would intervene if things somehow went awry. (Stalin had no intention of dispatching Soviet ground forces to fight on the Korean peninsula, though he did later secretly permit the use of Soviet pilots and air defence personnel.) Initially, Stalin surmised that Mao would be unwilling to commit China to North Korea's defence.[22] This suspicion proved well-founded. Mao's overriding priority was to

[16] 'Zapis' besedy tovarishcha Stalina I. V. s Predsedatelem Tsentral'nogo Narodnogo Pravitel'stva Kitaiskoi Narodnoi Respubliki Mao Tsze-dunom 16 dekabrya 1949 g'., No. 105 (Strictly Secret), in APRF, F. 45, Op. 1, D. 331, L. 72.

[17] See, for example, the voluminous encrypted cables between Stalin and the Soviet ambassador in North Korea, T. F. Shtykov from late 1949 and the first several months of 1950 in AVPRF, F. 059a, Op. 5a, Pa. 11, Dd. 3 and 4.

[18] For the text of Acheson's speech, see US Department of State, *Department of State Bulletin*, 22:3 (23 January 1950), pp. 111–16.

[19] Goncharov, Lewis, and Xue, *Uncertain Partners*, pp. 101, 142.

[20] Cited in Goncharov, Lewis, and Xue, *Uncertain Partners*, p. 145.

[21] Cited in *ibid.*, pp. 141–2.

[22] Ibid., pp. 146–7.

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regain Taiwan by force, and he did not want to divert Chinese troops elsewhere or run the risk of US military intervention in Korea until the Taiwan issue had been settled and 'the Chinese revolution is complete'.[23] Stalin therefore had to force Mao's hand. In May 1950, shortly after Kim visited Moscow, the North Korean leader went to Beijing at Stalin's behest and informed Mao that Stalin had consented to the proposed incursion.[24] This revelation caught Mao by surprise, and he asked for clarification from Stalin himself, who promptly confirmed that 'in light of the changed international circumstances, [we in Moscow] now agree with the Koreans' proposal to move toward reunification.'[25] Stalin's and Kim's manoeuvers left Mao with little choice but to approve of the operation.

With all these safeguards in place, Stalin made a final decision to press ahead. He sharply stepped up the supplies of Soviet weaponry to North Korea and dispatched a high-level Soviet military delegation to Pyongyang to complete the operational plans for an invasion, which were implemented on 25 June.[26] Nothing about this story need be construed in terms of ideology. The outcome is perfectly compatible with the notion that Stalin was seeking to expand Soviet power and influence at relatively low cost and minimum risk.

In principle, then, the outbreak of the Korean War can easily be explained by neorealism or neoclassical realism. The new evidence is valuable in highlighting the complexity of Soviet, Chinese, and North Korean bargaining in the lead up to the war; but it does not fundamentally add to or contravene the neorealist account. This is not to say that ideology played no role in Stalin's decision or that an ideology-based explanation is of no value in this case; but the notion that ideology determined the decision does not stand up to scrutiny.

Promulgation of the Brezhnev Doctrine

Soon after Soviet and East European troops invaded Czechoslovakia in August 1968, the leaders of the Soviet Communist Party (CPSU) promulgated what became known in the West (though not in the Soviet Union until 1989) as the 'Brezhnev Doctrine'.[27] The Brezhnev Doctrine linked the fate of each Communist country with the fate of all others, stipulated that every Communist country must abide by the norms of Marxism-Leninism as interpreted in Moscow, and rejected 'abstract sovereignty' in favour of the 'laws of class struggle'. Czechoslovak sovereignty, according to the Doctrine, would be undermined unless Czechoslovakia remained a Communist country. Hence, far from violating the norms of sovereignty and non-

[23] 'Shifrtelegramma', from General Ivan Kovalev, Stalin's personal envoy in China, to Stalin, 18 May 1949 (Strictly Secret), in APRF, F. 45, Op. 1, D. 331, Ll. 59–61.

[24] 'Shifrtelegramma', from N. V. Roshchin, Soviet ambassador in China, to Stalin, 13 May 1950 (Strictly Secret), in APRF, F. 45, Op. 1, D. 346, L. 142.

[25] 'Shifrtelegramma' from Andrei Vyshinskii to T. F. Shtykov, 14 May 1950 (Strictly Secret), in APRF, F. 45, Op. 1, D. 346, L. 143.

[26] 'Shifrtelegramma', from T. F. Shtykov to General Matvei Zakharov, chief of the Soviet General Staff, 26 June 1950 (Top Secret), in AVPRF, F. 059a, Op. 5a, D. 3, Pa. 11, Ll. 97–102; and Goncharov, Lewis, and Xue, *Uncertain Partners*, pp. 149–54.

[27] See my 'The Czechoslovak Crisis and the Brezhnev Doctrine', in Carole Fink, Detlef Junker, and Philipp Gassert (eds.), *1968: The World Transformed* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 163–8.

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interference, the entry of Soviet troops—the argument went—was intended to '*defend* Czechoslovakia's independence and sovereignty as a socialist state [against] the counter-revolutionary forces that would like to deprive it of this sovereignty'.[28] The 'bourgeois' concepts of independence and sovereignty were deemed invalid by the Brezhnev Doctrine because they lacked 'class content'. By redefining the norms of international law within 'the general context of class struggle', the Brezhnev Doctrine provided strict 'rules of the game' for the Communist bloc. The Doctrine codified Soviet attitudes toward East-Central Europe as they had developed over the previous two decades, from Stalin's time on.

The Marxist-Leninist phrasing of the Brezhnev Doctrine has led many scholars to conclude that ideological concerns were the dominant factor behind the Soviet decision to invade Czechoslovakia. Some have gone so far as to argue that Soviet leaders were not worried at all about Czechoslovakia's foreign policy or military alignment.[29] Newly released documents, including transcripts of the Soviet Politburo's deliberations during the crisis as well as many other sensitive notes, memoranda, and stenographic accounts, do not bear out this interpretation.[30] Although Czechoslovakia's purported 'deviations' from Marxist-Leninist principles were certainly of great importance to Soviet leaders, concerns about concrete military issues were equally salient. It is now clear that Soviet officials had grave doubts about Czechoslovakia's long-term commitment to the Warsaw Pact. In early May 1968, Soviet foreign minister Andrei Gromyko warned the Soviet Politburo that Czechoslovakia was becoming 'a second Romania, and this will be enough for the collapse of the Warsaw Pact'.[31] Of particular concern to the Soviet Politburo were changes in the Czechoslovak People's Army. At a bilateral meeting in May, Brezhnev urged the Czechoslovak authorities to realize that 'when your army is being weakened, this is not and cannot be a purely internal matter. We count on your [army's] strength, just as you rely on the might of the Soviet Union'.[32] Over the next few months, Soviet concerns about Czechoslovkia's military alignment continued to grow. Those concerns played a major part in the Soviet Politburo's decision to invade. Numerous other issues also contributed to the decision to intervene, particularly the prospect of a spillover from Czechoslovakia into other Warsaw Pact countries, including the Soviet Union itself. Those concerns fit an ideology-based explanation of the Soviet action, but they are not incompatible with a realist explanation, especially an explanation that takes account of threat perceptions. Ideological considerations may have been the underlying basis of Soviet anxiety, but concerns about military issues were serious enough in their own right to provoke Soviet intervention.

Whatever the precise weight of these various factors may have been, there is no question that events in Czechoslovakia were seen as having increasingly dangerous effects on Czechoslovakia's foreign alignment as well as on other Warsaw Pact

[28] A. Sovetov, 'Sovremennyi etap bor'by mezhdu sotsializmom i imperializmom', *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'* (Moscow), no. 11 (November 1968), p. 7 (emphasis added).
[29] See, for example, Jiri Valenta, *Soviet Intervention in Czechoslovakia, 1968: Anatomy of a Decision*, revised edn. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991).
[30] These materials are analysed in my 'The Czechoslovak Crisis and the Brezhnev Doctrine', pp. 111–71.
[31] 'Rabochaya zapis' zasedaniya Politbyuro TsK KPSS ot 6 maya 1968 goda', 6 May 1968 (Top Secret), in APRF, F. 3, Op. 45, D. 99, L. 209.
[32] 'Zapis' peregovorov s delegatsiei ChSSR 4 maya 1968 goda', 4 May 1968 (Top Secret), in APRF, F. 3, Op. 91, D. 100, L. 144.

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countries. Soviet leaders were determined to bring Czechoslovakia's internal configuration—and hence its foreign policy—back into conformity with Moscow's wishes. This raises the question of why the Brezhnev Doctrine stressed that the Soviet Union was not interfering, and never would interfere, in Czechoslovakia's internal affairs. Two possible explanations might be offered: either (1) Soviet leaders genuinely believed they were intervening in support of Czechoslovakia's sovereignty and not interfering in Czechoslovakia's internal affairs; or (2) they did not really believe what they said in their public utterances and were using those statements as a *post-hoc* justification for the invasion. Newly declassified evidence suggests that the latter explanation is far more plausible than the former.

In November 1968, three months after the invasion, the CPSU Politburo approved a highly classified report on the lessons of the 'military-political action of 21 August 1968'.[33] Several statements in the report are totally at variance with the ideological rationales offered for public consumption. The report recommended that the Soviet Union continue 'interfering as decisively as possible in the affairs of Czechoslovakia and exerting pressure through all channels'. It disparaged 'the current [public] line of non-interference', noting that 'the dispatch of troops is the most extreme act of interference there can possibly be in the internal affairs of a state'.[34] The report suggested that, if anything, 'the current [public] line of non-interference' was counterproductive because it was enabling the Czechoslovak leader, Alexander Dubček, to seek to minimize the influence of the occupying Soviet troops. (The Soviet authorities had been forced temporarily to restore Dubček to power after the invasion because efforts to set up a hard-line alternative regime collapsed.)

All these statements make a notable contrast with the countless public assertions that 'the aim of sending our troops was not to intervene in Czechoslovakia's internal affairs, but to ensure that Czechoslovak leaders can act of their own free will and without any pressure or interference from outside'.[35] Moscow's repeated pledges in public forums that 'our troops will not interfere in the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia' were being issued at the same time that the CPSU Politburo was urging just the opposite, that is, an increase in Soviet interference in 'the most decisive' and 'most extreme' manner possible.

It is not surprising to find that Brezhnev and his colleagues were insincere when they claimed to have 'defended Czechoslovakia's sovereignty and independence', but this episode raises broader questions about Soviet ideological statements. On the one hand, it is worth asking whether the Soviet leadership's insincerity about this matter was part of a wider pattern. On the other hand, it is worth emphasizing that Soviet public statements about 'non-interference' and the 'defence of Czechoslovakia's sovereignty' did not change after the Politburo approved the report, even though the document warned that the pro-sovereignty theme was proving counterproductive because of the leeway it was giving to Dubček.

These two points together illustrate the role that ideology played in Soviet policy toward Czechoslovakia after the invasion. Although ideology did not determine Moscow's broad strategy after the invasion—the ideological statements in this case

[33] 'Nekotorye zamechaniya po voprosu podgotovki voenno-politicheskoi aktsii 21 avgusta 1968 g'., 16 November 1968 (Special Dossier/Strictly Secret), in Tsentr Khraneniya Sovremennoi Dokumentatsii (TsKhSD), F. 5 "OP," Op. 6, D. 776, Ll. 128–144.
[34] Ibid., L. 134.
[35] 'Rech' tovarishcha L. I. Brezhneva', *Pravda* (Moscow), 5 November 1968, p. 2.

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were invoked to justify actions taken for concrete strategic reasons—the very use of these statements tended to constrain policy and to exclude certain steps that might have been more beneficial from Moscow's standpoint. Soviet leaders could not publicly warn Dubček that if he defied them, they would continue 'interfering in Czechoslovakia's internal affairs'. Because Moscow's public proclamations of non-interference, spurred by ideological considerations, could be used by Dubček for his own ends, the only way Moscow could ultimately resolve the matter was to get rid of Dubček altogether. In that sense, ideology did have a significant impact on Soviet policy, though not in the way usually depicted.

NATO versus the Warsaw Pact

The power vacuum in Europe after World War II eventually induced both superpowers to seek European allies against one another (an action that neorealists would describe as 'external balancing'). The disparate geopolitical circumstances that the two countries faced were bound to have some effect on the types of alliances they sought. In the United States, many officials and legislators initially were reluctant to maintain a permanent military presence in Europe. They planned instead to help the West European states themselves acquire the wherewithal to sustain a viable balance against the Soviet Union. Not until after the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950 did US perceptions of the Soviet threat change enough to generate widespread support for a huge increase in the US military commitment to Western Europe. By that point, US officials already sensed, from the Berlin crisis of 1948–49, that the United States would need an extensive network of military bases in Western Europe if it wished to deter or rebuff Soviet probes on the continent. The increased deployment of US troops and weapons in Europe from late 1950 on was geared toward that end, and was also intended to reassure the West Europeans of the strength of the US commitment to their defence. That commitment had been nominally codified in April 1949—primarily at the West Europeans' initiative—with the establishment of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), but it was not until the early 1950s, after the shock of Korea, that the United States began putting up the resources needed to fulfill its military obligations to NATO.

The Soviet Union, as the dominant European power, had less intrinsic need to deploy troops and weapons far outside its western borders, but until the early 1990s several hundred thousand Soviet soldiers were stationed at high alert in East Germany, Poland, Hungary, Romania (until 1958), and Czechoslovakia (after 1968). One of the main rationales for this was purely strategic: The Soviet-led alliance in Eastern Europe, which initially was based on an interlocking series of bilateral defence agreements and was then formally constituted in May 1955 as the Warsaw Treaty Organization (or Warsaw Pact, for short), started out primarily as a buffer zone for the Soviet Union against (West) Germany, rather than as a full-fledged military organization. For much the same reason, the Warsaw Pact consistently emphasized rapid offensive operations that would keep any fighting as far away as possible from Soviet territory. These features of the Pact can be explained by the geopolitical circumstances that the Soviet Union faced. Almost any government in Moscow would have been inclined to pursue similar arrangements.

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Yet even when the Warsaw Pact gradually took on more of the trappings of a genuine alliance from the early 1960s on, the organization remained very different from NATO in its complexion and functions. At no point during the Cold War did NATO resort to the actual use of military force. By contrast, the Warsaw Pact was nearly used in 1956—a year after it was created—to crush the Hungarian uprising; it was used in 1968 to subdue the Prague Spring in Czechoslovakia; and it was used repeatedly in conspicuous exercises in 1980–81 to exert pressure on Polish leaders and the Polish public.[36] Detailed plans for Soviet/Warsaw Pact military intervention in Poland were drafted in 1980–81 and forces were mobilized, but the introduction of martial law in Poland in December 1981 precluded any final decision by Moscow on whether to implement those plans.[37]

The fact that NATO was never called into action, whereas the Warsaw Pact was used numerous times against its own members, is indicative of the fundamental distinction between the two alliances. From their inception, both organizations ostensibly were designed for the exclusive purpose of warding off military threats from outside. In reality, only NATO regarded external defence as its sole military objective. External defence was never the only—or even primary—military mission of the Warsaw Pact. The Pact made elaborate plans and combat preparations for a war against NATO, but the alliance's military role in upholding Communist regimes in Eastern Europe ultimately was more important. Although the Soviet intervention in Hungary in 1956 was unilateral, many of the Soviet troops entered Hungary from the territory of another Warsaw Pact state, Romania. Moreover, the Romanian, Bulgarian, and Czechoslovak authorities expressed willingness (even eagerness) to have their own troops take part in what would have been a Warsaw Pact operation.[38] Had the time pressure for a response not been so acute, troops from these other countries might well have ended up joining the Soviet forces. In 1968 the Warsaw Pact was a key vehicle for exerting pressure on Czechoslovakia, culminating in the invasion on 21 August. Supreme command of the operation was transferred at the last moment from the Warsaw Pact Joint Command to the Soviet High Command, but the Pact's role in the crisis was salient throughout.[39] Brezhnev was determined to give the invasion a multilateral appearance, and he obtained the cooperation of four other Pact countries—East Germany, Poland, Bulgaria, and Hungary—to intervene with the Soviet Union against their ally, Czechoslovakia. The function that the Warsaw Pact performed in 1968 as a defender of 'socialist gains' in Czechoslovakia was the touchstone for all future crises in Eastern Europe. From the early 1970s on, Soviet officials themselves publicly acknowledged that intra-bloc policing was one of

[36] On the 1956 events, see my 'The Soviet Union and the 1956 Crises in Hungary and Poland: Reassessments and New Findings', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 33:2 (April 1998), pp. 163–215; on the 1968 events, see my forthcoming *Crisis in Czechoslovakia, 1968: The Prague Spring and the Soviet Invasion*.

[37] See my *Soviet Deliberations During the Polish Crisis, 1980–81*, Special Working Paper no. 1 (Washington, DC: Cold War International History Project, May 1999); 'Poland, 1980–81: Soviet Policy During the Polish Crisis', *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, Issue no. 5 (Spring 1995), pp. 1, 116–28; 'Jaruzelski, the Soviet Union, and the Polish Crisis: New Light on the Mystery of December 1981'; 'Colonel Kuklinski and the Polish Crisis, 1980–81'; and '"In Case Military Assistance is Provided to Poland": Soviet Preparations for Military Contingencies, August 1980', all in *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, no. 11 (Winter 1999), pp. 5–31, 47–60, and 86–94, respectively.

[38] See my 'The Soviet Union and the 1956 Crises in Hungary and Poland', pp. 205–6.

[39] See my 'The Czechoslovak Crisis and the Brezhnev Doctrine', pp. 152–3.

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the chief military missions of the Warsaw Pact.[40] Nothing of the sort could ever have been said about NATO's responsibilities.

The contrast between NATO and the Warsaw Pact was also evident in the political functions they acquired and the nature of their decision-making. From an early stage, NATO served as both a symbol and an organ of the 'pluralistic security community' of democratic industrialized states.[41] Although a few members of the alliance, especially Greece and Turkey, were not always able to uphold democratic principles, the organization helped stabilize democratic changes in Greece, Spain, and Portugal after those countries emerged from many years of dictatorship. A democratic polity became the norm for members of the alliance (or at least for those in good standing). By the same token, NATO's decision-making procedures reflected a commitment to democratic consensus-building. Although the United States was by far the strongest member of NATO and had a commensurately large role in allied decision-making (an arrangement that often sparked frictions with some of the West European governments, especially the French), differences between the United States and its allies were never violently squelched. Even at the height of intra-NATO tensions during the Suez crisis, the West European countries did not fear that the United States would use armed force against them. This was all the more true in subsequent years. France and Greece freely left NATO's integrated military command when they disagreed with allied policy. Decisions on important matters could not be approved without a genuine consensus among the member-states.

The Warsaw Pact, by contrast, served as little more than a bloc of Communist states under the hegemonic 'leadership' of the Soviet Union. By its charter, the Pact was supposed to be 'open to all states . . . irrespective of their social and political systems', but the events of 1956 and 1968 made clear that the members of the Pact would have to abide by the 'common natural laws of socialist development, deviation from which could lead to a deviation from socialism as such'.[42] The Soviet Union reserved for itself the right to determine when 'deviations' from the 'common natural laws of socialist development' exceeded permissible bounds, and Soviet leaders proclaimed a 'sacred duty' to intervene when necessary to 'protect socialist gains'. Not surprisingly, decision-making within the Pact featured much less of the give-and-take found in NATO. The political councils of the Pact were dormant for many years, and even when new bodies were set up in 1969, their main purpose was to facilitate political integration within the bloc and to foster 'organic links' between Soviet and East European political and military elites. To the extent that political-military integration actually occurred, it was always Moscow-centered. Although the East European states signed bilateral defense treaties with one another (and with the USSR) in the late 1940s, the only bilateral security relationship that really mattered was the one each of them had with the Soviet Union. At no point did any of the East European states maintain bilateral military links with one another outside the

[40] See, for example, Army-General S. M. Shtemenko, 'Bratstvo rozhdennoe v boyu', *Za rubezhom* (Moscow), no. 19 (May 1976), p. 7.

[41] See Karl W. Deutsch *et al.*, *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area: International Organization in the Light of Historical Experience* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957).

[42] 'Rech' tovarishcha L. I. Brezhneva', *Pravda* (Moscow), 13 November 1968, p. 2. The relevant portion of the Warsaw Pact's charter is Article 9; see 'Dogovor o druzhbe, sotrudnichestve i vzaimnoi pomoshchi', *Pravda* (Moscow), 15 May 1955, p. 2.

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Warsaw Pact framework, whereas all the East European countries (except Romania) had important bilateral military ties to the Soviet Union.

None of this is to suggest that Soviet control of the Pact was ever absolute. On a few occasions, serious problems arose with the East European allies, especially Albania and Romania. Albania ceased taking part in the alliance in 1961 (and formally left in 1968) after withstanding strong military and political pressure from the Soviet Union.[43] In the mid-1960s Soviet leaders feared that Romania, too, might seek to leave the Pact.[44] Those fears ebbed after the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 sparked a brief but serious standoff between the Soviet Union and Romania, which induced the Romanian authorities to curb their defiance of Moscow's wishes.[45] Even then, however, Romania was unwilling to resume a meaningful role within the Pact or to forgo an independent military course. Romanian leaders continued to eschew joint military exercises and refused to subordinate their country to the unified wartime command structure that Soviet military officers secretly devised for the rest of the Pact in the late 1970s and early 1980s.[46]

Despite these scattered rifts and disruptions, the East European states overall were far more subservient to the Soviet Union than the West European countries were to the United States. Although East European leaders tried to influence Soviet policy in numerous ways and occasionally succeeded, the leeway for independent action was always sharply constrained. Unlike NATO, which was a genuine and voluntary alliance of democratic states and which could not act without a consensus among its members, the Warsaw Pact was little more than a byproduct of Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe, whose main purpose was to keep pro-Soviet Communist regimes in power.

Two explanations of the discrepancy between NATO and the Warsaw Pact have been proposed: one based on ideology, the other on power.

The importance of ideology in alliance management has been emphasized by John Gaddis, among others. In his latest reassessment of the Cold War, Gaddis claims that NATO was far more flexible and open than the Warsaw Pact because Americans 'were, by habit and history, democratic in their politics'.[47] This ingrained democratic ethos, he writes, prompted 'the United States [to] permit [the West Europeans] a surprising amount of influence over [NATO's] structure and strategies'. US officials, Gaddis adds, 'were used to the bargaining and deal-making, the coercion and conciliation, that routinely takes place within [a democratic] system. They did not automatically regard resistance as treason'.[48] Gaddis contrasts this with the tyrannical nature of Soviet Communism, which, in his view, guaranteed that Soviet leaders would use an equally heavy-handed and ideologically driven approach within the Warsaw Pact: 'The Russians, coming out of an authoritarian tradition, knew of no way to deal with independent thinking other than to smother

[43] See my 'Declassified Materials from CPSU Central Committee Plenums: Sources, Context, Highlights', *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, no. 10 (March 1998), pp. 14–16.
[44] See, for example, the comments by Soviet foreign minister Andrei Gromyko in 'Rabochaya zapis' zasedaniya Politbyuro TsK KPSS 6 maya 1968 goda', 6 May 1968 (Top Secret), in APRF, F. 3, Op. 45, D. 99, L. 211.
[45] See my 'The Czechoslovak Crisis and the Brezhnev Doctrine', pp. 162–3.
[46] Romania's defiance on this score was first revealed by Colonel Ryszard Kukliński in 'Wojna z narodem widziana od środka', *Kultura* (Paris), 4/475 (April 1987), pp. 52–5, esp. 53.
[47] Gaddis, *We Now Know*, p. 289.
[48] Ibid.

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it. The slightest signs of autonomy . . . were heresy, to be rooted out with all the thoroughness of the Spanish Inquisition. The result was surely subservience, but it was never self-organization'.[49] The implication of Gaddis's argument, as he himself notes, is that 'democracy proved superior to autocracy in maintaining coalitions'.[50]

The competing explanations of why NATO and the Warsaw Pact were so different is one that would find favour with neorealists. This explanation not only de-emphasizes ideology, but leaves it out altogether. Proponents argue that the disparity can be attributed to the simple fact that Soviet preponderance in the Warsaw Pact was far greater than US preponderance in NATO. The difference in relative power guaranteed that the United States had to negotiate with its allies on more equal terms than the Soviet Union did with its allies. Differences in ideology, the argument goes, were irrelevant.

The importance of relative power in alliances has been emphasized not only by neorealists, but also by one of the most outspoken critics of neorealism, Ned Lebow. In an illuminating comparison of the Spartan and Athenian alliance systems of ancient Greece (as chronicled by Thucydides), Lebow argues that Sparta, despite being a militarized, authoritarian city-state, headed 'a democratic alliance system in which policy was made by consensus', whereas Athens, a city-state best known for its commitment to democracy, 'dominated and exploited its allies in a manner not at all dissimilar' to the Soviet Union's treatment of the other Warsaw Pact countries.[51] Lebow maintains that Athens 'exercised leadership [of its alliance] in an increasingly dictatorial manner' and 'did not hesitate to use force against recalcitrant allies . . . to discourage any of them from harbouring thoughts of independence', whereas Sparta 'was not in a position to dictate policy' to its allies and was often 'so cautious that [its] allies sometimes questioned [Spartan] resolve'. Lebow adds that Athens's reliance on highly undemocratic means of alliance management was especially striking insofar as the Athenians had set up democratic regimes in most of their allies. Sparta's reliance on democratic consensus-building within its alliance was equally striking insofar as almost all the regimes that voluntarily allied themselves with Sparta were rigidly authoritarian and intensely fearful of democracy.

Even if Lebow overstates the contrast somewhat, his analogy is telling enough that it should make one wary of relying on ideology alone as an explanation. Clearly, differences in relative power did matter. The US approach to the Organization of American States, for example, was quite different from the US approach to NATO. This disparity is most readily explained by the fact that the relative magnitude of US power was much greater in Latin America than in Western Europe.

Nevertheless, as important as the role of power may be, this hardly means that ideology was irrelevant. An explanation that focuses only on power may have the virtue of parsimony, but it leaves out a crucial aspect of European alliance dynamics during the Cold War. The US and Soviet approaches to alliance management in Europe were alike in one respect: Both superpowers sought ideological compatibility with their allies. The United States encouraged the spread of liberal democratic

[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid., p. 288.
[51] Richard Ned Lebow, 'The Soviet Response to Poland and the Future of the Warsaw Pact', in Arlene I. Broadhurst (ed.), *The Future of European Alliance Systems: NATO and the Warsaw Pact* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1982), pp. 185–236, esp. 185–90.

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systems in Western Europe, while the Soviet Union promoted orthodox Communist systems in Eastern Europe. Aside from this one similarity, however, the two sides' approaches to alliance-building and alliance management were fundamentally different. The US presence in Western Europe, as noted above, was established with the avid support and at the urging of democratically-elected European governments. The West European states took the initiative in forging NATO to ensure that the United States would remain firmly committed to their security, rather than leaving Europe to its own devices, as in the inter-war period. This is not to imply that the United States was merely a passive observer, responding diffidently to West European overtures. Leading officials in the Truman administration had a firm conception of US national security interests, which they pursued as best they could. Nevertheless, what is striking is the extent to which US objectives overlapped with and reinforced the objectives of the West European states. Far from imposing NATO membership or democratic systems on the West European countries, US leaders were merely doing what the West European governments and populations themselves wanted. The broad popular support in Western Europe for close ties with the United States was consistently evident in free elections, which brought leaders and political parties into office who favoured both NATO membership and liberal democracy. Extremist and anti-democratic parties and candidates, who might have opposed NATO membership and undermined democracy, were of negligible influence. Because the United States was acting in accord with the wishes of the West European countries, NATO was bound to rest on a consensus among its members. The United States had no reason—nor any inclination—to impose an Athenian-style alliance on Western Europe.

In Eastern Europe, by contrast, the Communist regimes were maintained not through public voting, but through the might of the Soviet Army. Free elections were never permitted once Communist rule had been consolidated throughout the region in the late 1940s. It is true that the Soviet Union initially had a favourable climate in which to set up a military bloc. All the leading Communist officials in Eastern Europe, including those who had lived for many years in the Soviet Union, were loyal Stalinists intent on forming a close alliance with Moscow. Moreover, the prospect of renewed German militarism may have been enough, for a while, to generate considerable popular support in Eastern Europe for military ties with the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, those popular sentiments quickly faded, particularly when the region was forcibly Stalinized in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Unlike the United States, the Soviet Union had to impose both its ideological system and a formidable military presence on its 'allies'. The periodic revolts in Eastern Europe against both Communist rule and Soviet hegemony—in 1953, 1956, 1968, 1970, 1976, 1980–81, and 1989—confirmed that popular resentment against Soviet-imposed institutions outweighed any lingering public concerns about Germany. It is not surprising, then, that until the mid-1980s the Soviet Union clamped down whenever East European leaders tried to pursue an independent course or when anti-Communist revolts erupted from below. In this respect, the Soviet Union bore a strong resemblance to ancient Athens.

The divergent origins and evolution of the two European alliances accounted for the different structures of decision-making. Unlike in ancient Greece, where a pronounced disjuncture existed between type of polity and type of alliance system, the two were mutually reinforcing in Europe during the Cold War. The democratic

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states in NATO interacted through consensus-building, whereas the Communist states in the Warsaw Pact had to abide by the code of 'proletarian solidarity' and 'socialist internationalism'. This conjuncture enabled the superpowers' ideological preferences (liberal democracy for the United States, orthodox Communism for the Soviet Union) to be encoded into the military and political bodies of their respective alliances. Over time, as the basic orientation of the two alliances remained stable, their respective ideological imprints congealed and became an integral part of the institutions. The Warsaw Pact's institutional identity was increasingly linked with the 'defence of socialism' in Eastern Europe, while membership in NATO carried with it, more and more, the expectation of a commitment to democratic principles both at home and within the alliance. The lapses in Greece and Turkey were seen as undesirable aberrations. NATO was by no means the only organization that bolstered democracy in Western Europe after World War II, but there is little doubt that the alliance helped to shape domestic political interactions and expectations in ways conducive to democratic outcomes. By contrast, the Warsaw Pact circumscribed the political options of the East European states and forestalled any public accountability, thus ensuring the maintenance of orthodox Communism.

Largely for this reason, the Warsaw Pact collapsed soon after Communism dissolved in Eastern Europe, whereas NATO survived, flourished, and even expanded long after the Cold War was over. If the two organizations had been nothing more than military alliances directed against one another (which is the way they were depicted during the Cold War in neorealist and realist theories of alliances), they both would have disintegrated once the Cold War ended. Many neorealists had explicitly predicted in the late 1980s and early 1990s that NATO would not survive for long in the absence of a common Soviet threat.[52] What those predictions overlooked is that NATO and the Warsaw Pact were not just Cold War military alliances. Both had gradually taken on institutional identities that conformed with the ideological preferences of their respective superpowers. Because US ideological preferences remained relatively constant both during and after the Cold War, NATO could thrive in the post-Cold War era. By contrast, Soviet ideological preferences changed drastically at the end of the 1980s. This shift proved too much to bear for the institutions of the Warsaw Pact, which for so long had symbolized and promoted Moscow's earlier set of preferences. The demise of the Warsaw Pact thus suggests that if ideological preferences determine the whole nature of an organization at an early stage, the task of reshaping that organization will be onerous if long-held preferences abruptly and fundamentally change later on. Rather than being adjusted or reconfigured to attain a new equilibrium, the existing institutions may simply have to be disbanded.

Bretton Woods/GATT/EEC versus CEMA

Unlike the rival alliance systems in Europe, which originally were of roughly comparable size, the international economic order headed by the United States after

[52] See, for example, John J. Mearsheimer, 'Back to the Future: Instability in Europe After the Cold War', *International Security*, 15:1 (Summer 1990), pp. 1–55.

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World War II was always vastly larger than the separate economic grouping formed by the Soviet Union.

The US-led economic order coalesced with the adoption of the Bretton Woods agreements in July 1944 (which created the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund) and the Marshall Plan in June 1947. Initially, the United States hoped and expected that the Soviet Union would take full part in the new economic arrangements. Soviet officials attended the Bretton Woods conference (not least because they wanted to obtain a postwar loan for reconstruction) and signed the agreements approved there. Over the next year-and-a-half, the United States repeatedly encouraged the Soviet Union to ratify the agreements and take up its role in the new system.[53] That objective never materialized, however, because of the growing political tensions between Moscow and Washington. Soviet foreign trade officials correctly sensed that 'non-participation in the Fund and Bank may leave the USSR isolated' and 'may cause economic hardships in relations with some of our external markets, particularly with the USA'. They sent a memorandum to Soviet foreign minister Vyacheslav Molotov in late 1945 emphasizing these risks and warning that a failure to ratify the agreements would obviate any prospect of securing a reconstruction loan and would prevent the Soviet Union from 'knowing what goes on in these organizations'.[54] Molotov promptly conveyed the warnings to Stalin, but the Soviet leader had already decided to forgo ratification. This decision marked a turning point in the Cold War.

The contours of the liberal international economy were reinforced in 1947, when Stalin declined an invitation to participate in the Marshall Plan, a rejection that most US officials by that point were expecting. (Stalin not only kept the Soviet Union out of the Marshall Plan, but also compelled the East European states to eschew it.) The Soviet Union's refusal to join any of the new organizations ensured that the emerging economic order would become—more explicitly—a world capitalist order led by the United States and would be increasingly aimed at isolating the Soviet Union.[55] The universalist aspirations that US policymakers had harboured in 1944–45 were abandoned.

All aspects of the new economic order bore the imprint of the United States. Because US economic power was so immense relative to the rest of the world in the late 1940s—the US gross national product (GNP) accounted for at least one-third and perhaps as much as two-fifths of the world's total output in 1950—the new economic institutions established by Bretton Woods, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), and the Marshall Plan were bound to reflect US interests and preferences. Although US officials did strike significant compromises with the British negotiators at Bretton Woods to allow for state intervention in economic affairs when necessary, the introduction of Keynesian principles did not funda-

[53] Robert J. Pollard, *Economic Security and the Origins of the Cold War: The Strategic Ends of US Foreign Economic Policy, 1945–1950* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), pp. 14–18, 247–8.

[54] 'O Mezhdunarodnom valyutnom fonde i Mezhdunarodnom banke rekonstruktsii i razvitiya: Proekt', Memorandum to V. M. Molotov, 26 December 1945 (Secret), from V. Gerashchenko of the Soviet finance ministry and A. Arutunyan of the Soviet foreign trade ministry, in AVPRF, F. 06, Op. 16, Pa. 9, D. 11, Ll. 14–19.

[55] Pollard, *Economic Security and the Origins of the Cold War*, pp. 33–58.

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mentally depart from the initial US conception.[56] The issue at Bretton Woods was not *whether* to pursue a liberal capitalist order, but simply *what type* of liberal order would be most widely acceptable. The new arrangements ultimately accommodated many forms of capitalism, ranging from the social democratic systems in Scandinavia, Great Britain (in the pre-Thatcher era), Germany, and the Benelux countries to the more laissez-faire systems in the United States and Switzerland; but the common feature of all these capitalist states was a commitment to private property rights and—under US pressure, where necessary—free trade. If Stalin had decided to bring the Soviet Union into the international economy instead of keeping it out, US efforts to nurture open markets around the world would have been more complicated, at least in the near term. But even if short-term problems had arisen for this (or some other) reason, the sheer magnitude of American economic dominance in the immediate aftermath of World War II gave US policymakers ample leeway to ensure that the new economic institutions would be conducive to liberal capitalism and an open trade regime.

Those institutions, once in place, proved resilient enough to continue serving their intended functions—albeit with some disruptions—long after the degree of US preponderance in the global economy shrank from its artificially high level of the late 1940s. The chief aim of the Marshall Plan and the Japanese reconstruction programme was to ensure that the West European countries and Japan could quickly build prosperous, dynamic economies and stable, democratic systems, which collectively would be able to offset Soviet military power. The success of that effort, as economic recovery took firm hold in Western Europe and Japan in the 1950s and 1960s, inevitably meant that the relative economic power of the United States declined. The US share of world output diminished gradually between 1950 and the early 1970s, when it levelled off at around 23–25 per cent, a share that has remained stable (and even slightly increased) since then. Despite this relative drop and the US decision in 1971 to abandon the fixed-rate exchange system established at Bretton Woods (a system that had become too costly for the United States to continue underwriting), the US economy was still by far the largest in the world, and the United States still played a stabilizing role in the global economy. By the time the Cold War was nearing its end, the US-sponsored recoveries in Western Europe and Japan, coupled with the eventual onset of rapid economic development in some parts of the Third World, had brought vast increases in living standards around much of the globe. Although certain parts of the Third World, especially sub-Saharan Africa, had experienced only meagre improvements (if any), and although economic recessions still occurred from time to time, there was little doubt by the 1980s that global wealth overall had expanded enormously since 1945. This trend was driven in no small part by the liberal capitalist institutions that the United States championed both at home and abroad in the 1940s.

The Soviet-led economic bloc was based on very different institutions. The bloc began to take shape in the mid-1940s when Stalin refused to participate in the

[56] On this point, see John G. Ruggie, 'International Regimes, Transactions and Change: Embedded Liberalism in the Postwar Economic Order', in Stephen D. Krasner, *International Regimes* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983); and G. John Ikenberry, 'Creating Yesterday's New World Order: Keynesian "New Thinking" and the Anglo-American Postwar Settlement', in Judith Goldstein and Robert Keohane (eds.), *Ideas and Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).

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Bretton Woods arrangements and the Marshall Plan. The Soviet Union instead signed bilateral trade and economic cooperation agreements with each of the East European countries. Those agreements in most cases were slanted heavily in favour of Moscow, entitling Soviet officials to control the output of 'joint' stock companies in Eastern Europe and to obtain key raw materials (coal, uranium, etc.) at prices far below world levels. The inequity of this arrangement brought mixed results. On the one hand, it sparked widespread popular and official resentment in Eastern Europe, especially Poland, where Soviet diplomats and military officers heard endless complaints about the 'high price Poland is obliged to pay for friendship with the USSR' and about the 'treaty links with the Soviet Union that are forcing Poland to reject highly profitable arrangements [and] far more advantageous economic opportunities' in Western Europe.[57] The tensions that resulted from these unequal agreements were one of the factors that precipitated the Soviet-Yugoslav split in 1948.

On the other hand, the bilateral agreements were successful in expediting the Soviet Union's postwar economic recovery. The Soviet recovery was also aided by the transfer of a large quantity of industrial plants and machinery from eastern Germany to Soviet territory and by the extraction of war reparations from East Germany, Romania, and Bulgaria. The net outflow of resources from Eastern Europe to the Soviet Union was approximately $15 bn in the first decade after World War II, an amount roughly equal to the total magnitude of US aid to Western Europe under the Marshall Plan.

The divide between the Soviet bloc and the liberal global economy became even more pronounced in 1947–48 when the Soviet Union tightened its political control in Eastern Europe, bringing full-fledged Communist regimes to power. This process culminated in the February 1948 takeover in Czechoslovakia, which prompted the United States and its allies to impose economic sanctions against the East-bloc countries. Most of these sanctions were strengthened after the Berlin Crisis erupted in June 1948, but the new measures failed to ameliorate the political situation in Eastern Europe, which deteriorated still further in the latter half of 1948 after a bitter split emerged between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. Under Soviet pressure, the Stalinization of Eastern Europe intensified, reinforcing the lines of division between East and West. Soviet economic 'advisers' in the East European countries helped formulate and oversee crash programmes of industrialization and agricultural collectivization, which eventually resulted in centrally planned economies throughout the region that were closely tied to the Soviet economy and that gave disproportionate emphasis to heavy industry and military production at the expense of consumer output. The existence of this separate economic bloc under Soviet auspices was formally codified in January 1949 when the Soviet Union joined five East European countries (Poland, Hungary, Romania, Czechoslovakia, and Bulgaria) in forming the Council for Economic Mutual Assistance, or CEMA. (East Germany, which was established as a state in October 1949, was admitted into CEMA in September 1950.)

[57] 'O nekotorykh nastroeniyakh v Pol'she po voprosu pol'sko-sovetskikh ekonomicheskikh otnoshenii', Memorandum from Lieutenant-General A. Okorokov, head of Political Directorate of the Northern Group of Forces, to M. A. Suslov, 19 March 1947 (Top Secret), in Rossiiskii Tsentr Khraneniya i Izucheniya Dokumentov Noveishei Istorii (RTsKhIDNI), F. 17, Op. 128, D. 284, Ll. 27–8, with cover note to M. A. Suslov.

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Initially, CEMA was intended mainly as a political response to the Marshall Plan and to the rift with Yugoslavia, and was not designed to be a meaningful economic organization. Although CEMA was nominally a multilateral group of states, trade ties and other forms of economic cooperation in the Eastern bloc were overwhelmingly Moscow-centered. Intra-CEMA trade followed a 'radial' pattern, in which the Soviet Union (as the 'hub') traded bilaterally with each of the East European states, while the East European states traded relatively little with one another. (One of the reasons that CEMA was founded was to head off any plans that some of the East European states may have had for subregional integration among themselves.) The Soviet Politburo received detailed reports about the inefficiencies and hardships that this arrangement was causing in Eastern Europe, but as long as Stalin was alive, CEMA remained no more than a paper organization.[58]

Not until after Stalin's death, and especially after the Polish and Hungarian crises in 1956, did the Soviet Union seek to remedy the exploitative nature of intra-bloc economic ties. Reparations and other uncompensated forms of resource extraction were terminated; trade relations were shifted to a more equitable basis; and economic contacts with Western countries were resumed, albeit at a low level. CEMA gradually acquired more substance, especially as a forum for coordination of planning targets. Even so, it was still an organization that revolved predominantly around one state, the Soviet Union. As of the mid-1980s the Soviet GNP was still three to four times the size of the combined GNPs of the other CEMA members, and the Soviet Union possessed vast supplies of oil and raw materials, producing 98 per cent of CEMA's crude oil, more than 90 per cent of its natural gas, nearly 98 per cent of its iron ore, almost 75 per cent of its steel, more than 98 per cent of its manganese, and similar percentages of other resources.[59] The East European states, by contrast, were largely devoid of natural resources and were unable to purchase oil and other vital commodities in sufficient quantity on the world market because of their lack of hard currency. Moreover, from the mid-1970s until the mid- to late 1980s, the East European states found the relative prices for trade with the Soviet Union (both imports and exports) to be far more advantageous than the prices for comparable trade with non-CEMA countries. Hence, for economic as well as political reasons, the Soviet Union remained the dominant supplier and market for the East European countries, with the partial exception of Romania after the mid-1960s. The 'radial' pattern of intra-CEMA trade was left largely intact.

The continued salience of bilateral trade between the Soviet Union and the East European countries was reinforced by the non-convertibility of CEMA currencies. The East-bloc currencies were internally as well as externally non-convertible. The CEMA states used an accounting unit known as the 'transferable rouble', which, despite its name, was not transferable at all even within the bloc, much less outside it. Almost all transactions had to be conducted bilaterally through bureaucratic

[58] See 'Informatsiya ob ispolnenii Sovetskim Soyuzom rekomendatsii Soveta Ekonomicheskoi Vzaimopomoshchi po voprosu o rasshirenii tovarooborota mezhdu stranami-uchastnikami Soveta: Prilozhenie k punktu 508 Protokolya Politbyuro no. 78', December 1950 (Top Secret), in RTsKhIDNI, F. 17, Op. 3, D. 1086, Ll. 252–60, esp. 254–5.

[59] US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), *Handbook of Economic Statistics, 1987*, CPAS-870002, September 1987, pp. 103–4.

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channels, a pattern that was bound to slant the large majority of intra-CEMA trade toward the dominant member of the organization, the Soviet Union.

The 'radial' pattern of intra-CEMA trade bolstered the separation of the East European and Soviet economies from the wider international economic system. The energy supplies and raw materials that the East European countries purchased from the USSR were crucial for their economic development. In return, they sold machinery, electronic equipment, and consumer and agricultural products, which were generally of inferior quality by Western standards, but not by Soviet standards. Most of these products would have been unmarketable, or saleable only at highly disadvantageous prices, outside the Soviet bloc. The capacity of the Soviet economy to absorb goods that would have been unacceptable on the world market gave the East European regimes an incentive to continue production of low-quality items without due regard for international competitiveness, leaving them even more dependent on the Soviet market. The importance of the Soviet market, in turn, encouraged East European planners to concentrate on products whose sole customer was the Soviet Union, thus further distorting sectoral development in the East European economies and further attenuating the range of market options outside the Eastern bloc.

For the Soviet economy, intra-CEMA trade was not as vital as it was for the East European economies—in part because foreign trade overall was much less important for the Soviet Union than for Eastern Europe—but it was hardly insignificant. Although Soviet officials frequently complained about the quality of goods imported from Eastern Europe and called for improvements, most of the imported items were of sufficient quality to meet Soviet needs. If the Soviet Union had been forced to buy large quantities of machinery, equipment, and other products from Western countries, the quality would have been higher, but so would the price. Because of Western export controls, the Soviet Union had to pay an onerous premium on most goods imported from the West. The cost of Soviet imports of machine tools from West Germany in the 1980s was some 58 per cent higher than the price charged on sales of the same goods to Western customers.[60] Similar mark-ups were applied to other Western goods exported to the Soviet Union. Thus, even though the trading arrangements within CEMA tended to perpetuate and reinforce the inefficiencies and technological backwardness of the East-bloc economies, the arrangements made sense in light of the (perverse) incentives that Soviet and East European officials faced.

The contrasting nature of the US- and Soviet-led international economic systems derived from the superpowers' respective ideological orientations. Neither economic grouping could have arisen spontaneously. The reason the world economy became a liberal capitalist order is that the dominant member of the world community, the United States, subscribed to a liberal capitalist ideology. Likewise, the cumbersome structures of CEMA stemmed from the Soviet Union's adherence to Marxist-Leninist ideology and its emphasis on centralized state control. Without taking account of each superpower's ideological preferences, the emergence of these particular economic groupings would be inexplicable.

[60] Kazimierz Poznański, 'Opportunity Costs in Soviet Trade with Eastern Europe', *Soviet Studies*, 40:2 (1988), pp. 290–307.

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In that sense, an ideology-based explanation is crucial, at least up to a point. But once the ideological backdrop has been taken into account, many features of the rival economic blocs can be explained quite well through a neorealist or neoclassical realist prism. Because the United States was vastly more powerful than all other states when postwar institutions were being set up in the mid-1940s, neorealists would not find it at all surprising that the new international economic order was shaped overwhelmingly by US preferences for liberal capitalism. Although the United States was willing to help the West European countries and Japan regain economic power (and thus become economic competitors of the United States), this was done to ensure that those countries would remain politically stable and would be able to build up their military strength against the chief US opponent, the Soviet Union. US efforts to promote economic recovery in Western Europe and Japan took the form not only of financial and material assistance through the Marshall Plan, but also a willingness to accept temporary restrictions on US exports to those countries so that key West European and Japanese industries could be revived without immediately having to compete against American firms. US policy-makers were willing to put up with short-term deviations from the principle of free trade in the hope (and expectation) that temporary discrimination against US exporters (and the relative economic gains it would bring to US allies) would accelerate economic recovery in Western Europe and Japan. This goal, in turn, was perceived to be of enormous long-term benefit to US security by ensuring that enough military power could be deployed in aggregate to counterbalance the Soviet Union. So long as the restrictions on American exports were purely transitory in nature, US economic power was deemed sufficient to forestall any lasting damage to either the US economy or the international free-trade regime.

A similar rationale lay behind US efforts to encourage European integration, a policy that began with the Marshall Plan. At Washington's behest, the West European states established the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) in April 1948 to coordinate and oversee the new funding. The European Payments Union was created two years later, and the European Coal and Steel Community was formed in 1951. The precedents set by these organizations were crucial over the next several years, culminating in the Treaty of Rome in September 1957. The integration of the West European states increased the challenge to US economic primacy, but it bolstered political and economic stability in Western Europe and ensured a stronger military front against the Soviet threat. The United States thus used its power to bring about a phenomenon—European integration—that would have been far more difficult, or perhaps impossible, to achieve in the absence of a hegemonic catalyst. To the extent that US efforts to promote European integration were part of a broader strategy of external balancing against the Soviet Union, they were very much in accord with neorealist and realist expectations.

The neorealist paradigm also provides a suitable explanation of American priorities in the global economy. From the outset, US officials surmised that the Third World would be much less important to US security than Western Europe and Japan were. No Marshall Plan was devised for the Third World, and foreign assistance to the less-developed countries (LDCs) in the 1940s and 1950s was dwarfed by the funding supplied to Western Europe and Japan. Later on, the United States and other Western countries rejected Third World demands for the establishment of a New International Economic Order, which would have required a massive and

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enormously disruptive transfer of wealth to the LDCs. Of the economic assistance that the United States did provide to Third World countries, the bulk was intended primarily to counter Soviet influence. Neorealism can readily account for this strategic ordering of US foreign economic priorities.

One additional aspect of US foreign economic policy that was compatible with the neorealist paradigm was the use of American economic strength for coercive purposes against the Communist bloc. When the Soviet Union began imposing tighter control in Eastern Europe in the mid- to late 1940s, the United States and other Western countries enacted trade sanctions against the Soviet bloc. Soon thereafter, the United States and its allies set up the Coordinating Committee on Multilateral Export Controls (COCOM), a body that initially functioned in strict secrecy. In the early 1950s, after the traumatic outbreak of the Korean War, the COCOM members embraced the US strategy of economic warfare against the Communist bloc, but beginning in 1954 the United States reluctantly acceded to West European demands for an easing of some export controls. (The United States could have used economic coercion to force the West Europeans to maintain full-fledged economic warfare against the Soviet bloc, but such steps would have endangered the political cohesion and economic and military strength of the Western alliance.) Despite this shift, COCOM restrictions against Communist countries remained in place throughout the Cold War. Economic pressure against the Soviet Union did not always, or even often, achieve its immediate ends—in part because economic sanctions in general are rarely of great efficacy, and in part because the Soviet Union, as a largely autarkic country, was much less vulnerable to economic coercion than most countries are—but over the long term the exclusion of the USSR from the US-led economic order proved to be a growing burden on the Soviet economy.[61] Having chosen and been forced to pursue a relatively autarkic pattern of development, the Soviet Union by the late 1970s was falling steadily behind the United States and other Western countries in many key technologies. The Soviet Union also continued to fall far short of Western quality standards in a large number of its products, especially consumer goods and high-precision machinery. The West's economic containment of the Soviet Union thus exacted a considerable toll.

The economic bloc that emerged under Soviet auspices was, in certain respects, also compatible with neorealism and neoclassical realism. Even if ideological differences had not existed, the early Soviet-East European economic relationship would have borne scant resemblance to the early US-West European and US-Japanese economic relationships. The Soviet Union extracted a huge volume of resources from Eastern Europe, whereas the United States provided a comparable amount of resources to Western Europe and Japan. This disparity is at least partly attributable to the very different circumstances facing Washington and Moscow at the end of World War II. The United States emerged from the war with by far the largest economy in the world and no physical damage to its continental homeland, whereas the Soviet Union underwent enormous destruction and economic dislocation yet also ended up as the dominant military power in Europe. For the United States, the

[61] Newly declassified evidence confirms that Western economic sanctions caused hardship. See the comments by Yurii Andropov and Mikhail Suslov about the sanctions imposed after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 'Zasedanie Politbyuro 10 dekabrya 1981: K voprosu o polozhenii v Pol'she', 10 December 1981 (Top Secret), in TsKhSD, F. 89, Op. 66, D. 6, Ll. 6–7, 10–11.

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highest priority was to help the West European countries recover economically so that they could resist Communist influence, whereas Soviet leaders were determined above all to rebuild their own economy while dominating Eastern Europe through military means. For nearly a decade after World War II, the Soviet Union used its military preponderance in Eastern Europe to maintain an exploitative economic presence. Recovery in Eastern Europe was always subordinated to the recovery of the Soviet Union itself. In light of the Soviet Union's economic and military standing at the end of World War II, this approach was consistent with realist expectations.

Neorealism and neoclassical realism are also useful in accounting for the Soviet Union's occasional attempts to use economic coercion against wayward Communist states: against Yugoslavia in 1948–49, China and Albania in the early 1960s, Romania in 1964–65, and Poland in 1981.[62] To be sure, in most cases the sanctions achieved little and, in the long run, were counterproductive.[63] Yugoslavia and Romania escaped any lasting damage when they turned to the West for trade and assistance, and Albania relied on China to make up for the loss of Soviet aid (though the Albanian economy was more seriously hurt by the sanctions than either the Yugoslav or the Romanian economy was). An abrupt cut-off of Soviet assistance to China was economically disruptive, but the main effect in the long run was to deepen the antagonism between Beijing and Moscow. Overall, then, Soviet efforts to rely on economic coercion merely ended up making things worse. Even so, the USSR's periodic decisions to resort to this instrument—if only with meagre results—were very much in accord with neorealism and neoclassical realism.

Realist theories are less useful, however, in explaining why the inefficient structure of Soviet-East European economic relations persisted for so long. Although the relationship became more equitable after the mid-1950s, key features of CEMA, particularly its emphasis on central planning, never changed. Even when limited multilateral clearing facilities were set up in the early 1970s, intra-CEMA trade still was—and had to be—conducted predominantly on a bilateral basis. The 'radial' pattern of trade persisted until the end of the 1980s. Although it was clear by the 1970s and 1980s that the centrally planned economies of the Eastern bloc could not keep pace with the capitalist economies of the West, Soviet preferences for central planning and state ownership continued to determine the fundamental complexion of CEMA. Not until the late Gorbachev era did Soviet preferences begin to shift, and the change at that point was much too belated and gradual to transform CEMA into an effective entity. The organization was abolished in mid-1991, soon after the downfall of the Communist regimes that had traditionally deferred to Soviet preferences.

The persistence of CEMA and of the 'radial' pattern of intra-bloc trade, long after the weaknesses of the organization had become evident, can be attributed to several factors. One of these, as suggested above, was simply the power that Soviet leaders exercised. A recent study of institutional persistence noted that 'less-than-optimal arrangements . . . and structures often endure through the active efforts of

[62] Robert O. Freedman, *Economic Warfare in the Communist Bloc: A Study of Soviet Economic Pressure Against Yugoslavia, Albania, and Communist China* (New York: Praeger, 1970).

[63] The Soviet Union's potential to use economic coercion did help induce the Polish Communist authorities to impose martial law. See my *Soviet Deliberations During the Polish Crisis, 1980–81*, pp. 12–15.

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those who benefit from them.'[64] Because Soviet leaders were determined to maintain central planning and keep severe limits on private property, they actively opposed attempts to carry out far-reaching market-oriented reforms in CEMA or in any CEMA member-state. On the rare occasions when East European Communist leaders moved beyond the bounds of what was acceptable in Moscow, the Soviet authorities intervened—either politically or, if necessary, militarily—to restore conformity with Soviet norms and preferences.

Although some economic reforms were permitted over the years in Hungary and Poland, all such measures still left the East European countries heavily reliant on central planning and state ownership. These basic Soviet preferences were encoded not only into CEMA, but into the whole structure of Soviet-East European relations. It was a structure in which, as Arthur Stinchombe pointed out in a different context, a 'powerful actor committed to some values'—in this case, central planning and state ownership—was able to ensure the 'preservation of those patterns of values'.[65]

The problem for realist theories comes not in demonstrating that Soviet power underwrote the Communist economic bloc, but in explaining why the ideologically-shaped structure of the bloc was so rigid. The Soviet Union's commitment to central planning and state ownership emerged out of a Marxist-Leninist ideological framework. When it became clear that those practices were eroding the Soviet Union's and the Eastern bloc's relative power *vis-à-vis* the United States and NATO, Soviet leaders should have been willing to undertake far-reaching changes. One of the basic tenets of neorealism is that states are instrumentally rational, meaning that they 'choose instrumentally among policy options [to determine] which [option] is most likely to help them protect and promote their interests'.[66] One obvious way they do this, according to Waltz, is to emulate the successful practices of rival states.[67] Nothing of the sort was ever done in Soviet-East European economic relations. Until the end of the 1980s, the option of fundamentally restructuring CEMA was never even on the agenda. Proposals for change in the organization were often floated (especially in Eastern Europe), but were of a highly circumscribed nature. None of these proposals, if adopted, would have come remotely close to Western-style capitalism. It is not surprising that when limited changes were implemented in the early 1970s, they were of very little long-term effect.

It is true, of course, that if Soviet leaders had been inclined to contemplate drastic market reforms in the 1970s, they would have encountered formidable obstacles. Marxist-Leninist economic principles (central planning and state ownership) were so entrenched in CEMA by the 1970s that piecemeal reforms would not have worked. Any attempt to change one aspect of the organization was bound to be of little efficacy unless changes were made in countless other aspects. The embeddedness of Marxist-Leninist practices and procedures in CEMA thus gave rise to a high degree

[64] Walter W. Powell, 'Expanding the Scope of Institutional Analysis', in Walter W. Powell and Paul J. Dimaggio (eds.), *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), pp. 190–1.
[65] Arthur L. Stinchombe, *Constructing Social Theories* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1968), p. 107.
[66] Joseph M. Grieco, 'State Interests and Institutional Rule Trajectories: A Neorealist Interpretation of the Maastricht Treaty and European Economic and Monetary Union', in Benjamin Frankel (ed.), *Realism: Restatements and Renewal* (London: Frank Cass, 1996), p. 282.
[67] Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, pp. 54, 74, 124–8.

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of inertia, as one might expect from patterns of institutional change in other settings:

> Common procedures that facilitate intraorganizational communication may be maintained, even in the face of considerable evidence that they are suboptimal, because the benefits associated with familiarity may easily outweigh the gains associated with flexibility. Altering institutional rules always involves high switching costs; thus a host of political, financial, and cognitive considerations militate against making such changes.

In this light, it is certainly possible that if drastic reforms had been assayed during the Brezhnev era, they would have failed.

Whatever the outcome might have been, the fact that basic Marxist-Leninist economic principles—notably, central planning and state ownership—were never up for reconsideration is indicative of the powerful role that ideology played in the Soviet-led economic bloc. During the pre-Gorbachev era, even the most far-reaching proposals for reform of CEMA were surprisingly modest.[68] Core ideological precepts were deemed sacrosanct. Soviet military power alone would not account for the complexion of CEMA; the glaring weaknesses of the organization (and of the Soviet Union's own economy) should have induced Soviet leaders to pursue drastic changes. Ideological considerations militated against any such changes, ultimately guaranteeing CEMA's demise.

End of the Cold War

The largely peaceful collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe in 1989, and the equally peaceful dissolution of the Soviet Union two years later, have shed new light on the role of ideology in the Cold War. The reason for this is not simply that many of the former Eastern bloc archives have been opened. Equally important is the advantage that scholars now have of knowing the outcome of a finite (albeit protracted) confrontation. This advantage is also potentially a drawback—not least because some analysts may be tempted to read inevitability into events that in fact were contingent and uncertain—but on balance the benefits outweigh the risks.

For neorealists the abrupt end of the Cold War poses a dilemma. Structural conditions in the international system had not changed between early 1985 and late 1989, yet the implosion of the Soviet bloc brought the peaceful demise of what had seemed to be a stable bipolar configuration. This development has prompted many scholars to conclude that 'the events of 1989–91 make sense only in terms of ideas. There was no military defeat or economic crash'.[69] Although some neorealists might respond that US pressure on the Soviet Union forced Mikhail Gorbachev to make drastic internal changes and to retreat from Eastern Europe, there is little evidence that this was in fact the case. US policy, including covert operations, may have made an important difference at the margins, but many similar efforts (and even some more ambitious activities, such as covert military aid to anti-Communist guerrilla forces in Eastern Europe) had been pursued in earlier decades, without any com-

[68] See, for example, 'Napravleniya i metody integratsii stran-chlenov SEV', 14 March 1968 (Secret), in Rossiiski Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Ekonomiki, F. 413, Kategoriya 1, Op. 12, D. 18401, Ll. 114–23.
[69] Gaddis, *We Now Know*, p. 283.

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parable effect.[70] By the 1980s, the United States and its allies had largely resigned themselves to the continuation of a bipolar divide in Europe.[71] Hence, it seems highly implausible that US policy alone was decisive in the mid- to late 1980s.

Even if neorealism is shown to be inadequate in explaining the peaceful end of the Cold War, an alternative explanation has been proposed by a neoclassical realist, William Wohlforth.[72] Drawing on theories of hegemonic rivalry and power-transition, Wohlforth depicts the Cold War as a prolonged but ultimately abortive attempt by a powerful challenger (the Soviet Union) to displace the preeminent state in the system (the United States).[73] According to this framework, the Soviet Union was a rising challenger during the first few decades of the Cold War, but was in relative decline from the late 1970s on. Wohlforth claims that as the relative decline in Soviet power became increasingly evident to Soviet (and American) leaders in the late 1980s, the Soviet authorities concluded that they could no longer afford the costs of a sustained great-power rivalry and would have to retrench.

For Wohlforth, then, the key explanatory variable is not structural factors or ideological changes, but each side's *perception* of its relative power. He argues that Gorbachev was convinced, even before taking office in 1985, that a relative decline in Soviet power necessitated a focus on domestic priorities and a contraction of overweening foreign commitments.[74] Once Gorbachev was in office, the argument goes, his perception of the USSR's relative decline grew steadily more pessimistic, and he was forced to acquiesce in one arduous retreat after another from the Soviet Union's great-power commitments, bringing an abrupt end to the Cold War. The whole process was peaceful, according to Wohlforth, because the Soviet Union was merely a challenger, not the preeminent state in the system. The collapse of the Soviet Union, he avers, left the United States in its existing position atop the world power hierarchy, rather than bringing about a transition to a new hegemon. (Wohlforth believes that if the situation had been reversed and it was the United States that was perceived to be experiencing a precipitous relative decline, the risk of war would have been much greater. Declining hegemons, Wohlforth asserts, are more likely than declining challengers to resort to violence to stave off the loss of their position.) Wohlforth concludes that the best way to explain the peaceful end of the Cold War is to determine how leaders on both sides, especially those in Moscow, perceived the Soviet Union's relative power.

This framework may be more useful than neorealism, but it is faulty on both theoretical and empirical grounds. Theoretically, Wohlforth's argument contains nothing to indicate whether declining challengers will peacefully accept their decline

[70] See James D. Marchio, 'Resistance Potential and Rollback: US Intelligence and the Eisenhower Administration's Policies Toward Eastern Europe, 1953–56', *Intelligence and National Security*, 10:2 (April 1995), pp. 219–45.

[71] After martial law was introduced in Poland in December 1981, senior officials in many NATO countries were privately relieved that stability had been restored. See 'Stenographische Niederschrift des Gesprächs Schmidt-Honecker', 12 December 1981 (Top Secret), in Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv (SAPMDB), Zentrales Parteiarchiv (ZPA), I IV 2/2/A-2447, Blatt (Bl.) 1–100; 'Entwurf zur Einschatzung des Treffens', 13 December 1981 (Top Secret), in SAPMDB/ZPA, IV B 2/2.035/086, Bl. 4–5; and 'Bericht über das Treffen von Honecker vor dem Politbüro', 15 December 1981 (Top Secret), in SAPMDB/ZPA, J IV 2/2/A-2447, Bl. 5–7.

[72] William C. Wohlforth, 'Realism and the End of the Cold War', *International Security*, 19:3 (Winter 1994/95), pp. 91–129.

[73] See William Wohlforth *The Elusive Balance: Power and Perceptions During the Cold War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).

[74] Wohlforth, 'Realism and the End of the Cold War', pp. 109–11.

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or will instead lash out, as the Habsburg empire did in 1914. Both outcomes are possible, and thus the theory cannot explain why the Cold War ended peacefully rather than violently. Wohlforth asserts that declining challengers are less likely than declining hegemons to resort to war, but that claim, even if accurate, has no bearing at all on the question of why the Cold War ended peacefully. A lower likelihood of going to war is not equivalent to zero likelihood. Indeed, earlier theoretical work on war and hegemonic rivalry suggests that a challenger will be more likely, not less likely, than a hegemonic state to resort to preemptive military action when confronted by an immediate threat.[75] The Soviet Union was faced with just such a threat in Eastern Europe in 1989. Wohlforth's theoretical framework sheds no light on why the Soviet Union decided to refrain from the use of military force in Eastern Europe.

Empirically, Wohlforth's argument presents a distorted view of the perceptions that actually existed in the mid- to late 1980s. In retrospect, it may seem that everyone at the time was convinced that the Soviet Union was in irreversible decline and the United States was on the ascendance, but the reality is that at least as much attention—indeed more attention—was being devoted in the 1980s to the purported decline of the United States. The prevailing 'declinist' mood in the mid- to late 1980s was well summarized at the time by Joseph Nye in a book responding to the oft-heard argument that the United States was 'clearly facing a crisis of the decay of power' and was rapidly losing its place in the world:

> By 1989, half the American public believed that the nation was in decline. Only one in five Americans believed that the United States was the top economic power, even though it remained by far the world's largest economy. After President Reagan's military build-up in the 1980s, only a fifth of the people believed that the United States was ahead of the Soviet Union in overall military strength. About a third of the public believed that the country's nuclear arsenal was weaker than that of the Soviet Union, and half believed that the United States was behind in conventional military strength. A rash of books and articles published in the 1980s described the decline of nations, and American decline in particular.[76]

So widespread was the perception of a steady and dangerous US decline in the 1980s that many commentators and political figures began calling for a retrenchment of US commitments abroad. In a typical case, a leading American scholar wrote in 1988 that the 'relative [US] decline has begun to turn absolute', making it imperative for the United States to withdraw its troops from Europe and reduce its defence expenditures.[77] Many other commentators endorsed this view, and similar misgivings were voiced by leading officials in the Reagan administration. When the US deputy defence secretary was asked in 1988 why he had urged Japan to increase its military spending, he chided the reporter: 'You mean you haven't read Professor Paul Kennedy's book on the rise and fall of the great powers?'[78]

These growing concerns in the United States hardly went unnoticed in Moscow. Soviet officials closely followed the debate and took comfort from it, hoping that the

[75] Jack S. Levy, 'Declining Power and the Preventive Motivation for War: Research Note', *World Politics*, 40:1 (October 1987), pp. 90–2.
[76] Joseph Nye, Jr., *Bound to Lead: the Changing Nature of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 1990), p. 2.
[77] David P. Calleo, 'The End of the Hegemony of the Cheap', *New Perspectives Quarterly*, 5:2 (Spring 1988), p. 32.
[78] Cited in Nye, *Bound to Lead*, p. 266.

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perception of relative American decline would force the Reagan administration to curtail its strategy of 'neo-globalism'.[79] Wohlforth's analysis omits the whole phenomenon of 'declinism' in the United States and implies instead that the dominant perception in the late 1980s was of a 'rigid, Spartan Soviet Russia [as] the moribund challenger, and [a] dynamic, Athenian America [as] the rising defender.'[80]

In addition to neglecting the American side of the power rivalry, Wohlforth is unconvincing when he discusses how the Soviet Union's relative position was perceived in Moscow. In particular, he overlooks the extent to which Soviet leaders perceived a sharp relative decline at the start of the 1980s, long before Gorbachev took office. Declassified transcripts of CPSU Politburo meetings from 1980, 1981, and 1982—when Leonid Brezhnev was still in office—are full of apprehensive comments about the Soviet Union's relative power.[81] Similar comments can be found in Politburo transcripts from 1983 and 1984.[82] These sorts of remarks were hardly unique to the Gorbachev era. (Indeed, the language used about this matter in 1980–84 was often identical to that used in 1987–89.) Yet neither Brezhnev nor his two immediate successors, Yurii Andropov and Konstantin Chernenko, would ever have contemplated any of the liberalizing steps that Gorbachev took.

If perceptions of relative decline were all that mattered (as Wohlforth argues), Andropov should have been inclined to move in the same general direction that Gorbachev did—that is, toward domestic liberalization and foreign policy retrenchment. Just the opposite was the case. Andropov wanted to make the Soviet economy work better by tightening discipline, punishing 'shirkers', demanding higher norms, and cracking down on corruption. Far-reaching liberalization and drastic foreign policy changes were never part of his agenda and would not have been even if he had lived longer. Far from wanting to loosen the Communist Party's control, Andropov intended to rely more heavily on political repression and to expand the powers of the KGB secret police to eradicate dissent and uphold Communist orthodoxy. This point was emphasized by one of the main architects of Gorbachev's reforms, Aleksandr Yakovlev.[83]

The difference between Andropov and Gorbachev was even more pronounced on foreign policy. Andropov was a vehement supporter of the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956 (when he was ambassador in Budapest), an outspoken and aggres-

[79] On Moscow's efforts to counter 'neo-globalism', see 'Postanovlenie TsK KPSS: O merakh po usileniyu nashego protivodeistviya amerikanskoi politike 'neoglobalizma',' no. 49 (Top Secret), 1 August 1986,in APRF, F. 3, Op. 102, D. 230, Ll. 170–6.

[80] Wohlforth, 'Realism and the End of the Cold War', p. 99.

[81] See 'Zasedanie Politbyuro TsK KPSS 29 oktyabrya 1980 goda: Materialy k druzhestvennomu rabochemu vizitu v SSSR pol'skikh rukovoditelei', 29 October 1981 (Top Secret), in TsKhSD, F. 89, Op. 42, d. 31, Ll. 1–7; 'Zasedanie Politbyuro TsK KPSS 29 oktyabrya 1981 goda: Ob itogakh poezdki t. Rusakova K. V. v GDR, ChSSR, VNR i NRB', 29 October 1981 (Top Secret), in TsKhSD, F. 89, Op. 42, D. 48, Ll. 1–6; 'Zasedanie Politbyuro TsK KPSS 10 dekabrya 1981 goda', Ll. 1–11.

[82] See, for example, 'Zasedanie Politbyuro TsK KPSS 31 maya 1983 goda', 31 May 1983 (Top Secret), in TsKhSD, F. 89, Op. 42, D. 53, Ll. 1–14; 'Zasedanie Politbyuro TsK KPSS 18 noyabrya 1982 goda', 18 November 1982 (Top Secret), in APRF, F. 82, Op. 1, D. 68, esp. Ll. 453–8; 'Zasedanie Politbyuro TsK KPSS 10 marta 1983 goda', 10 March 1983 (Top Secret), in TsKhSD, F. 89, Op. 42, D. 51, esp. L. 13; 'Zasedanie Politbyuro TsK KPSS 7 iyulya 1983 goda', 7 July 1983 (Top Secret), 7 July 1983 (Top Secret), in TsKhSD, F. 89, Op. 42, D. 64, Ll. 12–23; 'Zasedanie Politbyuro TsK KPSS ot 19 yanvarya 1984 goda', 19 January 1984 (Top Secret), in TsKhSD, F. 89, Op. 42, D. 56, Ll. 1–13; and 'Zasedanie Politbyuro TsK KPSS 23 fevralya 1983 goda', 23 February 1983 (Top Secret), in APRF, F. 84, Op. 1, D. 132, Ll. 129–38.

[83] Interview with Yakovlev in 'Priglashenie k sporu', *Literaturnaya gazeta* (Moscow), no. 19 (15 May 1991), p. 3.

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sive proponent of Soviet military intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968 (when he was head of the KGB and a candidate member of the Soviet Politburo), and one of the handful of Soviet Politburo members who decided to invade Afghanistan in December 1979.[84] He staunchly resisted any suggestion of pulling Soviet troops out of Afghanistan when he was CPSU General Secretary in 1982–84. Andropov's opposition to any retrenchment in foreign policy was evident at a Soviet Politburo meeting in March 1983, when Soviet foreign minister Andrei Gromyko argued that the 'difficulties' confronting Soviet troops in Afghanistan made it imperative to seek a 'mutually acceptable political settlement'.[85] Andropov immediately and angrily rejected this idea, emphasizing that 'we are waging a battle against the American imperialists, who are well aware that in this sphere of international politics they have lost their positions. That is why we cannot back down.'[86] He insisted that the Soviet Union would have to keep its troops in Afghanistan for as long as necessary—perhaps even for decades—to crush the 'bandits'. For Andropov, the only important thing was to hold the socialist bloc together (and expand it if possible) under tight Soviet control. It is inconceivable that he would have stood by if anything remotely comparable to the events of 1989 had occurred during his tenure.

Thus, despite long-standing perceptions of the Soviet Union's relative disadvantages, Brezhnev, Andropov, and Chernenko were all unwilling to relinquish key Soviet positions abroad. If these earlier leaders were averse to any notion of a retrenchment of Soviet foreign policy commitments, their perceptions of the USSR's relative weaknesses must have mattered far less than Wohlforth suggests.

Wohlforth's argument also conveys a misleading sense of the way Soviet policy toward Eastern Europe changed. Domestic political liberalization in the USSR and 'new thinking' in Soviet foreign policy went hand in hand. As domestic reform in the Soviet Union accelerated in the spring of 1988, Soviet policy toward Eastern Europe also began to loosen, and the 'winds of change' gradually swept through the Communist bloc. Faced with growing popular unrest, the Polish and Hungarian governments undertook ambitious programmes of political and economic reform, and before long they had proceeded further than the Soviet Union itself had. By contrast, the other four Warsaw Pact countries—Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, and Romania—adamantly eschewed any hint of political liberalization, clinging firmly to orthodox Communist policies. Even so, it had become clear by early 1989 that Gorbachev was willing to permit far-reaching internal changes in Eastern Europe that previously would have been ruled out by the Brezhnev Doctrine.

Thus, from then on, the real issue for Gorbachev was not whether to accept peaceful domestic change in Eastern Europe, as in Czechoslovakia in 1968, but how to prevent widespread anti-Soviet violence from breaking out, as in Hungary in 1956. Gorbachev would have found himself in an intractable situation if he had been confronted by a large-scale, violent uprising in Eastern Europe. On the two previous occasions when violent rebellions threatened Soviet control in the region—in East

[84] On Afghanistan, see the handwritten CPSU Politburo resolution 'K polozheniyu v 'A',' 12 December 1979 (Top Secret/Special Dossier), in TsKhSD, F. 89, Op. 14, Dok. 31, L. 1.

[85] 'Zasedanie Politbyuro TsK KPSS 10 marta 1983 goda: 6. O polozhenii v Afganistane i dopolnitel'nykh merakh po ego uluchsheniyu', 10 March 1983 (Top Secret), in TsKhSD, F. 89, Op. 42, D. 51, L. 12.

[86] Ibid., L. 13.

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Germany in 1953 and Hungary in 1956—Gorbachev's predecessors had responded with military force. If a comparable crisis had erupted in 1989, the pressure for Soviet military intervention would have been enormous. No matter how Gorbachev might have responded, he would have suffered grave political damage. On the one hand, if he had declined to reassert military control in the face of widespread anti-Soviet violence, he would have given his domestic opponents a perfect opportunity to move against him. On the other hand, if he had proceeded with a full-fledged invasion, the adverse effects on Soviet domestic reform and on East-West relations would have been incalculable. Although the best solution from Gorbachev's standpoint was to avoid this dilemma altogether, that objective, too, had become increasingly problematic. The sweeping reforms in the USSR had unleashed centrifugal forces within the Soviet bloc, making it *more* likely, not less likely, that a violent rebellion would occur.[87] One of the main deterrents to anti-Communist uprisings in Eastern Europe after 1956 was the local populations' awareness that, if necessary, Soviet troops would intervene to restore control. Because this perceived constraint had been steadily diminishing under Gorbachev, the risk of a violent upheaval had increased commensurately.

The possibility of a violent explosion in Eastern Europe had been increasingly apparent to prominent Soviet specialists on the region, such as Oleg Bogomolov and Vyacheslav Dashichev, whose views in the past would have been of little or no interest to the top leadership. By the late 1980s, however, the situation had changed enough that their views were gradually able to filter upward and help shape the perceptions of Gorbachev's key aides, especially Georgii Shakhnazarov (Gorbachev's chief adviser on Eastern Europe), Aleksandr Yakovlev, and Soviet foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze. These senior officials—and eventually Gorbachev himself—came to realize that the longer the existing structures in Eastern Europe remained in place, the greater the danger would be for the Soviet Union. A secret memorandum prepared by Shakhnazarov for Gorbachev and the Soviet Politburo in October 1988 warned that 'social instability and crisis might engulf the whole socialist world simultaneously.'[88] Another of Gorbachev's key advisers on Europe, Vitalii Zhurkin, later recalled that the Soviet authorities had finally 'faced up to the fact . . . that the authoritarian and totalitarian systems in the countries of Eastern Europe were artificial and would not last forever.'[89] If those systems had been 'prolonged for another five or ten years', Zhurkin argued, the resulting 'explosions' would have been far more 'destructive', causing greater 'destabilization' and 'problems for everyone, especially us.'[90]

Thus, both the record of previous crises in Eastern Europe and the prospect that new crises would soon emerge had convinced Gorbachev's advisers (and, in time, Gorbachev himself) that 'if positive changes [in Eastern Europe] were suppressed or delayed, the whole situation would end in tragedy'.[91] Gorbachev also was aware,

[87] This point was emphasized by Georgii Shakhnazarov in a memorandum he prepared in October 1988 for the CPSU Politburo, 'K zasedaniyu Politbyuro 6/X-88 g.', 6 October 1988 (Secret), reproduced in *Tsena svobody: Reformatsiya Gorbacheva glazami ego pomoshchnika* (Moscow: Rossika-Zevs, 1993), pp. 367–9.

[88] Ibid., p. 367.

[89] Interview with Vitalii Zhurkin, adviser to Gorbachev on European affairs, in 'Evropa v menyayushchikhsya koordinatakh', *Izvestiya* (Moscow), 26 May 1990, p. 5.

[90] Ibid.

[91] E. Shevardnadze, 'O vneshnei politike', *Pravda* (Moscow), 26 June 1990, p. 3.

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however, that unless these 'positive changes' in Eastern Europe occurred peacefully, his domestic reform programme—and his own political fate—would be in jeopardy.

Mindful of that dilemma, Gorbachev and his aides by late 1988 had established two basic goals for Soviet policy: to avoid direct Soviet military intervention at all costs;[92] and to achieve a peaceful but rapid transition to a new political order in Eastern Europe. By drastically modifying the region's political complexion, they could defuse the pressures that had given rise to violent internal crises in the past. But to ensure that the early stages of the process remained peaceful and that 'positive changes' would indeed occur, the Soviet Union itself had to play an active role.[93] The basic problem was that if most of the East European Communist parties had been left to their own devices, they would have sought to avoid reforms indefinitely. It thus fell to the Soviet Union to promote and help bring about fundamental change, rather than simply waiting and hoping that all would work out for the best.

This decision to assume an *active* role is what was so striking about the reorientation of Soviet policy toward Eastern Europe. Contrary to Wohlforth's depiction, Gorbachev was not mechanistically forced to accept and tolerate drastic changes in the Warsaw Pact countries; rather, he and his aides did their best to ensure that far-reaching changes occurred and that they occurred peacefully. One of the senior officials responsible for Soviet relations with Eastern Europe later acknowledged Moscow's role:

> The CPSU Central Committee was aware of the unsavory processes under way in the [East European] countries and therefore—to the extent permitted by the principle of non-interference in internal affairs and respect of the right of peoples to choose—we tried to influence the situation.[94]

Gorbachev had pledged in the spring of 1988 that the Soviet Union 'would not impose [its] own methods of development', including *perestroika* and *glasnost*, 'on anyone else',[95] but the situation in Eastern Europe was changing so rapidly by late 1988 and 1989 that it necessitated greater Soviet involvement than he had initially anticipated. In a reversal of earlier patterns of Soviet-East European relations, when Gorbachev's predecessors had relied on military force to 'defend socialism' in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union in 1989 had to play a direct part in countering the 'unsavoury processes' that might eventually have led to widespread violent unrest in one or more East European countries.

Gorbachev obviously could not have foreseen that the changes he initiated would soon lead to the demise of the whole Soviet bloc. By all indications, he was counting on the emergence of reform-minded Communist leaders (mini-Gorbachevs) in Eastern Europe, who could undertake bold changes while remaining within the Warsaw Pact and CEMA.[96] A transition of this sort, he hoped, would enable the socialist commonwealth to overcome the social and political instability that had plagued it so often in the past.

[92] 'K zasedaniyu Politbyuro 6/X-88 g'., p. 368.
[93] Ibid., pp. 367–8.
[94] 'XXVIII S"ezd Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soyuza', *Pravda* (Moscow), 9 July 1990, p. 5.
[95] 'Otvety M. S. Gorbacheva na voprosy gazety 'Vashington post' i zhurnala 'N'yusuik'', *Pravda* (Moscow), 23 May 1988, p. 2.
[96] This seems to be what Shakhnazarov had in mind in his October 1988 memorandum; see 'K zasedaniyu Politbyuro 6/X-88 g'., pp. 367–9.

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These hopes soon proved illusory, but even when the process of change in Eastern Europe took on a revolutionary momentum of its own, Gorbachev refused to interrupt it. At each of the many points when the Soviet Union could have acted to halt or reverse the process, Gorbachev instead chose to expedite events. Hence, rather than threatening or using military force to prevent a non-Communist government from taking power in Poland in September 1989, he went out of his way to facilitate a smooth transition to a Solidarity-led government. The Soviet Union played a similar role in East Germany, where the leaders of the Socialist Unity Party (SED) had been convinced in the late 1980s that they could avoid reform indefinitely because Moscow would never permit their regime to collapse.[97] This belief persisted in East Berlin to the very end, but again Gorbachev decided otherwise. Much the same was true in Czechoslovakia. In mid-November 1989, just after the Berlin Wall had opened and just before a 'velvet revolution' began in Czechoslovakia, Aleksandr Yakovlev was asked by an official Czechoslovak journalist whether the revolutionary events in East Germany, Hungary, and Poland were endangering the existence of Communism. Yakovlev replied that the recent changes 'pose a threat to no one except to those [Communist] countries that have not yet gone through the process of democratization'.[98]

All this suggests that ideological change did play at least some role—perhaps even a decisive role—in the transformation of Soviet policy. Gorbachev had choices to make in 1989, just as Chinese leaders did in June when they opted for large-scale violent repression near Tiananmen Square. The vivid images of the bloodshed in China reinforced the sense in Moscow that urgent steps were needed to defuse the growing pressures in Eastern Europe.[99] For the hardline East European regimes themselves, however, the main lesson of Tiananmen Square was very different: They concluded that violence could be useful in putting an end to dangerous unrest. East German leaders lavishly praised the Chinese crackdown, prompting Beijing to thank 'the comrades in the GDR for their support and understanding of the steps China took to crush the counter-revolutionary disorders.'[100] Within a few days of the massacres, the East German authorities began secretly planning for what they described as a 'Chinese solution' (*chinesische Lösung*) in the GDR.[101] Three months later, when a full-fledged crisis erupted in East Germany, the authorities there

[97] See, for example, 'Niederschrift des Arbeitstreffens des Genossen Erich Honecker, Generalsekretär des ZK der SED und Vorsitzender des Staatsrates der DDR, mit Genossen Michail Gorbatschow, Generalsekretär des ZK der KPdSU und Vorsitzender des Obersten Sowjets der UdSSR, am 28.6.1989 in Moskau', 28 June 1989 (Top Secret), in SAPMDB/ZPA, J IV 2/2A/3228; 'Niederschrift über das Gespräch des Generalsekretärs des Zentralkomitees der SED und Vorsitzenden des Staatsrates der DDR, Erich Honecker, mit dem Generalsekretär des ZK der KPdSU, Michail Gorbatschow, am 7. Oktober 1989', 7 October 1989 (Top Secret), in SAPMDB, ZPA, J IV 2/2.035/60.

[98] TASS, 15 November 1989.

[99] Interviews with Georgii Shakhnazarov and Anatolii Chernyaev, in Providence, Rhode Island, 7 May 1998.

[100] 'Herzliche Gratulation der DDR an das chinesische Brudervolk: Grusstelegramm nach Peking an Repräsentanten der Volksrepublik', *Neues Deutschland* (East Berlin), 30 September–1 October 1989, p. 1.

[101] See 'Krenz und Mielke vereinbarten auf Geheimkonferenz chinesische Lösung', *Die Welt* (Hamburg), 21 May 1990, p. 6.

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prepared to move ahead with a 'Chinese solution'.[102] On 5 October, the head of the East German state security (Stasi) apparatus, Erich Mielke, sent an 'extremely urgent' directive to all Stasi branches ordering them to take 'decisive action to smash inimical enemy activities'.[103] At the behest of the East German president, Erich Honecker, Mielke followed up on this directive three days later by ordering Stasi units to use 'all appropriate means' and 'offensive measures' to 'rout and eradicate conspiratorial gatherings'.[104] After preliminary disturbances were forcibly suppressed in Dresden and Berlin on 8 October, the prospect of much larger unrest in Leipzig on the 9th prompted the dispatch of a vast number of combat-ready army troops, security forces, motorized police, and airborne commandos, along with the stockpiling of emergency medical supplies and blood plasma.[105] Shortly before these heavily-armed units were sent to confront the demonstrators, they were given stern instructions:

> Comrades, from now on this is class war. The situation corresponds to [the uprising on] 17 June 1953. Today it will all be decided: either them or us. Class vigilance is essential. If truncheons are not enough, use firearms. [If you encounter children], that's too bad for them. We have guns, and we don't have them for nothing![106]

If the East German authorities had resorted to large-scale force and repression in Leipzig with political support from Moscow, and if they had been backed by the nineteen Soviet Army divisions in the GDR, they undoubtedly could have quelled the unrest rather swiftly. (Soviet troops needed only a day in June 1953 to crush the rebellion that engulfed East Germany.) Before any repressive measures could be adopted on 9 October, however, Soviet officials urged the East German authorities to avoid the use of large-scale force.[107] They also made clear that Soviet troops in the GDR would not support any move against unarmed demonstrators. Without backing from Moscow and the opportunity to rely on Soviet troops, the East German authorities reluctantly abandoned their plans for a violent crackdown and allowed protests to continue all over the GDR.

Shortly thereafter, when a senior East German official, Harry Tisch, visited Moscow to inform Gorbachev that the SED Politburo intended to remove Erich Honecker as SED General Secretary and head of state, the Soviet leader expressed

[102] See '"Chinesische Lösung": Wollten Stasi-Leute ein Blutbad unter Demonstranten provozieren?' *Der Spiegel*, No. 51, 18 December 1989, pp. 42–4; Ewald König, 'Der Honecker-Befehl zum Blutbad war am 9. Oktober schön unter schrieben', *Die Presse* (Vienna), 24 November 1989, p. 4; Cordt Schnibben, 'Ich bin das Volk': Wie Erich Honecker und sein Politburo die Konterrevolution erlebten' (1), *Der Spiegel* (Hamburg), no. 16, 16 April 1990, pp. 72–90; and '"Makkaroni mit Schinken, bitte": Wie Erich Honecker und sein Politbüro die Konterrevolution erlebten' (II), *Der Spiegel* (Hamburg), no. 17, 23 April 1990, pp. 78–98.

[103] 'VVS-Nr. 0008 Mfs-Nr. 69/89', 5 October 1989 (Top Secret), from Army General E. Mielke, in Bundesbeauftragte für die Unterlagen des Ministeriums für Staatssicherheit der ehemaligen DDR (BStU), Zentralarchiv (ZA), MfS-ZAIG 3806.

[104] 'VVS-Nr. 0008', 8 October 1989 (Top Secret), from Army General E. Mielke, in BStU, ZA, Mfs-Dok. 103625.

[105] 'Massnahmen zum Übergang zu einer hoheren Stufe der Gefechtsbereitschaft', Befehl Nr. 105/89 (Strictly Secret), 7 October 1989, from Army General Heinz Hoffmann, in Bundesarchiv/Abteilungen Potsdam, Militärisches Zwischenarchiv, Strausberg Archiv-Zugangsnummer 32665, Bl. 183.

[106] Text in Neues Forum Leipzig, *Jetzt oder nie-Demokratie: Leipziger Herbst '89* (Leipzig: Forum, 1989), pp. 69, 92–93.

[107] See the testimony of Vyacheslav Kochemasov, Soviet ambassador in the GDR in 1989, in Stanislav Kondrashov, 'Nashe mesto v mire, ili Dumaya o dome za granitsei', *Izvestiya* (Moscow), 29 April 1990, p. 7. See also Kochemasov's memoir, *Meine letzte Mission*, pp. 168–9.

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his approval.[108] The Soviet ambassador in East Germany, Vyacheslav Kochemasov, then aided the effort by persuading a key SED figure, Willi Stoph, to go along with the anti-Honecker forces.[109] There is no doubt that if Gorbachev had been strongly inclined to keep Honecker in power, the East German Politburo would have deferred to his wishes; but Gorbachev's withdrawal of support for Honecker effectively sealed the East German leader's fate.

Contrary to Wohlforth's depiction, the collapse of Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe was by no means inevitable. If Gorbachev had been determined to uphold orthodox Communist rule in Eastern Europe, he undoubtedly could have succeeded. The Soviet Army in the late 1980s was still perfectly capable of enforcing the Brezhnev Doctrine. If the top post in the Soviet Communist Party in March 1985 had gone to a hard-line Politburo member like Viktor Grishin, Grigory Romanov, or Nikolai Tikhonov instead of Gorbachev, the Brezhnev Doctrine undoubtedly would have remained in full force. None of these men would have even contemplated a drastic change of course in Soviet foreign policy, especially policy in Eastern Europe.

Gorbachev's acceptance and even encouragement of the peaceful disintegration of the bloc stemmed from a conscious choice on his part, a choice bound up with his domestic priorities and his desire to 'lay to rest all remnants of Stalinism and start the Soviet Union on its way to the 20th century.'[110] This is the phrase that Adam Ulam used when he speculated in 1975—ten years before Gorbachev came to power—about what would happen if 'ten years from now' a Soviet leader were to come along who was determined to pursue 'modernizaton, rationalization, radical economic reform, political relaxation', and other measures that would do away with the Stalinist ideological legacy.[111] Ulam correctly foresaw that any Soviet leader who was truly intent on extirpating Stalinist ideology at home would have to be willing to implement drastic changes in policy *vis-à-vis* Eastern Europe. Far-reaching political liberalization and greater openness within the Soviet Union—which represented fundamental departures from traditional Marxism-Leninism—would have been incompatible with, and eventually would have been undermined by, a policy requiring military intervention on behalf of orthodox Communist regimes in Eastern Europe. A fundamental reorientation of Soviet ideology and domestic priorities necessitated the relinquishment of Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe. Gorbachev's growing recognition of this link, and his willingness to pursue it to its logical end, were crucial in ending the Cold War.

Thus, the connection between ideological change and the demise of the Soviet bloc was more complex than often implied. It was not a matter of propitiating the West or of making endless concessions. Instead, it was a question of taking steps to head off violent uprisings in Eastern Europe that, if they had occurred, would have derailed Gorbachev's effort to eradicate the Stalinist legacy once and for all. By the end of 1989, the pace and scope of change in Eastern Europe had greatly outstripped Gorbachev's expectations, but the fact that his policy brought unintended

[108] See Günter Schabowski, *Der Absturz* (Berlin: Rohwolt, 1991), p. 261. See also Kochemasov, *Meine letzte Mission*, pp. 175–6.
[109] Kochemasov, *Meine letzte Mission*, pp. 175–6.
[110] See Mark Kramer, ed., *The Collapse of the Soviet Union* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000).
[111] Interview with Adam B. Ulam, Radio Free Europe, May 1975, stored in RFE/RL archive in Budapest.

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consequences does not detract from one vital way in which it succeeded.[112] The rapid transition to a new and more stable political order in Eastern Europe was almost entirely peaceful, other than in the special case of Romania. Never before has social and political change of this magnitude occurred so quickly with almost no violence. To the extent that Gorbachev's policy contributed to that outcome—and it did in no small measure—it guaranteed that the Cold War was truly over.

Conclusion

In the United States, the declassification of materials during the Cold War greatly enriched the study of ideological influences in US foreign policy, but in the Soviet Union no such procedures existed. Analyses of the role of ideology in Soviet foreign policy had to be based solely on published materials and open sources. The sudden availability of new evidence from the former Soviet-bloc archives has enabled scholars to probe far more deeply into the motivations behind Soviet foreign policy. One consequence has been to accord ideology greater prominence after years of relative neglect—neglect stemming partly from a view that ideology was unimportant, and partly from the influence of neorealism on studies of the Cold War.

The new emphasis on ideology is welcome in many respects. The fierce ideological divide, pitting liberal democratic capitalism against Marxism-Leninism, provided a crucial backdrop for the Cold War. Although a spirited rivalry between the two dominant states might well have arisen even if they had both been liberal democracies, it is inconceivable that such a rivalry would have been as militarized and hostile as the Cold War was. Ideology goes a long way toward explaining the sheer intensity of the Cold War.

Nevertheless, in the rush to 'bring ideology back in,' there is a real danger of giving short shrift to the importance of material interests. Even if we concede that the ideological clash transformed a standard great-power rivalry into a global, all-encompassing competition, ideology would not explain why a rivalry arose in the first place. Nor is it at all clear, despite John Gaddis's claim to the contrary, that ideology *determined* (as opposed to merely influencing) either side's specific foreign policy decisions, at least in most cases. In a few instances, of course, ideology did determine specific policy choices, as we saw with the international economic arrangements that the two superpowers promoted and the types of alliances they forged in Europe. Even on these issues, however, ideology alone is not sufficient to explain what happened. On most other issues, it seems unlikely that decisions would have been vastly different from what they were even if a deep ideological gulf had not existed. Although we should always be careful to avoid confusing real history

[112] See 'Vypiska iz protokola No. 175 zasedaniya Politbyuro TsK KPSS ot 2 yanvarya 1990 goda: O sobytiyakh v Vostochnoi Evrope i pozitsii SSSR', no. P175/V (Top Secret), 2 January 1990, in TsKhSD, F. 89, Per. 13, Dok. 39; and 'Vypiska iz protokola no.184 zasedaniya Politbyuro TsK KPSS ot 5 aprelya 1990 goda: O linii KPSS i merakh v podderzhku kommunisticheskikh i rabochikh partii v vostochnoevropeiskikh stranakh', no. P184/38 (Top Secret), 5 April 1990, in TsKhSD, F. 89, Per. 9, Dok. 109. This was especially true of events in the GDR; see 'Vypiska iz protokola no. 165 zasedaniya Politbyuro TsK KPSS ot 11 sentyabrya 1989 goda: O zayavlenii TASS v podderzhku Germanskoi Demokraticheskoi Respubliki', no. P165/6 (Top Secret), 11 September 1989, in TsKhSD, F. 89, Per. 9, Dok. 30.

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with its counterfactual opposite, we can surmise that the United States would have wanted to counter the rising power of the Soviet Union after the war, even if the regime in Moscow had not been Communist. By the same token, it is not unreasonable to think that a non-communist Stalin might have approved North Korea's attack against South Korea. And Moscow's decision in 1968 to intervene in Czechoslovakia was reminiscent of the Tsarist empire's efforts to keep rebellious nations in line. Realist explanations emphasizing state interests are often borne out well by the archives.

This is not to say, however, that we should move too far in the realist direction. The latest evidence suggests that Marxism-Leninism was far more than a charade or a smokescreen; it was an ideology that underlay and guided the Soviet regime, as well as a means of codifying and elaborating foreign policy. It was both the language in which foreign (and domestic) policy discussions took place and a 'linguacultural ideology' that helped shape how Soviet leaders viewed the outside world. And because policy was formulated in Marxist-Leninist terms by officials who had to act as though the ideology was scientifically accurate, those officials were inclined to fit their policies into particular stereotypes.

The basics of Soviet ideology changed relatively little over time, but on a few occasions profoundly important domestic or foreign events did allow new ideological tenets to emerge, which in turn paved the way for changes in foreign policy. One such opportunity was opened by Stalin's death. His successors promptly sought to reverse a number of 'mistaken policies' that he had bequeathed to them, including his refusal to accept a settlement in the Korean War and his bitter rift with Yugoslavia.[113] These reversals were not merely short-term, tactical shifts. Nor were they aberrations on the part of a 'maverick' Lavrentii Beria, as was later alleged. Instead, they reflected a deeper sentiment among top officials that Stalin's ideological framework had at times been detrimental to Soviet state interests.[114]

More important still for an understanding of the role of ideology in Soviet foreign policy was the end of the Cold War, an event that realism cannot adequately explain. Structural conditions in the international system—especially the US-Soviet military balance—did not change enough in the 1970s and 1980s to account for the drastic reorientation of Soviet policy in Eastern Europe. From the neorealist perspective, Moscow's withdrawal from the Cold War rivalry should have been inconceivable. Nor are the changes in Soviet foreign policy readily explained by perceptions of relative power alone. Gorbachev's assessment of the USSR's relative power was little different from the apprehensive views expressed by his predecessors. Yet Gorbachev, unlike his predecessors, was eventually willing to take drastic steps to liberalize the Soviet polity and eliminate the Stalinist legacy. Those goals, in turn, required a transformation of Soviet policy in Eastern Europe. Gorbachev increasingly recognized that his bid to undo the Stalinist legacy at home would not succeed unless he also eliminated Stalin's legacy in Eastern Europe. The active policy that the Soviet Union adopted to forestall violence in Eastern Europe and bring about a new political order was crucial in ending the Cold War. Thus, on the key issue of why the

[113] 'Rasporyazhenie Soveta Ministrov SSSR ot 19 marta 1953 g.', No. 858–372ss (Top Secret), 19 March 1953, in APRF, F. 3, Op. 65, D. 830, Ll. 60–71.

[114] See my 'The Early Post-Stalin Succession Struggle and Upheavals in East-Central Europe: Internal-External Linkages in Soviet Policy' (Part 1), *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 1:1 (Winter 1999), pp. 3–55 and 1:2 (Spring–Summer 1999), 3–86.

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Cold War ended, neorealist and realist explanations seem inadequate or, at best, incomplete. The momentous events of 1989 were spurred primarily by sweeping ideological changes in the Soviet Union that paved the way for a new Soviet policy in Eastern Europe, which in turn led to the end of the Cold War and a reconfiguration of the international system.

Judged in this light, the greater emphasis that has recently been accorded to the role of ideology in Soviet foreign policy seems largely warranted. Too often, however, scholars have been wont to draw sweeping conclusions from a limited body of evidence. Many Western analysts have been surprised to find Marxist-Leninist formulations in newly declassified materials and transcripts of secret discussions.[115] Some of these formulations are indeed peculiar, but what is far more surprising is the large number of archival items that are free (or nearly so) of ideological residue and are couched instead in the language of *realpolitik*. To cite one example: The countless cables sent by Soviet diplomats to senior officials in Moscow are in many instances remarkably similar to the diplomatic and foreign ministry reports and correspondence stored in Western archives. This may well be a case of 'institutional isomorphism,' a concept devised by organizational theorists to denote the high degree of homogeneity of bureaucratic/organizational forms and practices. The tasks assigned to Soviet foreign ministry officials were broadly similar to the types of assignments given to foreign ministry officials in other countries, and thus the means of performing these tasks tended to be similar as well This phenomenon is evident not only in reports and cables from the Soviet foreign ministry, but in many other types of declassified Soviet documents: military directives and reports, intelligence dispatches, and even many top-level deliberations. Most of the records of the Soviet Politburo are still off-limits, but the transcripts and reports that have been released are by no means always reflective of ideological preoccupations.

Particular caution is also needed when evaluating the effects of ideology on individual Soviet leaders. Despite the plethora of newly released documentation, we still understand remarkably little about Stalin's 'real' thinking and motives.[116] Recent analyses of Stalin's motives in foreign affairs often amount to little more than speculation, albeit in some cases well-informed speculation. Khrushchev's motives are equally difficult to fathom. It was after all Nikita Khrushchev who, as head of the Ukrainian Communist Party in the late 1930s and 1940s, outdid even Stalin in his cruelty and murderousness. Were his actions at that time motivated by ideological fervour or a simple lust for power? By the same token, were his efforts later on to de-Stalinize the Soviet system driven by ideology, calculations of power, or a desire to strengthen the Soviet system? There is no easy answer or any reason to assume that it was ideology 'all the way down.'

This suggests that even if all the archives are opened, the new evidence will not provide full vindication for either realism or an ideology-based approach. As

[115] See, for example, Vojtech Mastny, *The Cold War and Soviet Insecurity: The Stalin Years* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 9, which claims that 'some of the most secret documents could have been published in *Pravda* without anybody's noticing'. Mastny asserts that 'there was no double bookkeeping', but the case of the Brezhnev Doctrine (discussed above) shows otherwise.

[116] See, however, Vladimir Pechatnov, 'Soyuzniki nazhimayut na tebya dlya togo, chtoby slomit' u tebya volyu . . .': Perepiska Stalina s Molotovym i drugimi chlenami Politbyuro po vneshnepoliticheskim voprosam v sentyabre-dekabre 1945 g'., *Istochnik* (Moscow), no. 2 (1999), pp. 70–85; and 'Na etom voprose my slomaem ikh anti-sovetskoe uporstvo . . .': Iz perepiski Stalina s Molotovym po vneshnepoliticheskim delam v 1946 godu', *Istochnik* (Moscow), no. 3 (1999), pp. 92–104.

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Norman Naimark's book on Soviet occupation policy in Germany shows, the motivations behind Soviet (and US) actions were often intricately mixed, and it can be all but impossible to know whether behaviour would have been appreciably different in the absence of ideological considerations.[117] Although many of the specific policies adopted by Soviet leaders could just as easily have been pursued by a 'normal' government responding to external systemic pressures, that does not necessarily mean that ideology was of little relevance. A key task for scholars will be to reexamine the broad and often unspoken assumptions on which specific Soviet and US policies were based. Even if the immediate motivations of these policies were ambiguous or too numerous to disentangle, the broad ideological assumptions that guided policy-making can be laid out and can be compared to the salience of structural considerations.

In the end, of course, none of this will really answer the perennial question about the share of responsibility that each side may bear for the Cold War. Nor can we expect to find such an answer just by accumulating more archival evidence. One thing does seem plain, however: The core features of Soviet Communism—including the unchallenged dominance of the CPSU over all aspects of political and economic life, the centralized and hierarchical structure of the Party itself (a condition euphemistically known as 'democratic centralism'), a strict ban on public dissent, and the use of Marxist terminology and 'anti-imperialist' rhetoric—reinforced the Stalinist legacy in Soviet foreign policy. Even if the relative weight of ideology in specific Soviet foreign policy decisions remains murky, it is safe to conclude that the defining features of Soviet Communism were responsible for policies that helped sustain the fierce bipolar confrontation from its inception in 1945 until its unexpected end in 1989.[118]

[117] See Norman M.Naimark, *The Russians In Germany. A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945–1949* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1995).

[118] On the unexpected end of the Cold War and why Western experts in particular failed to predict it, see Michael Cox (ed.), *Rethinking the Soviet Collapse: Sovietology, the Death of Communism, and the New Russia* (London: Pinter/Cassell, 1998).

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