The Cold War has ended, shifting global political life on a scale not seen in fifty years. At the heart of these changes were domestic and foreign policy choices made by the Soviet Union. In domestic affairs, the Communist Party gave up its political monopoly, then collapsed, glasnost has aired historical crimes and failings, and socialist economics is being abandoned. In foreign affairs, the Soviets have acquiesced in the complete collapse of communist client regimes in Eastern Europe and the unification of Germany, accepted far-reaching force reduction and disarmament agreements, sought to strengthen the United Nations, and embarked upon a broad effort to solve regional conflicts. The speed and magnitude of these changes, accelerating in the wake of the abortive August coup, have exhilarated world public opinion and stunned Western foreign policy elites. They have also overturned much of the conventional wisdom in the West about the permanence of the East-West

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conflict, the possibility of change in the communist world, and the relative strengths of the competing camps.2

Not only have these changes been sweeping and unexpected, but they have been peaceful as well, at least at the international level. Many students of Great Power politics have long held that sudden and significant changes in the status of Great Powers, particularly authoritarian ones, are likely to be violent.3 In the modern state system, it is hard to find a precedent for sudden and peaceful change in the status of a central Great Power and in the pattern and intensity of inter-state rivalry. The half century of Cold War, marked by unexpected stability and peace among the Great Powers, has been labeled the “long peace.”4 The postwar period has now also experienced “major peaceful change.”

Given the centrality of the Cold War over the last forty-five years and the importance of the Soviet experiment in the twentieth century, explanations

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of these events are of central concern to social scientists and historians as well as makers of foreign policy.\textsuperscript{5} Thus the long and contentious debate over the origins and strategy of the Cold War is being replaced by a debate about its end.\textsuperscript{6} Because Western knowledge of internal Soviet deliberations and motives remains incomplete and because events of this magnitude are the product of the conjunction of many forces, the debate over the end of the Cold War, like the debate over its origins, is likely to be long and inconclusive.

At the heart of this debate is a question with far-reaching practical and theoretical implications: what are the sources of the Soviet crisis and how do we account for the directions of policy change? At the outset, it is useful to distinguish between the question of what caused the Soviet crisis and the question of what caused the responses. Many students of Soviet politics argue that both the crisis and the responses are the product of essentially internal developments—the failure of socialism and the reform impulses it generated. In this view, the new Soviet foreign policy has been primarily driven by the requirements of domestic reform.\textsuperscript{7}

The proposition of this paper is that recent changes in Soviet foreign policy behavior (and some domestic behavior) can be explained as a product of the changing character of the Soviet Union’s external environment. The Soviet environment has evolved slowly but profoundly over the last half century. The two most important features of the Soviet Union’s new environment, nuclear weapons and the multi-faceted liberal capitalist system of states, have foreclosed the traditional options of expansion, while creating opportunities and imperatives for accommodation and integration. Although the primary causes of the crisis are domestic, Soviet responses, particularly in foreign affairs, derive from external sources. These policy changes are, to a significant degree, an adaptation to a changed international environment that has shaped policy responses by foreclosing some opportunities and creating others.\textsuperscript{8} In short, the transformation of the Soviet


\textsuperscript{6} These recent events also seem certain to alter the debate about the origins of the Cold War. John Lewis Gaddis, “The End of the Cold War and the Rewriting of Cold War History,” unpublished paper, summer 1990.

\textsuperscript{7} We argue that the theory of industrial modernization best explains the Soviet crisis; Deudney and Ikenberry, “Soviet Reform and the End of the Cold War: Explaining Large-Scale Historical Change,” \textit{Review of International Studies}, Vol. 17, No. 3 (Summer 1991), pp. 225–250.

\textsuperscript{8} One of the few systematic attempts to schematize adaptation processes is that of James N.
Union was made possible by the transformation of the international system.9

The Soviet Union’s external environment is a complex collection of factors that include deep global structural trends, the policies of leading states, and the actions of transnational movements and particular individuals.10 Many commentators have emphasized the role of Western state policy, and particularly American containment policy, in inducing Soviet change. However, before conclusions are drawn about the success or failure of particular policies, it is important to assess the full set of environmental factors operating on the Soviet Union, some of which have been long in the making and some of which are not a reflection of government policy. To assess the impact of the Soviet Union’s external environment, it is useful to distinguish between military, economic, and sociocultural realms, and to isolate eight distinct dimensions and chart their change over time. In the military realm, these are: (1) the regime type of leading states; (2) the composition of military power; and (3) the distribution of military power. In the economic realm, they are: (4) economic resources available to other states; (5) economic sta-

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9. We believe that there is a strong deductive case for our claims that changes in the external environment produced changes in Soviet domestic and foreign policy, but until a full assessment of the evidence from Soviet sources is possible, many of our arguments should be regarded as hypotheses, however plausible. The argument that international or system-level factors are paramount in shaping foreign policies rests on the insight that states must respond to external opportunities and vulnerabilities to achieve their goals. Even without full knowledge of internal decision-making, a focus on a state’s international setting provides powerful insights into its behavior. Accordingly, to account for these changes in foreign policy, it is useful to turn to international relations theory to construct a system-level or “outside-in” explanation. Key works in the debate over the explanatory power of unit-level versus system-level factors are: J. David Singer, “The Levels-of-Analysis Problem in International Relations,” in Klaus Knorr and Sidney Verba, eds., The International System: Theoretical Essays (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), pp. 77–92; Kenneth Waltz, Man, the State, and War (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959); and Robert Jervis, Perception and Misperception in International Politics (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), chap. 1.

10. The environment of a state is made up of a multitude of pressures, constraints, opportunities, and attractions often pushing, pulling, and blocking in different directions simultaneously. While all states are subject to the international environment, not all states experience the same environment. The geographical position of a state’s neighbors matters a great deal. In the case of the Soviet Union the behavior of Germany—the nearest Great Power—has loomed particularly large. See Harold Sprout and Margaret Sprout, The Ecological Perspective on Human Affairs (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965).
bility of other states; and (6) the external appeal of a state's economic system. In the sociocultural realm, they are: (7) the strength of international organizations; and (8) the character of global society and culture. Any analysis of either the world system or Soviet policies that does not weigh this full range of factors risks being incomplete and distorted.11

With so many relevant variables, the question arises whether a smaller number of more fundamental causes link them. Identifying such taproots would allow a more parsimonious explanation. The most salient cluster of variables in the Soviet Union's environment is the West, itself a multidimensional, complex set of factors including the world capitalist system, the Western alliance, the policies of the United States, non-state actors, and Western society and culture. Although the features of this system are inter-connected, they cannot be readily reduced to one factor, but rather are distinct forces that pull and push in different ways and directions. The economic dynamism of capitalism puts competitive pressures on the Soviet Union, while the democratic and pacific character of the West diminishes Western military aggressiveness. Nuclear weapons, a factor distinct from the character of the West, reinforce pacific tendencies and incentives for accommodation. The result is a paradox: although the West has become more militarily and economically powerful, it has presented an increasingly benign and magnetic face to the Soviet Union.

Since many of the influential factors in the Soviet environment have existed for many decades, explaining the timing of Soviet change poses a particular challenge. To begin with, the search for new policies may have begun only after the internal economic malaise was perceived as a crisis, which would explain why long-established external features began only recently to exert an influence. Furthermore, some features of the Soviet Union's environment, such as the performance of capitalism and the external appeal of socialism, were undergoing gradual transformation. Also, some features such as nuclear weapons were so novel that a long and uneven learning process was necessary before fundamentally new policies were deemed necessary.

Conclusions about the role of international factors in shaping Soviet change have important implications for two ongoing Western debates. First, they are central to the spirited debate between the left and the right on the role of recent policies and movements in ending the Cold War. Many assessments

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of the conclusion of the Cold War are extensions of political positions held during the Cold War. The right and the left are each scrambling to show that a largely unexpected outcome was the product of its favored policy. On one side, several former Reagan administration officials argue that the vigor of the Reagan-era military counterpressure and its ideological reassertiveness precipitated the Soviet changes.\(^{12}\) On the other side, many Europeans claim that the Helsinki process, détente, and transnational ties within Europe caused change in the East.\(^{13}\) Members of the American peace movement also argue that their efforts to moderate Western extremism and to signal the Soviets that accommodation had a strong constituency in the West significantly contributed to the moderation of Soviet foreign policy.\(^{14}\) Despite their obvious differences, these views all assign a major importance to very recent Western efforts to alter Soviet behavior. But viewed from the longer and wider perspective developed in this article, these initiatives played only a negligible—perhaps even a retarding—role in the Soviet reorientation.

Secondly, conclusions about the international sources of Soviet change also have implications for the long-running clash between realism and liberal globalism in international theory. Since the 1940s, the type of realism that emphasizes the distribution (or balance) of power has been dominant among Western academic theorists as well as in shaping Western policy.\(^{15}\) In the last several decades, this type of realism has been repeatedly challenged by a heterogeneous set of propositions emphasizing global interdependence and the importance of changes in the composition of power.\(^{16}\) In the late 1960s


and 1970s, these liberal globalist theories rapidly gained ground, but were then dealt a serious set-back by the deterioration of East-West relations.\(^{17}\) For liberal globalists, the hard case has been the U.S.-Soviet relationship, because its antagonistic and militarized character has confounded their expectation that relations between states would become more moderate. The basic thrust of our analysis is that while certain aspects of the international environment described within realism and liberalism account for the outcomes, they are not those dimensions of power and interdependence that have been emphasized by either school over the last several decades.

We begin by sketching the key features in the Soviets’ domestic economic crisis, potential avenues of domestic and foreign policy response, and the actual policy changes pursued by Soviet officials to date. In the central sections of the paper, we analyze the Soviet Union’s environment in eight dimensions, trace changes in them over the last half century, and weigh the impact of these changes upon the Soviet Union. In the conclusion, we weigh the relative strength of these variables, examine their interactions, and draw implications for international theory.

**The Soviet Crisis and Alternative Strategies in Response**

About the character of the crisis there is wide agreement. Virtually every commentator of these events—from Mikhail Gorbachev to his American right-wing critics—points to economic stagnation as the decisive impetus for change. Economic stagnation has created a political crisis because it has reduced the resources available to Soviet foreign policy, reduced the domestic legitimacy of the Soviet regime, and reduced the attractiveness of the Soviet model elsewhere. The crisis was the product of failures in the domestic economy.\(^ {18}\) The crisis was exacerbated by international factors, but not caused by them.

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To explain the particular responses to this crisis, it is necessary to consider various paths of change, including those that were not chosen. Both history and theory suggest that there is a range of potential strategic responses to such a crisis. States might pursue different combinations of policies with different degrees of intensity. We categorize these policies to capture interrelated clusters of policies that define fundamentally different societal trajectories. Domestic options range from the totalitarian and authoritarian (single-party and autocratic political rule, repression of human rights, extensive confiscatory extraction, and a state that dominates civil society) to the liberal (political democracy and pluralism, extensive reliance on markets and private property, openness and the accountability of the state to civil society). Foreign policy options include imperialism (military aggression, ideological truculence); autarky (economic and cultural isolation); and accommodation (retrenchment, integration, and ideological moderation).

Prior to the emergence of the Gorbachev regime, there was widespread expectation in the West that the Soviet Union would respond to a crisis of economic stagnation with a mixture of renewed imperialism and authoritarianism. Contrary to these expectations, Gorbachev has led the Soviet Union in a fundamentally new direction both at home and abroad. The Soviet Union has responded to this crisis with a mixture of internal liberalization and external accommodation and retrenchment, rather than increased domestic repression and foreign aggression.

The path of Soviet change contradicted the predictions of renewed authoritarianism and aggressiveness, because a changed international environment made possible the new Soviet foreign policy and domestic liberalization. To understand the logic of Soviet response in the 1980s, we look to the shifting and complex contours of the international environment.

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20. In the early 1980s, for example, Edward Luttwak argued that “regime pessimism,” exacerbated by economic failure, would produce Soviet aggression against neighboring states, particularly in Asia. Luttwak, The Grand Strategy of the Soviet Union (New York: St. Martin’s, 1982). “For Russian governments, foreign glory is not merely an escape from transient crises, but a feature of the very constitutional order; permanent conquests serve to justify the permanent subservience of Russian society. . . . For this reason, international tension and the spectre of war in the form of an ‘imperialist’ attack on the Soviet Union, are vital to the interest of the Communist elite.” Pipes, Survival is Not Enough (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), pp. 41–42.
THE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

A primary goal of all states is the provision of physical security for its people and territory. The ease or difficulty of achieving this goal varies greatly across time and space. For much of Russian and Soviet history, invasion and territorial appropriation was an acute and recurring problem. The way in which the Russian and Soviet state secured itself has had deep ramifications not only for its continued existence but also for many aspects of the domestic regime.21 Over the last fifty years, the Soviet Union’s military and strategic environment has changed, with important implications for both domestic and foreign choices. For purposes of analysis, we look at the international security environment in three parts: the regime characteristics of potential adversaries, the composition of military power, and the distribution of military power. These features, their changes, and their implications are summarized in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Security Environment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old International Environment</th>
<th>New International Environment</th>
<th>Implications for Soviet Foreign Policy</th>
<th>Domestic Implications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quasi-feudal capitalist states seek territorial expansion vs. Pacific liberal-democratic states widespread</td>
<td>Nuclear weapons make territorial aggression suicidal</td>
<td>Lessened fear of Western aggression</td>
<td>More opportunity for domestic liberalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military seizure of territory possible and often successful vs. Overall parity in full range of military capability</td>
<td>Soviet aggression too costly</td>
<td>Expansion as solution to domestic problems foreclosed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia/Soviet Union at relative military disadvantage</td>
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</tbody>
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21. The classic formulation of this argument was made by Otto Hintze: “The form and spirit of the state’s organization will not be determined solely by economic and social relations and clashes of interests, but primarily by the necessities of defense and offense, that is, by the organization of the army and of warfare.” Hintze, “Military Organization and the Organization of the State” (orig. pub. 1906), in Felix Gilbert, ed., The Historical Essays of Otto Hintze (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975).
THE AIMS OF POWER AND THE SPREAD OF LIBERAL-PACIFIC STATES

Change in the Soviet Union's neighboring and rival states during the twentieth century provides a powerful explanation for the recent reorientation of Soviet foreign policy. A world populated by secure liberal democratic states presents a much more benign security environment for the Soviet Union than one filled with dictatorial and authoritarian states. The central presence in the Soviet environment is the Western system that presents a set of constraints and opportunities to which Soviet foreign policy has adapted. We assess this changing environment at two levels: the pattern of regimes of neighboring and rival Great Powers, and the character of foreign policies pursued by liberal democratic states.

GREAT POWER REGIME TYPE AND SYSTEM CHARACTER. A key dimension of a state's security environment is the foreign policy orientation of neighboring and powerful states. States must be concerned not just with the capabilities of other states, but also with their foreign policy objectives. The threat posed by a potential adversary is determined by both intent and capabilities. Policies and intentions are less tangible, harder to measure, and can change more rapidly than capabilities. Nevertheless, foreign policy goals have significant continuities because they are rooted in political institutions and culture. Thus the overall character of a system can be powerfully shaped by the political orientations of the leading actors in it, particularly in a system with a small number of major powers.

For the Soviet Union as well as Russia before it, the political orientation of neighboring states in the West has constituted an overwhelming feature of its environment. During the first half of the twentieth century, Germany loomed largest in the Russian and Soviet security environment. War with Germany has been a profoundly formative experience: In World War I,

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Imperial Germany occupied large areas of the Russian Empire and weakened the autocracy, opening the way for the Bolshevik coup.  

In World War II, Nazi Germany's invasion was defeated at the cost of roughly twenty million lives. The aggressive foreign policy of both Imperial and Nazi Germany was in significant measure the expression of their authoritarian and totalitarian regimes. This experience confirmed the Leninist expectation that capitalist states were volatile and aggressive.

Since the Second World War, there have been two major changes in the Soviet Union's adversaries in the West. First, the Soviets' main adversary has been the liberal democracy of the United States and not imperial authoritarian Germany. The United States is a far more benign and less aggressive Great Power than most of the European states with which the Tsar or Stalin had to contend. Second, and perhaps even more important for the Soviets, the regime character of Germany was radically changed with the emergence of robust liberal democratic institutions in postwar West Germany. The American occupation forces transplanted liberal democratic and constitutional norms and institutions into Germany in such a way that they did not bear the stigma of their foreign origin or arouse a sense of national humiliation. For half a century now, the Soviet Union's principal adversary has been a stable alliance of liberal capitalist democracies. This Western alliance largely defines the character of the contemporary international system and the Soviet Union's security environment.

**THE PACIFIC WESTERN SYSTEM.** The states of the Western alliance, while capable of balancing and resisting Soviet aggression, have shown little inclination to aggress on the Soviet sphere or to provoke war. The system is pacific: capable of defense but structurally non-offensive. The internal plu-

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24. This argument is made most forcefully by Theda Skocpol in *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979).


eralism and structure of the Western system largely forecloses the formation and implementation of an offensive grand strategy, and makes coherent and sustained defensive strategies difficult, particularly in circumstances where threats are not immediate and unambiguous. Liberal states are capable of formulating coherent grand strategies, but these strategies—for the deeply rooted reasons we describe below—tend to be non-offensive.

The tendency of liberal democracies to have pacific relations with each other has been widely recognized. At the same time, liberal democracies do have an extensive record of military intervention in smaller and weaker non-liberal states. But liberal democratic states have not initiated war against non-liberal Great Powers and their overall posture toward such states is essentially defensive. There are five reasons for this pattern. First, the structure of the liberal state itself impedes aggressive action because of its numerous constitutional checks on major war-making, and because its extensive system of deliberation and consultation tends to filter out rash and extreme ideas. Second, democracy empowers the broad mass of people, who have the most to lose from war, and who therefore tend to hold their states back from war-making. Third, the capitalist system of private ownership of wealth provides a continuing check on the ability of the state apparatus to generate revenues for public purposes of all sorts, including war-making. Fourth, the pacific tenor of liberal democratic political culture and the non-

27. Eighteenth-century liberal theorists maintained that popular and constitutional constraints on foreign policy decision-making would lead to pacific outcomes because they would give power to the citizens who would tend to bear the costs of wars. For discussions of the complex relationships between democracy and war, see Peter Manicas, War and Democracy (Oxford, U.K.: Basil Blackwell, 1989); and Michael Doyle, “Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs,” Philosophy and Public Affairs, Vol. 12, No. 3 (Summer 1983), pp. 205–235; and ibid., Vol. 12, No. 4 (Fall 1983), pp. 323–353.

28. Kant’s argument for the pacific tendencies of “republican states” is based on the idea that the state is constitutionally limited, as well as upon democratic controls. On the filtering out of extreme policies in a democracy, see Stephen Van Evera, “Primed for Peace: Europe After the Cold War,” International Security, Vol. 15, No. 3 (Winter 1990/91), p. 27.


martial character of consumer society further reduces the probability of liberal aggression, particularly against a well-armed state.\textsuperscript{31} Fifth, alliances of liberal states experience in a particularly acute form the coordination problems that are inherent in all alliances. Thus liberal democratic states and alliances of such states are likely to experience great difficulties in pursuing grand strategies that go beyond defense.\textsuperscript{32}

As the theory suggests, the basic post–World War II strategy of the Western alliance toward the Soviet Union—containment—has been essentially defensive in character.\textsuperscript{33} “Rollback,” the alternative to containment advanced by James Burnham and other right-wing critics, has remained a fringe position.\textsuperscript{34} Furthermore, the demands of rollback were mismatched to American institutions and culture. The chronic pessimism of rollback advocates was rooted not just in an exaggerated fear of Soviet capabilities, but in an accurate assessment of American unwillingness to engage in provocative and aggressive acts other than interventions in small, weak neighboring states. In addition, this grand strategic alternative has not been pursued because of the potential costs of major war in the nuclear era. Moreover, the non-aggressive nature of America’s grand strategy was matched—indeed, surpassed—by those of West Germany and the other European members of

\textsuperscript{31} The hypothesis that wealth softens martial tendencies has been advanced by Aristotle, Ibn Khaldun, Machiavelli, and Montesquieu. Only in the eighteenth century did this softening come to be seen as a virtue rather than a liability of mercantile societies. See Albert O. Hirschman, \textit{The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism before its Triumph} (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977). The existence of militant industrial states, such as Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan, pose a challenge to this proposition. The changing relationship between wealth and militarism is explored in Michael Mann, “Capitalism and Militarism,” in Martin Shaw, ed., \textit{War, State and Society} (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1984), pp. 25–46. See also Manicas, \textit{War and Democracy}.

\textsuperscript{32} Our argument is essentially Schumpeterian: the aggressiveness observed in capitalist regimes derives from pre-modern residues. “In a purely capitalist world, what was once energy for war becomes simply energy for labor of every kind. Wars of conquest or adventurism in foreign policy in general are bound to be regarded as troublesome distractions, destructive of life’s meaning, a diversion from the accustomed and therefore ‘true’ task. A purely capitalist world therefore can offer no fertile soil to imperialist impulses.” Schumpeter, “The Sociology of Imperialisms,” in \textit{Imperialism and Social Classes} (New York: World Publishing, 1972), p. 69.


NATO, who pursued a remarkably consistent conciliatory policy toward the Soviet Union.35

INTRA-WESTERN COUNTER-BALANCING IN THE REAGAN ERA. In the early 1980s, the Reagan administration’s hard-line policies signaled an intent to alter Western grand strategy fundamentally by augmenting containment with more active and confrontational measures. This episode calls into question our claim that the West has been consistently defensive toward the Soviet Union. Furthermore, this effort to assume an offensive and active policy has been widely credited with triggering the reorientation of Soviet policy. But a careful reading of the overall pattern of the Western relationship with the Soviet Union during this period reveals that the Reagan initiative was significantly blocked by other actors in the Western system and that the “departures from containment” that did take place were balanced by the overtures of political groups seeking accommodation.36

The Reagan administration’s posture toward the Soviet Union was both inconsistent and evolving. Although loudly proclaiming its intention to break with the previous containment policies toward the Soviet Union that were deemed too soft, the actual Reagan administration policies were, as Gail Lapidus and Alexander Dallin observe, “marked to the end by numerous zigzags and reversals, bureaucratic conflicts, and incoherence.”37 While the Weinberger Doctrine seemed to commit the United States to virtual non-intervention, the Reagan Doctrine seemed to commit the United States to a

36. Because the system is a complex and dynamic aggregate, internal counter-balancing flourishes within it. This rich potential for balancing behavior on the part of powerful actors in the system further reinforces the difficulty of mobilizing and sustaining an offensive posture towards powerful antagonists outside the system. As a result, consensus over foreign and security policies tends to be minimum and defensive. The multiple forces shaping U.S. Soviet policy are discussed in Joseph S. Nye, Jr., “Can America Manage Its Soviet Policy?” in Nye, ed., The Making of America’s Soviet Policy (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984).
The hard-line tendencies of the Reagan administration were offset in two ways. First and most importantly, the peace movement that burgeoned in the United States and Western Europe during the early 1980s was a response to the Reagan hard-line initiatives. This movement exerted significant pressure upon the United States and its NATO allies to advance far-reaching arms control proposals. The mobilization of the Western publics in the early 1980s in favor of arms control created a political climate in which the rhetoric and posture of the early Reagan administration were significant political liabilities. By the 1984 elections, Reagan had embraced arms control goals that he previously had ridiculed. At the 1985 Geneva Summit and, most spectacularly, at the Reykjavik Summit, Reagan emerged as the personal spokesman for comprehensive de-nuclearization. Thus, paradoxically, Reagan both substantially triggered the popular revolt against hard-line policies and then came to embrace and pursue the popular anti–nuclear weapons agenda more successfully than any postwar president.

Second, the Reagan administration’s hard-line policies were also undercut by powerful Western interests that favored East-West economic ties. The embargo upon sales of grain to the Soviet Union imposed by the Carter administration in 1979 was revoked in the early months of the Reagan administration in order to keep the Republican party’s promises to Midwestern farmers. Likewise, in 1981, the Reagan administration did little to challenge Soviet control of Eastern Europe when the Soviet Union suppressed the Polish trade union Solidarity, in part because of the threat that Poland would default on loans held by Western banks. Also, despite strenuous efforts by

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38. Risse-Kappen, “Did ‘Peace Through Strength’ End the Cold War?”
39. David Meyer argues that the Western peace movement built a domestic constituency of support for arms control, forcing governments to support the process and creating a political climate in the United States that forced government officials to respond to the Soviet Union’s steps toward détente and reform. Meyer, A Winter of Discontent. Don Oberdorfer also emphasizes the importance of Reagan’s personal anti-nuclearism; Oberdorfer, The Turn: From Cold War to a New Era (New York: Poseidon, 1991).
the Reagan administration to stop the project, the NATO allies went forward with the natural gas pipeline linking the Soviet Union with Western Europe.\(^{41}\)

That a project creating substantial economic interdependencies was approved during the worst period of U.S.-Soviet relations in the 1980s points to the difficulties of maintaining defensive strategies toward the Soviets, let alone converting them to offensive strategies.\(^{42}\)

**Changing Soviet Perceptions of the West.** Soviet ideology has increasingly recognized and reflected this tendency for advanced capitalist states to be less aggressive than dictatorial ones.\(^{43}\) The traditional view of orthodox Leninism was that capitalism itself was the source of imperial aggression. But there has been a pronounced shift in Communist party doctrine concerning the tendency of advanced capitalist societies to be militarily aggressive.\(^{44}\) During the 1930s, Yevgeni Varga posed the revisionist hypothesis that the Western system was not inevitably aggressive, a view that was explicitly rejected by the party.\(^{45}\) Beginning in the mid-1980s, however, these views came into the ascendancy. The new view, voiced by Yevgeni Primakov, was that the “aggregation of interimperialist contradictions did not inevitably lead to world wars” and that “militarism is not a mandatory companion of even the accelerated growth of productive factors under capitalism.”\(^{46}\) Soviet commentators have also displayed an increasing sophistication in their appreciation of the plural and diffused character of American political power.\(^{47}\)

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47. This was acknowledged by the Russian minister of foreign affairs, Andrei Kozyrev, who noted that “the main thing is that the Western countries are pluralistic democracies. Their governments are under the control of legal public institutions, and this practically rules out the pursuance of an aggressive foreign policy. In the system of Western states . . . the problem of
The new Soviet policy toward Eastern Europe and Germany appears to be an adaptation to this new security environment. Western observers steeped in realpolitik took it as an axiom of international political life that the Soviets would never willingly withdraw from the security belt of Eastern Europe acquired at such great cost. The rapid collapse of the regimes in Eastern Europe was undoubtedly unwanted and unexpected by the Soviet leadership. A major factor in Gorbachev’s epochal decision not to back the tottering Soviet client regimes with military force in late 1989 was his realization that reform at home would be fatally undermined by crushing popular aspirations for change. Nevertheless, his willingness to accept the loss of this buffer zone of client states seems likely to have involved the calculation that the West would not militarily advance into this area. That Gorbachev discarded the Brezhnev Doctrine in favor of what Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman, Gennadi Gerasimov, has dubbed the “Sinatra Doctrine” (under which any Eastern European country can sing, “I did it my way”) suggests a radical transformation in the Soviet Union’s sense of threat from the West. The Soviet acceptance in 1990 of the de facto absorption of socialist East Germany into the Federal Republic of Germany involves the same calculation with even higher stakes. In accepting the reunification of Germany despite its record of aggression, Gorbachev was apparently acting on the assumption that the Western system is fundamentally pacific.

NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND THE COMPOSITION OF MILITARY POWER

The development of nuclear weapons has profoundly altered the international security environment of all states, particularly the Soviet Union. Nuclear weapons are revolutionary because they have transformed the composition of power, which shapes the ends to which specific power assets can be used. Perhaps the most important aspect of the composition of power war has essentially been removed.” Kozyrev, “Building a Bridge—Along or Across a River: The Parameters of Our Security,” New Times, Moscow, October 23-29, 1990, pp. 6–8. See also Schwartz, Soviet Perceptions of the United States; and Griffiths, “The Sources of American Conduct.”

48. As Paul Warnke has observed, the Soviet abandonment of Eastern Europe “would not have been possible at a time when the Soviet Union feared that the elimination of its buffer zone of satellite states would be taken advantage of by the West and thus present a serious threat to Soviet security.” Warnke, “Now More Than Ever: No First Use,” in Kegley, and Schwab, eds., After the Cold War, p. 64.

49. The composition of power should be thought of as a second dimension of structure along with the distribution of power. Analyzing the composition of power is often very difficult and most contemporary realist theorists have focused on the distribution of power, employing
is the degree to which military force can be used to conquer territory and thus expand the domain of state power. Ebbs and flows in the ability to control territory have been propelled by changes in the range and destructiveness of weapons.\textsuperscript{50} Nuclear weapons have altered the security constraints and opportunities of states in two ways: first, the cost of territorial aggression has now become prohibitively high, while the cost of protecting territory against aggression has fallen greatly for nuclear-armed states. Second, the threat of mutual destruction provides powerful incentives for states to reach accommodation in order to regulate nuclear capability. Nuclear weapons thus paradoxically make states both more and less secure. The adjustment of states to this reality has required far-reaching changes in the way states pursue security, changes that have run against the grain of long-established assumptions and institutions.

TERRITORIAL SECURITY. The development of nuclear weapons has particular significance for the Soviet Union, because the problem of territorial security has loomed large in Russian and Soviet history. Compared with the other Great Powers of the European state system, the Russian empire was more successful in acquiring neighboring territory, but it was also subject to more frequent and more devastating invasions. Unlike Western Europe, where the borders of England, France, and Spain were established early in the modern era and survived despite numerous wars, the pattern of interaction between the Russians, various German states, and the smaller nations and peoples in between was one of great fluidity.\textsuperscript{51} The state that emerged in adaptation to this security environment was one that was organized to rely upon the acquisition of more land and people rather than on improving the efficiency


51. This pattern of territorial insecurity was in no small measure the product of the region's flat topography and the resulting lack of strong natural defensive positions, whether against Mongol horsemen or Nazi tanks. The classic treatment of the large-scale historical consequences of flat topography in the Eurasian interior is Halford Mackinder, \textit{Democratic Ideals and Reality} (London: Holt, 1919).
of its existing assets to enhance its power. It also was a state with a swollen military establishment, thus able to dominate civil society autocratically.52

The development of nuclear weapons has transformed this territorial security dilemma. Soviet aggression against nuclear-armed states, even those far distant, would directly jeopardize the survival of the Russian heartland. At the same time, even expansive buffers of annexed territory and client states provide no security from nuclear bombardment.53 In this new world, territorial expansion has become less attractive as a solution to domestic problems and international pressures.54 Finally, the relatively low cost of maintaining a nuclear force sufficient to deter aggression and the inability of expensive offensive forces to acquire new territory open the possibility for reducing the demands for military resources, thus creating more scope for domestic reform.

SURVIVAL INSECURITY AND NUCLEAR LEARNING. A second and more subtle consequence of the nuclear revolution is the emergence of incentives for political accommodation and joint regulation of nuclear capability.55 So great would be the harm of using nuclear weapons that moderation in foreign policy and substantial arms control are in the fundamental interest of states.56

52. The relationship between the geographically shaped pattern of Russian expansion and the relative strength of the Soviet state over Russian society is argued by Richard Pipes, Russia Under the Old Regime (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1974).
55. Two different schools hold that nuclear weapons will produce accommodation and joint nuclear management. One view, perhaps best labeled “nuclear one-worldism,” is that nuclear weapons pose a fundamental challenge to the viability of a multi-state system, and that major structural changes will be necessary to bring the system into adjustment with these new realities. See Kenneth Boulding, Conflict and Defense (New York: Harper and Row, 1963); and John H. Herz, International Politics in the Atomic Age (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959). The dominant view in Western policy and academic circles holds that nuclear weapons maintained for deterrence purposes render major war among the Great Powers unthinkable and provide incentives for arms control. The classic early expression of this position is Bernard Brodie, “Implications for Military Policy,” in Brodie, ed., The Absolute Weapon: Atomic Power and World Order (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1946).
As a result of these changes, nuclear-armed states tend to come to see that their security is threatened by war and that it depends on maintaining good relations with other nuclear states. Since major war as a process of institutional change has been blocked, the much slower processes of learning (by both states and publics) eventually will cause institutional change.\(^{57}\) The characteristics of institutions responsive to these new security imperatives remain controversial and largely unrealized, but would include norms against nuclear use, arms control agreements, and confidence-building measures.

The nuclear policies and declarations of the early Reagan administration raise doubts about superpower nuclear learning. Although force-structure decisions did not depart dramatically from previous policy, the declarations of Reagan and other officials in the early 1980s seemed a throwback to a much less cautious attitude toward nuclear weapons.\(^{58}\) But this one step back from nuclear moderation triggered several steps toward it. These statements fed an explosive growth in peace movement activism\(^{59}\) that undermined the legitimacy of nuclear weapons as instruments of statecraft.\(^{60}\) Reagan's own radical doubts about nuclear weapons also contributed to nuclear delegitimation.\(^{61}\) By the end of the 1980s, a substantial movement toward nuclear moderation had taken place that Reagan both provoked and championed.

The evolution of Soviet nuclear statecraft also exhibits a process of nuclear learning. For much of the postwar era, the Soviet nuclear strategy—not unlike advantages to the limit, the status quo will be relatively easy to maintain, and political outcomes will not be closely related to either the nuclear or conventional balance." Jervis, The Meaning of the Nuclear Revolution: Statecraft and the Prospect of Armageddon (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1989), p. 45.


61. An intriguing hypothesis on the importance of Reagan's personal anti-nuclearism for Soviet-American relations has been advanced by Michael McCGwire, who argues that Gorbachev's assessment of American intentions was heavily shaped by discussions with Reagan at the Geneva and Reykjavik summits. McCGwire, Perestroika and Soviet National Security.
the American—has been a contradictory mixture of pacific declarations and attempts to use nuclear threats for political and military gain. During this period, the Communist Party doctrine on nuclear war evolved from Stalin’s position that nuclear war was still governed by the class principle, to the view foreshadowed by Khrushchev and adopted in the late 1970s and early 1980s that nuclear war was species suicide, requiring deep disarmament and stronger international organization. Gorbachev’s “new thinking” is an attempt to bring Soviet force structure and negotiating positions into line with these more recent Party doctrines.

THE SHIFTING DISTRIBUTION OF MILITARY POWER

The idea that the relative power available to actors in the interstate system significantly determines state behavior and international order has been one of the central contributions of realism to international theory. Both deployed military forces and the underlying economic resources upon which they depend determine the distribution of power. Relative military power is traditionally thought to be a prime shaper of interstate relations because it is the most immediately employable power asset for protecting populations, controlling territory, and coercing others. Economic capability is a significant but indirect influence because it affects the quantity and quality of resources available for foreign and military policy.

What role has the relative military power of the Soviet Union and its Western adversaries played in Soviet change? Since the Second World War, the Soviet Union has achieved overall relative military parity with the West,

64. Two of the leading neo-Realist theorists emphasize the distribution of power assets as shapers of the system. Kenneth Waltz, Theory of International Relations (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1978); and Gilpin, War and Change in World Politics.
providing a degree of security that previous Soviet and Russian regimes lacked.\textsuperscript{65} At the same time, the relevance of relative military power has tended to be overshadowed by the simultaneously stabilizing and threatening effects of nuclear weapons.

Over the last twenty years, the Soviet Union has maintained at least military parity with the West. Both its conventional and strategic nuclear forces continued to grow in capability well into the Gorbachev era. Although the American political and defense debate at times suggested either imminent Soviet peril or overwhelming American superiority, the core superpower military indices remained in remarkably constant balance once the Soviets achieved strategic parity in the late 1960s. Given this balance which was maintained as military capabilities on both sides steadily increased, it is difficult to attribute the end of the Cold War and Soviet retrenchment and accommodation to a military power imbalance.\textsuperscript{66} The real strength of the argument about the impact of military distribution looks at future trends and the economic burden of continuing competition, issues to which we return below.

The 1980s witnessed several important American initiatives in military spending and defense policy that many observers argue were decisive in triggering Soviet foreign policy changes. Chief among these were the massive increases in peacetime military spending; the "Reagan Doctrine" pressure on Soviet client states; and a renewed emphasis on technological competition, most dramatically seen in the Strategic Defense Initiative ("Star Wars"). Although the American spending increases and the Reagan Doctrine shored up Western strength and raised the cost of Soviet commitments outside of Europe, the overall East-West military balance did not tip dramatically in favor of the West.

Potentially more significant for the Soviet-American strategic relationship was the Reagan administration's Star Wars initiative unveiled in March 1983. Although no weapon has been deployed, defenders of the program argue that it dramatically opened a vital new realm of military development in

\[65\] This situation is noted by Seweryn Bialer: "Never in their history have the Russians been as secure from external danger as they are now and will remain in the foreseeable future. . . . A Soviet Union that understands that it is extremely secure may be less hostile to the West." Bialer, "Gorbachev's Program of Change: Sources, Significance, Prospects," \textit{Political Science Quarterly}, Vol. 103, No. 3 (Autumn 1988), p. 459.

which the Soviets were unprepared to compete because of their weaknesses in advanced technologies, particularly in computing and sensors. As evidence for the impact of Star Wars, its advocates point to the seriousness with which the Soviets reacted to it for several years after its introduction.

There are, however, several reasons to doubt that Star Wars had a significant impact upon the direction of Soviet security policy. First, it is not clear that the Star Wars program was ever going to produce a weapon system of strategic significance. Second, as both Soviet and American critics have pointed out, space-based weapons are subject to a wide array of effective and relatively inexpensive counter-measures. Whatever its abstract technological potential, it is highly improbable that Western public opinion would support the kind of rapid and sustained unilateral deployment necessary to derive advantage. The speed with which the Star Wars program has declined, both as a live deployment option in the West and as a subject of Soviet negotiating concern, suggests that the program had much more impact on the imaginations of Americans than on the global strategic balance.

SUMMARY. Taking all three elements of power into account, the contemporary security environment of the Soviet state is distinctly different from earlier periods. The increased number of nonaggressive states in the Soviet Union’s international environment further increases the security of the regime in historically unprecedented ways. Nuclear weapons have freed the Soviet Union from fears of territorial aggression, while making its own expansion too costly. The achievement of overall parity with the West, although overshadowed by nuclear weapons, has given the Soviets a sense of security. The new policies of accommodation and retrenchment are a logical adaptation to this environment.

This new security environment also has two significant domestic consequences: expansionary solutions to domestic problems are foreclosed and there is more opportunity for domestic liberalization. No longer faced with

68. The loud Soviet public opposition to Star Wars can be interpreted as an effort to gain political advantage with the peace movements in the West for whom the Star Wars program embodied the early Reagan strategy. As right-wing critics of the Soviet Union have pointed out, there is no necessary relationship between the rhetoric of Soviet “peace campaigns” and the actual threats to Soviet security. (Gorbachev’s adamant refusal to agree to arms limitation [START] unless SDI was curbed ended on December 9, 1987, in a morning meeting during the Washington Summit; Oberdorfer, The Turn, p. 267.)
acquire security threats that force repressive and centralized economic mobilization of resources, the claims of the state apparatus on society's resources become more difficult to justify and competing groups and interests are in relatively stronger positions. In short, a world dominated by liberal states affords remaining illiberal states both a need and an opportunity to liberalize.

The Economic and Political Environment and Its Consequences

A significant factor contributing to Soviet reorientation is the gradual decline in its economic position relative to the rest of the world. The Soviet Union has been economically more autarkic than any other major state in the last half century, but it is still profoundly affected by economic developments beyond its borders. Because the Soviet Union was the premier socialist and anti-capitalist state in the world from the time of the Bolshevik Revolution, its economic decline has political and ideological ramifications beyond the availability of resources for its domestic and foreign policy purposes. Furthermore, the legitimacy of the Soviet regime was based upon a set of ideological claims about the moral superiority of socialism and thus its position in the world declined with the erosion of these claims. Accordingly, four aspects of the Soviet Union's economic and political position in the world have caused ideological moderation, liberalization, and accommodation in its foreign and domestic policy. First is the dynamism of Western capitalism, which is not a new factor but which has intensified. The second factor is the stabilization of the capitalist system and the decline in strength of the socialist minority within the West. Third is the declining appeal of socialist ideology throughout the world. Fourth is the decline of socialism's claims to moral superiority, which have been decisively challenged by the human rights movement. These factors are summarized in Figure 2.

CAPITALIST DYNAMISM AND SOCIALIST STAGNATION
The policies of Gorbachev can be understood to a considerable extent as a response to the decline in the Soviet Union's relative economic power posi-

69. This point is made by Jack Snyder: "In a struggle whose outcome is far from decided, a propitious international environment could provide the all-important margin of victory for the forces in favor of reform." Snyder, "International Leverage on Soviet Domestic Change," World Politics, Vol. 42, No. 1 (October 1989), p. 1. Of course, security demands may decline but they will not disappear. And the security organs, forged in an earlier environment, may persist in making disproportionate claims, despite changes in the environment.
In order to maintain military parity with the West, with a shrinking share of world product, the Soviets had to spend a much higher percentage of their economic product on defense than did their adversaries. For the Soviet Union, as for all states, availability of resources shapes foreign policy goals and outcomes. When foreign policy objectives and commitments are not backed by adequate domestic resources, they must ultimately be scaled back or lost. In measuring the adequacy of the Soviet state’s resource base for the achievement of its aims, the most relevant calculation is a relative one—is a state better equipped than its potential rivals?

Since at least the eighteenth century, the challenge posed by dynamic Western capitalist states has driven the Russian empire and then the Soviet Union to successive political and economic restructurings. Since World War II, the number of successful capitalist states in the world has increased,
presenting the Soviet Union with further competitive pressures. Capitalist states have demonstrated superior capacities to create wealth and innovate technologically. Thus the wealth and technology base from which the Soviets must draw is declining relative to their traditional adversaries. The dynamism of capitalist adversaries is not a new feature of the Soviet environment, but it continues to intensify.

Over the last several decades, the Soviet Union’s share of world economic resources has been declining. Although Soviet recovery from the ravages of war in the 1950s was rapid, so too was that of West Germany and Japan under American protection. The slowing of Soviet growth rates during the 1960s and the virtual stagnation of the Soviet economy during the 1970s contrasts with the remarkable pace of economic growth in the Western capitalist countries. Debate continues about the size and output of the Soviet economy, but there is wide agreement among both Soviet and Western economists that the Soviet economy has ceased growing and has begun to shrink. Moreover, recent evidence suggests that the Soviet economy may be substantially smaller than had previously been generally thought, implying that the burden of Soviet defense was correspondingly greater.72 As the number of its adversaries and their wealth has increased, and Soviet economic performance has remained sluggish, the Soviet Union has been forced to spend ever greater percentages of its national product on foreign and security policy.73

In such a world, the Soviets must extract more from society, must dramatically restructure their economy and integrate into the world capitalist economy, or must seek accommodation with traditional adversaries.74 Unable in the short term to extract more from the already overburdened economy and civil society, Gorbachev sought to reduce requirements by reducing threats. Thus, the basic logic of the Gorbachev foreign policy was to bring burdens into line with resources by reducing the number of Soviet adversar-

ies through a process of retrenchment and accommodation. The change in economic performance has been gradual, and therefore provides only a limited explanation for why Soviet policy reorientation took place in the late 1980s. Economic decline provided an incentive to retrench, but a benign international environment made it possible.

STABILITY OF CAPITALISM AND THE DECLINING STRENGTH OF ANTI-CAPITALIST FORCES IN THE WEST

The declining occurrence of capitalist crisis and the closely related decline of political opposition to capitalism within the West constitute a second feature of the world political economy that provides incentives for Soviet change. To an extraordinary degree, the destiny of the Soviet regime has been intertwined with the fate of capitalism—for better or worse. Unlike other European Great Powers, the Soviet Union posed as headquarters for the international working class movement. And the Bolshevik revolutionaries, unlike the leaders of coups or mere rebellions, held elaborate expectations about the imminent demise of capitalism and about their own role as the catalyst and vanguard of what they expected to be a world-wide revolutionary transformation. Thus to a nearly unprecedented extent, the legitimacy of the Soviet regime was hostage to the economic performance of the capitalist world.

In the first half of the twentieth century, the Western world was riven by structural crises and deep inequalities that pitted dominant capitalist groups against a large and restive working class with socialist leanings. Particularly during the decade between the great stock market crash of 1929 and World War II, the performance of capitalism seemed to be following the trajectory that Marx had plotted—a general crisis triggering revolution. In this situation, the Soviet Union attracted deep loyalties from disaffected workers as well as intellectuals drawn to socialist ideals. Even in the postwar era, well-organized Marxist parties in the West—particularly in France, Italy, and Spain—continued to vie for power and attract a substantial bloc of votes. As late as the 1970s, pessimistic Western observers felt that “Eurocommunism” was a major threat to the survival of liberal democracy.

77. Although it advanced Soviet geopolitical interests by undermining NATO, Eurocommunism
The value for the Soviet Union of these diffuse transnational political affinities is hard to gauge, but it is unlikely that they provided the decisive margin for the regime’s survival. However, Soviet leaders valued the international socialist movement and thought that it served to constrain the West.78 Ideological allies in the West provided the Soviets with a wide range of benefits: they weakened anti-Soviet Western policy, prepared Western opinion for the wartime alliance against Germany, and provided a vocal group of apologists for Soviet mistakes and excesses.79 In effect, from the Bolshevik Revolution to the waning Brezhnev years, communist ideology provided the Soviet state with a powerful “fifth column” in the West.

An additional Soviet asset was the fissure between the Western metropol and the colonial peripheries caused by the desires of colonial peoples for independence. The official Soviet ideology of socialism and the rhetorical identification with the oppressed in the periphery as well as in the metropol put the Soviet Union on the side of the decolonialization movement.80 As peoples subjected to Western imperialism gained independence, some in the West feared and many in the East hoped that the new states would join the anti-capitalist and anti-Western coalition led by the Soviet Union. Indeed, the West suffered its greatest setbacks and most costly defeats, in the Chinese civil war and the wars in Indochina, when national liberation and revolutionary movements were resisted by the West due to their communist orientation. Although the movement toward non-alignment was strong among new states, decolonialization gave the Soviet Union powerful political supporters in the United Nations and elsewhere.

In the last several decades, this political and economic context has changed greatly. The advanced capitalist societies have enjoyed relatively sustained


79. The opening of Soviet archives creates the opportunity to assess the extent and effectiveness of pro-Soviet activity in the West.

growth and have built modern Keynesian welfare states. The result has been a dramatic decline in the severity of economic contraction in the West, as indicated in Table 1. The political foundation of this stability was laid in the 1940s. As the Keynesian policy revolution spread across the Western industrial world, governments undertook new and more intensive forms of economic intervention and management. These developments in economic policy led to the formation of compromises and coalitions between capital and labor, thus defusing the potential of the working class for revolution. As a result, proletarian movements in the West waned and support for socialism in the West has declined. These trends have been reinforced by an unambiguous awareness of Soviet socialist failings.

Although it is contrary to the expectations of Marx and Lenin, the resilience of capitalism has been increasingly recognized by Soviet analysts. Gorbachev has observed that “the present stage of the general crisis does not lead to any absolute stagnation of capitalism and does not rule out possible growth of its economy and the mastery of new scientific and technical trends.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time period</th>
<th>Output</th>
<th>Output per head of population</th>
<th>Non-residential capital stock</th>
<th>Percentage maximum fall in GDP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1870–1913</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>−6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913–50</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>−13.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950–70</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>+0.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


83. The rise of postwar political coalitions around Keynesian social democracy has been widely discussed. For its emergence in Britain, see David Marquand, The Unprincipled Society: New Demands and Old Politics (London: Jonathan Cape, 1988). For the United States, see Alan Wolfe, America’s Impasse: The Rise and Fall of the Politics of Growth (New York: Pantheon, 1981).
recognition, not unique to Gorbachev, is the product of a long evolution in
Soviet thinking.85

Outside the metropol, the achievement of decolonialization has reduced
the foreign policy value to the Soviet state of anti-Western ideology. As the
struggle for independence fades into history, Third World states have come
increasingly to pick their friends and enemies on the basis of economic benefit
rather than ideological solidarity. Moreover, by the 1970s the areas of the
Third World still under Western colonial rule were of minor significance
compared with emerging regional powers such as Indonesia, Nigeria, and
Brazil, states for whom Soviet ideological support had little relevance. The
net result of these developments is that previous assets of the Soviet Union
have evaporated, or even turned into liabilities.86

THE DECLINING IDEOLOGICAL APPEAL AND LEGITIMACY OF SOCIALISM
The decline in the legitimacy and ideological standing of the Soviet Union
has provided further incentives for change. The performance and prestige of
state socialism as an economic and political model have declined, while the
rise in internationally recognized norms of human rights have undermined
the moral claims of socialism. All states, particularly those with great power
aspirations, depend upon, and thus attempt to cultivate, a sense of legitimacy
both at home and abroad. Sheer coercion, however necessary, is ultimately
an insufficient and costly means for achieving compliance.87 In the modern
era, states seeking to play a commanding role in world politics must embody
a model of economic and political success that others can admire and emu-
late.88 The larger the state and its global leadership aspirations, the more
universal and fundamental tend to be that state’s claims to ideological and
moral superiority. Thus the decay of a state’s legitimacy can have far-reaching
impacts on a state’s international position and behavior. The Soviet regime,

and Carnesale, Fateful Visions, p. 147.
86. For an evaluation of changing Soviet views on the potential for and value of alliances with
Third World states, see Jerry Hough, The Struggle for the Third World: Soviet Debates and American
87. Max Weber classically states this political reality: “Experience shows that in no instance does
domination voluntarily limit itself to the appeal to material or affectual or ideal motives as a
basis for its continuance. In addition every such system attempts to establish and to cultivate
the belief in its legitimacy.” Weber, Economy and Society, Vol. 1 (repr., ed. Guenther Roth and
88. The importance of such “soft power” has been stressed by Joseph S. Nye, Jr.; see Nye,
because of its peculiarly ideological character, has been more dependent on the fulfillment of secular prophecies than have traditional great powers.

THE DECLINE OF THE SOVIET ECONOMIC MODEL. Until recently, the socialist economic model could be seen as either an untried or a successful economic system, with wide appeal to those dissatisfied with capitalism. In the first several decades after the Bolshevik Revolution, the progress of the Soviet Union in industrialization outside the capitalist system was a major source of inspiration to elites in the Third World seeking development without dependency. This meant that the Soviet Union had a major reservoir of support in the world upon which it could draw to counter the West’s military and diplomatic containment.

Beginning in the mid-1970s, the stagnation of centralized economies throughout the socialist world seriously undermined the appeal of socialism everywhere. During this period, the most dynamic forces in the world economy have been the Newly Industrializing Countries, which have employed outward-looking state capitalist economic strategies to propel themselves rapidly upward. This performance, completely contrary to Soviet expectations, dealt a heavy blow to the conventional wisdom of socialist development theory that autarky, if not socialist autarky, was the only path of economic improvement. Also of importance was the success of Chinese economic liberalization, initiated by Deng in 1978, in stimulating growth, particularly in the coastal provinces. After a generation of application in diverse Third World settings—ranging from Cuba to Vietnam to the disasters of African socialism—the promise and appeal of socialism had been badly tarnished. The Soviet economy had been transformed from a model of success into an anachronism. And thus, for the Soviet state, the role of socialist standard-bearer had been transformed from an asset into a liability.

NEW NORMS OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Soviet legitimacy has also declined as new norms of human rights have emerged and been championed in the last two decades. Since its formation, the Soviet regime has drawn considerable legitimacy from Marxism’s claim of the moral superiority of socialism over capitalism, even though massive human deprivations have been part of Soviet life from the outset. But since the 1970s the legitimacy of the regime, both at home and abroad, has been progressively eroded by reference to standards of human rights that emphasize fundamental freedoms of expression and conscience. The salience of these norms and their relevance to the Soviet Union grew with the signing of the Helsinki Accords in 1975.92 Ironically, Soviet gains from the accompanying international recognition of its client states in Eastern Europe did not, as the Brezhnev regime expected, strengthen domestic legitimacy of the Soviet regime. Rather, American and West European interest in human rights in the region was legitimized, and dissidents gained a powerful tool to press their demands. By the mid-1980s, the legitimacy of Soviet political practices was under systematic assault by internal dissidents and by a powerful network of human rights watchdog organizations such as Amnesty International and Helsinki Watch; periodic conferences were scheduled at which Soviet practices were intensively scrutinized.93 The clash of norms between the West and the Soviet Union began in 1917, but during the 1970s a concept of human rights independent of economic ideology emerged and subverted the legitimacy of authoritarian and totalitarian regimes whatever their economic orientation.94


94. As two analysts have recently put it: “Increasingly the legitimacy of political regimes (and hence their capacity to rule non-coercively) is judged externally and internally, less by the standards of divine mandate, revolutionary heritage, nationalism, or charismatic authority, and more by the performance criteria specified in internationally defined standards of human rights.” Richard Pierre Claude and David R. Davis, “Political Legitimacy at Risk: The Emergence of Human Rights in International Politics,” paper presented at the Fourteenth World Congress of
In these circumstances, Gorbachev’s “new thinking” in foreign affairs and domestic reforms can be understood as an attempt to refurbish the Soviet state’s ideological appeal in the world.95 It is striking the extent to which “new thinking” on topics such as nuclear weapons, international institutions, and ecological responsibility is infused with a globalist outlook.96 These ideals appeal to a large and growing segment of Western public opinion. Like socialism in an earlier era, globalist ideology seeks to put the Soviet state into the vanguard of international progressivism, thus creating allies beneficial to Soviet foreign policy. But, unlike revolutionary Marxist ideology, “new thinking” offers the basis for a cooperative relationship with the Western powers.

The Cultural, Social, and Organizational Environment

Within the last several decades, cultural, societal, and international-organizational factors have created opportunities and incentives for greater Soviet integration into the Western system. First, a large number of international organizations—economic, scientific, and other professional associations—provide opportunities for the functional integration of many Soviet citizens and groups. Second, a cultural and social milieu, of American origin but increasingly global in scope, exerts an assimilative and inclusive influence. Although most of the Soviet people have remained isolated from these forces, the relatively small but influential segment of the Soviet population occupying the leadership strata in Moscow has been intensively exposed to these sociocultural forces, which magnifies their impact. Within the last several decades, the exposure and reorientation of the Soviet elite to the norms and outlooks of this globalizing civilization has been a “silent revolution”—never

96. The ways in which the traditional cosmopolitanism of Marxism has been infused with a new globalist content in “new thinking” are analyzed in Kubalkova and Cruickshank, Thinking New about Soviet “New Thinking.” See in particular the writings of one of Gorbachev’s advisers, Georgi Shakhnazarov, The Coming World Order, trans. Margot Light (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1991); and Shakhnazarov, “Governability of the World,” International Affairs (Moscow), Vol. 3 (March 1988), pp. 16–24.
capturing headlines, but relentlessly transforming political possibilities.97 These changes and implications are summarized in Figure 3.

Underlying these pressures and opportunities for expanded intercourse with the rest of the world has been the ongoing revolution in the technologies of communication and transport. In the past, it was possible for civilizations to isolate themselves from the outside world, as China and Japan did for centuries and as the Soviet Union tried to do in Stalin’s time. But since World War II, advances such as jet travel, television, and data transmission have greatly eased the ability of large numbers of people to associate over long distances.98 The proliferation of these opportunities makes strategies of cultural and social autarky increasingly costly and difficult to sustain. The extent and impact of external involvement in Soviet life was graphically demonstrated during the abortive August 1991 coup, when the Soviet people were mobilized by Western broadcasts of Yeltsin’s call for resistance. During the

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97. For the most extended, recent, and theoretically sophisticated analysis of these social and cultural dimensions of the contemporary world, see Rosenau, Turbulence in World Politics.

98. For general overviews of the expansion and impact of global communications systems, see Hamid Mowlana, Global Information and World Communication: New Frontiers in International Relations (New York: Longman, 1986); and Brian M. Murphy, The International Politics of New Information Technology (New York: St. Martin’s, 1986).
1980s, the leading strata of the Soviet Union switched from sullenly resisting these entreaties to whole-hearted embrace of them.99

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND TRANSNATIONAL NETWORKS

The emergence of an extended system of international organizations and transnational networks has influenced the Soviet Union by pulling Soviet elites out of their isolation and into the broader Western world. The Soviets are drawn in because the tangible benefits of cooperative participation are too great to forgo, and the Soviet participants come increasingly to be socialized by the norms of their functional networks and the broader Western culture that subsumes them. A huge growth in the density and variety of international organizations over the last several decades has taken place in order to cope with increased levels of complexity and interdependence produced by modern technological society. These organizations carry out a multitude of increasingly valuable functions, such as weather forecasting, disease control, and air traffic management. They create numerous opportunities for individuals and groups within the Soviet Union to work closely with foreign nationals on common problems.

The prominence of international organizations is accounted for by the increase in the density and scope of interactions across borders that has been produced by the increased scale and complexity of modern industrial societies.100 These organizations affect international relations by drawing otherwise antagonistic states into a complex network of transactions that become


increasingly difficult to sever. Furthermore, the participants in such organizations come to be socialized by their activities in ways that diminish a simple identification with their nation of origin.

For the Soviet Union, these organizations and networks constitute what might be thought of as an increasingly complex set of "receptors" or "outlets" into which appropriate Soviet participants can "plug in." As a factor in the Soviet's environment, international organizations have changed dramatically in the last several decades. The first international organizations were founded in the nineteenth century and their scope was confined largely to Western Europe. Since the end of World War II, the number of international organizations has skyrocketed. By the mid-1980s, roughly 300 international organizations were in operation, and a great number of them are engaged in global rather than regional activities. Before and after World War II, the Soviet Union attempted to set up a system of international organizations within the Communist bloc. Although some of these organizations, such as the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, performed important functions, the Soviets increasingly sought involvement in the more global system of organizations associated with the United Nations.

Scientific networks. Of all the linkages across interstate borders in the modern era, those involving scientists may be the most important. Scientific research is of great and growing importance for all aspects of modern life: the military and economic health of nations is increasingly dependent upon science, so no state dares not cultivate a strong scientific research establishment. At the same time, science itself is one of the most transnational

enterprises and communities. Scientists depend upon maintaining communication with their peers elsewhere, and the quality of their work is often dependent upon participation in international conferences and exchanges. Furthermore, scientists have become so important that they enjoy a social standing as high as or higher than any other professional group.

In the Soviet Union, both the need to rapidly catch up with the West and Marxism's emphasis on scientific progress have further elevated the status of scientists. Because of these factors, the Soviet scientific community has been more internationally oriented and less subject to ideological control than any other segment of Soviet society. As a result, the Soviet scientific community has been a major seedbed of heretical ideas and a powerful constituency for reform. The ability of physicist Andrei Sakharov to defy Soviet authorities by speaking out in favor of human rights and disarmament during the Brezhnev era is a powerful illustration of scientific dissent and influence. Particularly on issues of nuclear war and peace, Soviet physicists, interacting with their Western counterparts in organizations such as Pugwash, have been a major counterweight to military and Communist party ideas and approaches. Gorbachev's principal adviser on scientific and technological issues, Yevgeni Velikhov, developed wide knowledge and contacts in the West while participating in the joint U.S.-Soviet fusion research program. During the late Brezhnev and early Gorbachev periods, a wide array of Soviet and Western scientific exchanges focused upon "technical" aspects of security helped lay the foundations for Gorbachev's initiatives.

The overall impact on the Soviet Union of this growth in opportunity for participation in international organizations and networks has been two-fold.

105. On the inherently international nature of the enterprise of science, see Diana Crane, "Transnational Networks in Basic Science," in Keohane and Nye, Transnational Relations and World Politics, pp. 235–251.
108. One of the most ambitious joint research projects was between the Federation of American Scientists and the Soviet Scientists Committee for Peace and Against the Nuclear Threat on nuclear disarmament. See Frank von Hippel, "Arms Control Physics: The New Soviet Connection," Physics Today, Vol. 42, No. 11 (November 1989), pp. 39–46. In another unprecedented step, the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) set up a seismic monitoring network in the Soviet Union to track Soviet underground nuclear explosions, demonstrating to a skeptical Reagan administration that such verification was effective.
First, since the West exerts a disproportionate influence in most of these organizations, maintaining non-antagonistic relations with the West is necessary if the Soviet Union is to realize the opportunities these organizations provide and avoid the costs of isolation and estrangement. Second, the participation of Soviet citizens and groups in these organizations is a powerful source of socialization into the norms and orientations of the West. As the frequency and density of individual and group transnational interaction rises, new sets of identities and affiliations emerge. Taken together, international organizations exert powerful attractions that over time have reoriented Soviet attitudes and behavior.

The development of these ties should be considered a background feature rather than a leading cause of Soviet change. The building of these ties and their influence on Soviet elites have been gradual and have served to mold attitudes supporting policy reorientation, although without creating the necessary conditions to do so.

ASSIMILATIVE GLOBAL CULTURE AND SOCIETY

Finally, another important Western influence upon the Soviet Union is the assimilative and inclusive culture and society of the West which have drawn the Soviet Union out of its isolation and into the global mainstream. Culture—human attitudes and world views, and society—relations among groups and classes—shape what people think of as beneficial and desirable, in contrast to military, economic, and organizational variables, which define patterns of costs and benefits. Cultural and social forces are more difficult to measure than economic and security variables, and they are often neglected by power-oriented analysis, but they are nevertheless important.

Cultural and social factors affect international relations by influencing the manner in which members of a society, including the state elite, define themselves and their place in the larger global setting.\(^\text{109}\) The historical record provides many instances in which such transnational cultural and social factors played a major role. For example, dynastic and aristocratic interstate

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linkages profoundly shaped the character and stability of the early modern
European state system. Similarly, the religious affiliations and antagonisms
between Latin Christendom and Islam significantly shaped patterns of group
conflict in the Mediterranean world for a millennium.\textsuperscript{110} The secular nature
of modern industrial society has not eliminated transnational culture, only
changed its character.

From the standpoint of Russia and the Soviet Union, the most important
feature of the cultural environment is the extent to which the West has
presented a more inclusive (open, cosmopolitan, and integrative) or exclusive
(closed, nationalistic, and discriminatory) face. In the late seventeenth cen-
tury, Peter the Great as a young man was able to travel throughout the West,
particularly Holland, freely gaining skills and knowledge. In the eighteenth
and nineteenth centuries, cosmopolitan tendencies in the West were partic-
ularly strong and the Russian elites mingled as peers with their counterparts
in the rest of Europe. In contrast, Germany in both the imperial and Nazi
eras was an extremely closed nationalistic and chauvinistic culture, presenting
the Soviet Union with few attractions or opportunities to participate in the
larger European system.

The post–World War II era has been dominated by one the most open and
inclusive sociocultural formations in Western history. The ascendency of
the United States in this period has produced a culture and society that are far
more open than any the Soviets have experienced before. Part of the U.S.
impact has been through the reconstruction of Europe along much less
nationalistic and aristocratic lines. A central feature of the contemporary West
is the prominence of what might be termed an international business culture
in which the norms of openness, predictability, and performance prevail.
The global ubiquity of Western-style business attire is an indication of the
ease with which people from different backgrounds can participate and thrive
within this system.\textsuperscript{111} Closely linked is the similarly pervasive commodity
culture created by globally standardized and mass-marketed products such
as blue jeans, Coca Cola, and television.\textsuperscript{112} The enormously assimilative

\textsuperscript{112} Francis Fukuyama, “The End of History,” \textit{The National Interest}, No. 16 (Summer 1989), pp. 3–18.
capacities of this global culture are reinforced by the multi-ethnic and multi-racial nature of the United States itself. The United States—the “nation of nations”—has a capacity to attract and include that no previous Great Power rooted in a particular ethnic, racial, or religious group has demonstrated.113

Exposure to this attractive sociocultural formation has had far-reaching impacts on Soviet attitudes toward their own government and the outside world. Perhaps most importantly, the legitimacy of the Soviet regime has suffered by simple comparison: as Soviet citizens have learned that people in the West are wealthier and freer, the authority of the Communist Party has been undermined. By the late Brezhnev period, the discrepancy between the official line and the popular perception of the West had reached an all-time extreme. In contrast to the protean richness of Western culture, the puritanical proletarianism of the new Soviet man championed by the Communist Party had little appeal to either the outside world or to many Soviets, particularly the young. The effect of these Western influences was greatest upon the state elite centered in Moscow, and it is these members of the establishment who set in motion the recent reforms.

During the 1980s, the sociocultural impact of the West on Soviet attitudes was greatly strengthened by what has been called the “citizen diplomacy” movement.114 Prompted in part by fears of nuclear war in the early 1980s, growing numbers of Westerners, particularly Americans, sought to reach out and establish dialogue with Soviets, both officials and citizens, through a variety of unofficial channels and settings. In contrast to the official anti-Soviet posture of the Reagan administration, these activists attempted to undercut antagonistic stereotypes and create a climate of mutual understanding and trust. These citizen groups purveyed the view that the human race faced threats to its survival and that a human interest in common security transcended the ideological oppositions of the Cold War. Measuring the influence of such groups is difficult, and observers who focus on high-level state diplomacy will tend to neglect their influence, but the great number and intensity of these interactions and their similarities with the new Soviet

elite attitudes suggest that their impact was surely felt. At the very least, the systematic efforts of these citizens to subvert Cold War antagonisms reinforced an image that the West was benign and receptive to fundamental accommodation.

**Taproot, Timing and International Relations Theory**

In analyzing Soviet policy change from the “outside in,” not all of the external variables cut in the same direction. Nuclear weapons and the increased strength of neighboring states close off the path of expansion that previous Russian regimes pursued. Nuclear weapons and the prevalence of liberal democracies reduce security demands, while dynamic capitalism and the diffusion of power increase them. The net impact of all these features of the environment on Soviet domestic and foreign policy substantially favors liberalization and accommodation, in contrast to so much of Russian historical experience. External factors leave nothing to be gained by continued policies of confrontation and isolation, and a great deal to be gained by abandoning confrontation and joining the mainstream of Western-dominated international society.¹¹⁵

The largest cluster of external factors shaping Soviet change stems from the complex sociopolitical and economic system led by the United States: capitalism, the Western alliance, American culture and society, and international organizations. Their net and cumulative impact has thwarted Soviet expansion while at the same time presenting an appealing alternative. Although it is possible to separate these factors analytically, many of them are in fact highly interconnected. Given these interconnections, it is difficult to identify one element of the system as its core or taproot cause. Nonetheless, to evaluate the relative impact of these various factors, we distinguish between three layers: deep and persistent features of the Western system; long-term policies of leading states; and recent Western policies and movements.

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¹¹⁵ Our argument that the Soviet’s external environment has provided this combination of “carrots and sticks” differs from Marshall Shulman’s proposal that U.S. strategy should be to hold out a combination of incentives and penalties. American strategy itself has only been part of a larger set of forces that add up to this effective mix, and American strategy has never been coherent and proactive enough for a “carrot and stick” policy of the sort Shulman advocated. See Marshall D. Shulman, *Beyond the Cold War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966).
At the deepest level, identifying this Western system with capitalism is appealing because the wealth of capitalism makes military containment possible, while also softening aggressive tendencies within the West and drawing outsiders in. But other features not reducible to capitalism, crucial for it, are part of this Western system. The West has maintained military strength sufficient to contain the Soviet Union defensively, while the pluralistic, pacific, and open features of this system have made it difficult for the West to pursue a policy to actively and directly assail the Soviets offensively. At the same time, the assimilative and inclusive society and culture of the West have held out potentially high rewards for an accommodating Soviet Union. Paradoxically, therefore, as the West has become more economically and militarily powerful, it has presented an increasingly benign face to the Soviet Union.

The second layer has been the long-term state policy of containment. Whether this strategy, based on the application of the most simple principles of balance of power, would have been successful without nuclear weapons is impossible to determine. The metaphor of “containment” also misses the many ways in which the mutual permeability of the Soviet and Western systems has contributed to Soviet reorientation. The inability of the Iron Curtain to isolate the Communist world from the influences of the West and the inability of either side to protect itself from nuclear destruction are as important as the ability of the West to frustrate Soviet territorial aggression. Thus Soviet changes are significantly the consequence of the inability of modern states—even large, socialist states—to exclude influences from beyond their borders.

At the most proximate level are the events of the last decade, most importantly the policies and statements of the Reagan administration and the Western peace movement. Many observers have been tempted to draw causal links from the temporal correlation between Reagan’s assertiveness and Soviet change. Yet the broader perspective developed here undermines such claims. The Reagan administration was unable to depart substantially from the postwar strategy of containment despite rhetoric suggesting otherwise. Furthermore, during the Reagan years an unusually contradictory mixture of signals emanated from Washington. Even more fundamentally, for every Reagan administration hard-line move, there were counter-balancing tendencies in the West. In the United States, the popular peace movement drew Reagan towards arms control and political moderation. And perhaps more
decisively than the heated clashes occurring in Washington was the essential continuity of European, and particularly West German, support for détente.

One clearly separate variable is nuclear weapons. If in fact nuclear weapons have rendered Great Power war obsolete, then many of these same outcomes might have occurred regardless of changes in domestic regime, distribution of power, or economic performance. A true test of the ability of nuclear weapons alone to produce an abandonment of confrontation would have been possible if the West had maintained a nuclear deterrent capability but had not matched the Soviets across the spectrum of conventional force.

THE QUESTION OF TIMING. So many of the external factors point toward accommodation that the new Soviet orientation appears greatly over-determined. Given the number of variables that suggest shifts to accommodation, the question may not be why it happened, but why did it not happen earlier? Nuclear weapons have existed for forty-five years and the United States has been a liberal democracy throughout the Cold War.

However, these variables have made their presence felt in stages. State policies toward nuclear weapons have evolved, reflecting what might be understood as a learning curve. Similarly, the decline in Soviet economic performance and the legitimacy of socialism, while long in the making, have been felt only recently. Moreover, these external factors constitute constraints and opportunities that must be perceived and acted upon; it takes time for the lags and spurts that are shaped by the dynamics of domestic leadership.

The international factors we describe do not guarantee the emergence of a benign and liberal Soviet Union (or a Russian successor state), but do ensure that such a state could pursue a hostile and autarkic policy only at its peril. Even the officials involved in the August 1991 coup attempt felt compelled to announce their intention to maintain existing international commitments. Moreover, the role played by transnational networks and communications in frustrating the coup is evidence of how difficult it would be for the Soviet Union to return to the past.

REALISM AND LIBERALISM. Attention to the factors described above may help answer theoretical questions dividing realists and liberal globalists. For the last several decades, liberal globalists have made their greatest inroads against realists in the sphere of Western political economy, but realism has remained compelling because of the East-West conflict. Now that the long peace has culminated in a “major peaceful change,” liberal globalist theories have greater attraction. The factor most emphasized in dominant forms of realism—relative military power—clearly could not have been the decisive
cause of these changes, since the Soviet Union was at rough parity with the West when these changes began. A related realist claim about the importance of relative economic performance has more to say about these developments, but the magnitude of the changes is not fully explained by economic performance alone. A telling factor, nuclear weapons radically reduced interstate aggression between the Great Powers and created interest in more basic and far-reaching interstate accommodation. While not inconsistent with realism, this factor is outside of the contemporary realist focus on system structure and power distribution. The sociocultural variables have transformed Soviet elite attitudes and orientations, with far-reaching consequences for Soviet policy. These variables are not inconsistent with liberal globalism, but have not been central to liberal analysis in recent years. Thus, the end of the Cold War alters the intellectual balance between realism and liberal globalism, and shifts the center of gravity within each school.

Conclusion

In recent years, the Cold War has ended unexpectedly and peacefully. The cascade of change in the Gorbachev era has brought many significant surprises, but none more so than the peaceful end to Soviet domination of Eastern Europe and the peaceful reunification of Germany. Confounding the conventional wisdom of many in the West, the Soviet Union has responded to its crises with liberalization and accommodation rather than repression and expansion. The modern global system has produced not only a long peace, but major peaceful change.

This Soviet reorientation is in significant measure an adaptation to an evolving external environment made up of a complex mixture of demands, opportunities, and constraints. While the sources of the Soviet crisis that led to reorientation are primarily internal, the responses to the crisis, particularly in foreign affairs, have been significantly shaped by outside circumstances. Important sources of the new Soviet behavior lie in the world system in which the Soviet Union is positioned. This international environment has a paradoxical character: although the West has grown more militarily and economically powerful, it has presented the Soviet Union with a more benign and attractive face. With similar effect, nuclear weapons have eased the Soviets' territorial security problem while producing new incentives for accommodation.
The real victor in the Cold War is not the policy of any particular administration or the activities of any particular movement, but the Western system itself. The central role of these deeper long-term forces puts in perspective and shows the limits of the designs and disputes of policy-makers. The real genius of the Western system has not been its coherent and far-sighted policy, but the vitality and attractiveness of its polity.

The impact of the accommodating and attractive features of the West upon the Soviet Union has not ended with the end of the Cold War. Gorbachev’s great dependency on foreign acceptance, support, and resources shows that Soviet reform continues to be dependent on outside opportunities and constraints. If the West reaches out to support Soviet reform and the incorporation of the Soviet Union and its successors into the Western system, it will continue to build upon one of the most important and successful features of Western strength in the twentieth century: its capacity to attract and integrate. Western support for the Soviet Union would be a continuation of the same process that helped end the Cold War.