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Matriculation no: 0903756

**Moscow's Dual Foreign Policy: Soviet Ideologized Foreign Policy and the Pursuit of
all-European Collective Security
1954-1989**

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree
of Master of Research in History

Department of History

University of Glasgow

9 October 2015

(c) Ioana Zaharieva 9 October 2015

Abstract of Dissertation

Moscow's Dual Foreign Policy: Soviet Ideologized Foreign Policy and the Pursuit of all-European Collective Security
1954-1989

“The dissertation argues that from the 1950s to the late 1980s, the Soviet Union pursued two often contradictory foreign policies in Europe— one, ideologized foreign policy, Moscow’s commitment to which will be explored through case studies, and another policy of peaceful coexistence exemplified by the Soviet long-term campaign for all-European collective security system. Moscow often had to prioritize one policy over the other and was not totally committed to either. I demonstrate that in the early 1980s, with the fall of détente and the eruption of the Polish crisis, the two policies became incompatible and the Soviets were forced to choose between the two, which ultimately contributed to the end of the Cold War.”

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Author's Declaration

Moscow's Dual Foreign Policy: Soviet Ideologized Foreign Policy and the Pursuit of all-European Collective Security
1954-1989

Ioana Zaharieva

Matriculation no: 0903756

I declare that the attached dissertation is the result of my own work and has been written by me.

Signature _____

Printed name _____

1. Introduction

The factors which contributed to the peaceful end of the Cold War have been the subject of considerable research and theorizing among scholars. In order to solve the puzzle posed by Gorbachev's diplomacy in 1985-1989, historians and political scientists have studied issues such as the impact of "new ideas" on Soviet foreign policy, Gorbachev's trust in the West, the process of Soviet identity change through interaction with Western leaders, and the role of civil society, as well as the material conditions which determined Moscow's policy choices. In line with this research, I'm interested in one of the factors which according to the most recent scholarship was responsible for the Soviet non-use of force in Eastern Europe in 1989 – the concept of common European Home. According to Svetlana Savranskaya and Jacques Lévesque the concept, which meant for Gorbachev the political and economic integration of the USSR into Europe, was the single most important driving force behind Moscow's foreign policy in 1988-1989.¹ Created as part of Gorbachev's new thinking, the concept of common European home underwent different stages of development. By 1987, it entailed the building of a new European collective security framework through the transformation of NATO and the Warsaw Pact into political organizations and their eventual dissolution; the peaceful resolution of conflicts (which implied the renunciation of the use of force in foreign policy), and the promotion of pan-European economic and trade cooperation.² Most of these ideas, however, were not really new – in fact, they were promoted by Soviet leaders in one form or another at different points in time between 1954 and 1989. In this dissertation I am interested in exploring the long-term evolution of Soviet ideas about all-

¹ Svetlana Savranskaya, 'The Logic of 1989: The Soviet Peaceful Withdrawal from Eastern Europe', in *Masterpieces of History: The Peaceful End of the Cold War in Europe, 1989*, ed. by S. Savranskaya, T. Blanton and V. Zubok (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2010); Jacques Lévesque, 'In the Name of Europe's Future Soviet French and British Qualms about Kohl's Rush to German Unification', in *Europe and the End of the Cold War*, ed. by F. Bozo, M-P. Rey, N. Ludlow, and L. Nuti (Oxon: Routledge, 2008)

² Marie-Pierre Rey, 'Europe is our Common Home: A Study of Gorbachev's Diplomatic Concept', *Cold War History*, 4 (2004), p.39.

European collective security. The related questions that I will examine are: i) To what extent were the ideas embodied in the common European concept new?; ii) How did they evolve over time?; iii) To what degree were they shared by the Soviet leadership?; and iv) How did these ideas relate to Soviet ideologized foreign policy? To attempt answering these questions, I analyze key Soviet foreign policy diplomatic initiatives and their relation (if any) to crisis-management decisions with respect to Moscow's Warsaw Pact allies and Western Europe. On one hand, I examine concrete cases of shifts of ideas which are related to all-European collective security. On the other hand, I explore case studies of Soviet crisis management (Poland and Hungary in 1956, Czechoslovakia in 1968, Poland in 1980-1981 and the peaceful revolutions in 1989) to test Soviet commitment to an ideologized foreign policy and to see if and how these crises affected the Soviet pursuit of collective European security. Studying these crises is particularly appropriate since they reflected the Kremlin's foreign policy thinking. The crises threatened the Soviet status quo in Eastern Europe and therefore constituted a hard test for the limits of the Soviet tolerance for reforms. In order to provide a general background to Moscow's changing ideas regarding all-European collective security, I will first show in the introduction that the strategic ideas embodied in the common European home concept have their antecedents in earlier foreign policies and proposals promoted by the Soviet leadership. I will then argue that, from the 1950s to the late 1980s, the Soviet Union pursued two often contradictory foreign policies in Europe— one, ideologized foreign policy, Moscow's commitment to which will be explored through case studies, and another policy of peaceful coexistence exemplified by the Soviet long-term campaign for an all-European collective security system. Moscow often had to prioritize one policy over the other and was not totally committed to either. I demonstrate that in the early 1980s, with the fall of détente and the eruption of the Polish crisis, the two policies became incompatible and the Soviets were forced to choose between the two, which ultimately contributed to the end of the Cold War.

The historiography on the Cold War is vast and the literature on the final years of the conflict is constantly growing. The framework chosen here focuses on the debate regarding the different material and ideational factors which contributed to the end of the Cold War. It is only within this framework and in the context of Gorbachev's new

thinking and Moscow's relations with Western leaders that the complexity of the concept of common European home and its importance for Gorbachev's foreign policy choices can be fully grasped. The next section will therefore proceed as follows: first, I examine the debate on the end of the Cold War by focusing on possible explanations stressing material factors, the role of ideas and the impact of personalities; second, I trace the development of the concept of common European home from 1985 to 1989 which allows a deeper understanding of its basic ideas; third, I examine briefly the roots of these strategic ideas within the Soviet political establishment; fourth, I present the methodology and the sources that have been used.

1.1 Existing Historiography on the End of the Cold War

The literature on the end of the Cold War has focused on the material international and domestic context and the role of ideas and personalities in order to explain Moscow's diplomacy in 1985-1990.

The decline of the USSR's economic and military power relative to the West, and Moscow's perception of this trend have often been cited as one of the main reasons for the Soviet foreign policy of retrenchment.³ According to this perspective, by the mid-to-late 1970s the Soviet Union was affected by a systemic crisis as the country's growth rate and economic performance steadily declined. Brooks and Wohlforth, among others, have argued that the USSR's isolation from the globalization of production and the international economy, its lag behind the West in the scientific and technological revolution and Moscow's rising defence burden and the economic costs of subsidizing its Eastern European satellites created powerful incentives for a reorientation of Soviet foreign policy in the 1980s.⁴ Traditional realist accounts have emphasized the pressure exerted on the Soviet Union by the American military buildup, Reagan's pursuit of the SDI, and Western competitive economic policies which represented an insurmountable

³ Randall Schweller and William C. Wohlforth, 'Power Test: Evaluating Realism in Response to the End of the Cold War', *Security Studies*, 9 (2000).

⁴ Stephen G. Brooks and William C Wohlforth, 'Power, Globalization and the End of the Cold War', *International Security*, 25 (2000), p. 23-38.

challenge for the declining Soviet economy.⁵ The role of SDI and the American buildup in forcing Kremlin to invest more in defense, and ultimately to make concessions on arms control, however, is not supported by clear data, and has been challenged by Garthoff and FitzGerald.⁶ Writing on Gorbachev's diplomacy, Rice and Zelikow have argued that by 1989 an exhausted Soviet Union could no longer resist the leap towards liberty in Eastern Europe, while Bush, Kohl, Mitterrand and Thatcher seized the opportunity and acted with skill and speed to secure German unification on Western terms.⁷ Ultimately, having missed several opportunities during the Malta summit and the Two-Plus-Four negotiations to tie the issue of German unification to NATO's future expansion eastward, Gorbachev was "bribed out" of Germany by Helmut Kohl's skillful checkbook diplomacy.⁸

The Soviet domestic economic and financial crisis, the growing instability and indebtedness of the Eastern European satellites, along with the rise of nationalism within the USSR (the Baltic States and Azerbaijan) have been stated as another reason for Moscow's foreign policy concessions in the late 1980s.⁹ Mastny and Ouimet have demonstrated that the financially draining Soviet war in Afghanistan and the 1980-81 Polish crisis, in particular, led to an early reevaluation of the Soviet commitment to socialist internationalism and of the costs involved in subsidizing the Eastern European states.¹⁰ Significantly, in 1981, the Soviet leaders unanimously ruled out a military intervention in Poland as being beyond Soviet capabilities, which signaled the end of the Brezhnev Doctrine and was a precursor of Gorbachev's policy of non-interference in the

⁵ Schweller and Wohlforth, 'Power Test', p. 86-97; Peter Schweizer, *Reagan's War: The Epic Story of his Forty Year and Final Triumph Over Communism* (New York: Anchor Books, 2003).

⁶ Raymond L. Garthoff, *The Great Transition: American-Soviet Relations and the End of the Cold War* (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institutions, 1994). ; Frances FitzGerald, *Way Out There in the Blue: Reagan Star wars and the End of the Cold War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), p. 475.

⁷ Philip Zelikow and Condoleezza Rice, *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed: A Study in Statecraft* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), p.370.

⁸ Mary Elise Sarotte, 'Perpetuating U.S. Preeminence - The 1990 Deals to Bribe the Soviets Out and Move NATO in', *International Security*, 35 (2010), p.135.

⁹ Vladislav Zubok, 'New Evidence on the End of the Cold War New Evidence on the Soviet Factor in the Peaceful Revolutions of 1989', *Cold War History Project Bulletin*, 12/13 (2001), p. 10.

¹⁰ Vojtech Mastny, *The Soviet Non-Invasion of Poland in 1980/1981 and the End of the Cold War* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 1998).; Matthew J. Ouimet, *The Rise and Fall of the Brezhnev Doctrine in Soviet Foreign Policy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), p. 241-242.

domestic affairs of Soviet satellites in Eastern Europe. Thus, some scholars have seen Poland, already plagued by economic and sociopolitical crisis by 1980, as leading the way to end the Cold War.¹¹ Bennett and Lévesque have demonstrated that in 1988 the leadership in both Hungary and Poland had taken steps to accommodate the opposition by embarking on programs of political and economic reform, and by 1989 the independence movements in Eastern Europe could not be crushed without endangering the socioeconomic and sociopolitical systems in these countries.¹² Declassified Soviet documents also show that the growing external debts of the Warsaw Pact states and in particular the precarious situation in Poland and Hungary, where economic collapse was expected, warned Moscow against attempts to maintain the status quo in Eastern Europe which would have placed an excessive burden on the Soviet economy.¹³ Koslowski and Kratochwil, on the other hand, have argued that the strengthening of the civil societies in Eastern Europe, and Gorbachev's fear of jeopardizing perestroika and upsetting the Soviet relations with the West prevented Moscow from using force to suppress the 1989 revolutions.¹⁴ With respect to the GDR, traditional accounts underscore the growing destabilization of the country in 1989 and Moscow's inability to bankroll it, thus stressing that Gorbachev found himself with no other alternative than to agree to German unification in exchange for Western economic aid. Newnham, for instance, has suggested that economic incentives such as food aid, bank loans and trade deals offered by Kohl at key moments of the West German-Soviet negotiations played a central role in convincing Gorbachev to accept German unification on Bonn's political and military terms.¹⁵ For other scholars, however, it was not the financial value of Western economic incentives which was most important for Gorbachev, but the prospect they gave of securing a long-term co-operative relationship with the West.¹⁶ Germany was considered a close partner

¹¹ Ouimet, *The Rise and Fall*, p. 129.

¹² Jacques Lévesque, *The Enigma of 1989: The USSR and the Liberation of Eastern Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 111-129.; Andrew Bennett, 'The Guns That Didn't Smoke', *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 7 (2005), p. 101.

¹³ Bennett, 'The Guns', pp. 96-97.

¹⁴ Rey Koslowski and Friedrich V. Kratochwil, 'Understanding Change in International Politics: The Soviet Empire's Demise and the International System', *International Organization*, 48 (1994), pp. 215-247.

¹⁵ Randall Newnham, 'The Price of German Unity: The Role of Economic Aid in the German-Soviet Negotiations', *The German Studies Review*, 22 (1999).

¹⁶ Tuomas Forsberg, 'Economic Incentives, Ideas, and the End of the Cold War: Gorbachev and German Unification', *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 7 (2005), p.155. ; Andrew Bennett, 'Trust Bursting All Over: The

in the future common European home, and therefore, its membership in a transformed NATO was seen as compatible with Soviet interests.¹⁷

In this line, some constructivist accounts have focused on the shift of ideas and on the personal relationships and trust that the encounters between Gorbachev, Mitterrand, Reagan and Thatcher and Soviet-American meetings and the Reykjavik and Malta summits helped to develop, thereby making the peaceful end of the Cold War possible.¹⁸ In the atmosphere of co-operation and understanding, Gorbachev redefined traditional security concepts and was persuaded by Kohl, Bush and Baker that Soviet interests would be better secured by Germany's membership in NATO.¹⁹ Other scholars have explored the long-term influence of ideas on the Soviet leadership. Evangelista, for example, has studied the impact of transnational actors, "epistemic communities", on the Soviet leaders' and experts' ideas regarding arms control, strategic defense and nuclear testing.²⁰ The shift of ideas among the Soviet leadership has also been ascribed to the long-term gradual erosion of communist ideology.²¹ Arguably, the latter's impact on Soviet foreign policy could be observed as early as the late 1940 from which point on very little innovation was introduced by the leading ideologues Zhdanov and Suslov.²² Perhaps one of the best constructivist alternatives to Wohlforth's realist interpretation of the end of the Cold War, which emphasizes the material constraints that brought about a shift in the Soviet foreign policy, has been articulated by Robert English. English traces the origins and development of "new thinking" back to the 1950s post-Stalinist generation of intellectual elites with reformist values and beliefs and identity of a neo-Westernizing

Soviet Side of German Unification', in *Cold War Endgame: Oral History, Analysis, Debates*, ed. by William C. Wohlforth (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2003), p. 187.

¹⁷ Tuomas Forsberg, 'Power, Interests and Trust: Explaining Gorbachev's Choices at the End of the Cold War', *Review of International Studies*, 25 (1999), p. 613.

¹⁸ Forsberg, 'Power, Interests and Trust', p. 613-618.

¹⁹ Thomas Risse, 'The Cold War's Endgame and German Unification: A Review Essay', *International Security*, 21 (1997), pp. 177-178. ; Tuomas Forsberg, 'Economic incentives', p. 156.

²⁰ Matthew Evangelista, *Unarmed Forces: The Transnational Movement to End the Cold War* (London: Cornell University Press, 1999).

²¹ Vladislav Zubok, 'Gorbachev and the End of the Cold War: Perspectives on History and Personality', *Cold War History*, 2 (2002).

²² Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996), pp. 109-113.

orientation.²³ He argues that Gorbachev greatly benefited from his exposure to the reformers' social democratic ideas about socialism's liberal-humanistic revival and the need for more extensive East-West cooperation.²⁴ Bennett and Zubok have also highlighted Gorbachev's formative and subsequent experiences through the 1956 and 1968 events in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, which were different from those of the Stalinist World War II generation, in order to explain his and Shevardnadze's aversion to the use of force and their preoccupation with arms control in the aftermath of the Chernobyl catastrophe.²⁵

Finally, a number of scholars have highlighted the role of personalities for the peaceful end of the Cold War. Archie Brown, for example, singles out Gorbachev from previous Soviet leaders for his strong drive for innovation and desire to learn from the likes of Mitterrand, Thatcher, Nixon and González, thus pointing to Gorbachev himself as the most important factor for the demise of the Cold War.²⁶ On the American side, several authors underscore the central role played by Gorbachev in advancing new ideas, in acknowledging the extent of the USSR's domestic economic crisis and in taking steps to reduce the defense spending and sign arms reduction agreements, while others emphasize both Gorbachev's and Reagan's ideas, personal characteristics and courage which allowed them to build a relationship based on trust.²⁷ Oberdorfer takes a more general approach and highlights the role of senior officials and their negotiating abilities citing in particular the contributions of Gorbachev, Reagan, Shevardnadze, Bush and Baker.²⁸

While all these material and ideational factors contribute to the understanding of the context in which Gorbachev was operating, they are insufficient to explain Moscow's

²³ Robert English, 'The Sociology of New Thinking: Elites, Identity Change, and the End of the Cold War', *Journal of Cold War Studies* 7 (2005), pp. 67-68.

²⁴ English, 'The Sociology', p. 52.

²⁵ Bennett, 'Trust Bursting All Over', p. 191-194.; Vladislav Zubok, *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), pp. 288-289.

²⁶ Archie Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 52.

²⁷ Robert McMahon, *The Cold War: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 160-161; Jack Matlock, *Autopsy of an Empire: The American Ambassador's Account of the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (New York: Random House, 1995).

²⁸ Don Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War to a New Era: The United States and the Soviet Union* (Baltimore, Md: Johns Hopkins Press, 1998).

choices in the Cold War endgame. The most recent scholarship has, therefore, examined other contingent factors which affected Soviet policy-making. Using recently declassified materials from the Soviet archives and writing on the Soviet non-use of force in 1989, Savranskaya, for example, has argued that, for Gorbachev, traditional considerations about security and the balance of power were of secondary importance to the integration of the Soviet Union into Europe.²⁹ Suppressing the 1989 revolutions by military means was never considered by the new thinkers or the conservatives since such a move would have endangered the relations with the West and the creation of a new European security system. Similarly, Jacques Lévesque has suggested that a major preoccupation in the fall of 1989 for Gorbachev was that the creation of all-European structures, a common European home, would not precede the unification of Germany.³⁰ In fact, Moscow's fear of being left aside from the pan-European process was a common theme of all the Soviet proposals to Bonn and Washington regarding the status of a unified Germany.³¹ Julie Newton's research has also demonstrated how Gorbachev's reliance on the mentorship of François Mitterrand weakened Moscow's negotiating position, and convinced Gorbachev to accept Germany's membership in NATO. For Newton, the vague, idealistic and interchangeable language Mitterrand used with Gorbachev in discussions of the common European home concealed their clashing visions of European integration.³²

1.2 The Concept of Common European Home

Whereas Savranskaya, Lévesque and Newton discuss the common European house concept in view of explaining issues such as the peaceful Soviet withdrawal from Eastern Europe and the failure of the USSR, France and Britain to coalesce and slow down German unification, I am interested in the evolution of the concept's strategic ideas. The expression common European home was not invented by Gorbachev. It was

²⁹ Savranskaya, 'The Logic of 1989'.

³⁰ Lévesque, 'In the name of Europe's', p. 98.

³¹ Ibid., p. 97.

³² Julie M. Newton, 'Gorbachev, Mitterrand, and the Emergence of the Post-Cold War Order in Europe', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 65 (2013), p. 297.

first used in 1972 by Gromyko in a conversation with the French president Pompidou in order to convince him to support the proposal for a Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and then in 1982 by Brezhnev in the context of a speech given in Bonn regarding public opinion.³³ The expression was mentioned again by Gorbachev in December 1984 in his speech before the British Parliament where he famously proclaimed: “Europe is our common home, a home, not a theatre of military operations”. Between 1985 when Gorbachev ascended to the position of General Secretary and 1989 when the peaceful revolutions in Eastern Europe took place, the concept went through different phases of development. In its initial phase 1985-1986, it was part of a pragmatic approach to ensure the support of the Western European governments on the European missile question and thereby it aimed at splitting the Americans from their NATO allies. By late 1986, the concept became an integral part of Gorbachev’s new diplomatic principles, the “New Thinking”, and it centered on strategic issues and on questions of disarmament. According to Chernyaev, throughout this period, Gorbachev embraced a version of Khrushchev’s theory of peaceful coexistence and argued in favor of strategic sufficiency.³⁴ In its third final phase of development (late 1987 to 1990), the common European home came to mean the building of a new pan-European security order on the foundations set by the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. According to a number of speeches given by Gorbachev in Prague, Belgrade and Strasbourg between 1987 and 1989, the concept involved the creation of a collective security structure based on nuclear, chemical and conventional disarmament, the transformation of NATO and the Warsaw Pact into political organizations and their eventual dissolution by year 2000, the renunciation of the use of force in foreign policy, the deepening of the economic and trade cooperation between the Soviet Union and Western Europe, as well as the creation of a true European cultural community.³⁵ Significantly, Gorbachev envisioned the reunification of Germany as the final stage of the erection of an all-European collective security system which would anchor the Soviet Union and its satellites in Europe.

³³ Rey, ‘Europe is our Common Home’, p. 34.

³⁴ Zubok, ‘Gorbachev and the End of the Cold War’, p. 64.

³⁵ Rey, ‘Europe is our Common Home’, p. 39.

My particular interest in the concept of common European home stems from the fact that many of the ideas embodied in it were not as groundbreaking as it has been often assumed. To begin, in the period 1919-1928 the Bolsheviks had developed two foreign policies which often undermined each other - a policy devised to promote the world revolutionary process was put forward by Bukharin and supported by Zinoviev and a second policy of peaceful coexistence favoring conventional diplomatic and economic relations with the Western states was promoted by Lenin.³⁶ The duality of the Bolsheviks' foreign policy was expressed in their effort to achieve national security by cultivating diplomatic relations with the West, while also promoting revolutionary activities when the conditions were favorable.³⁷ During the Second World War period, the two policies were epitomized by the ideologically based discourse favoured by Stalin and Molotov, and Litvinov's realist approach to foreign policy which stressed the need for agreements and institutions which would constrain great power relations.³⁸ Indeed, these two directions in Soviet foreign policy from the 1920s are visible through the 1930s to the 1980s. For instance, in the 1930s and the early 1940s Litvinov favoured a cooperative approach with the West. He put forward proposals for the creation of a collective security system to contain Nazi Germany, worked to secure the inclusion of the Soviet Union in Briand's pan-European project and pursued a defensive alliance with France.³⁹ Gorbachev's idea of building an all-European security structure integrating Russia which would then lead the way to German unification also has antecedents in Stalin's and Molotov's foreign policy. In 1952, for example, Stalin proposed the reunification of Germany in exchange for a peace treaty guaranteeing the German state's neutrality.⁴⁰ It is unclear whether Stalin's offer was sincere but some evidence suggest that a chance for reunification might have existed since Stalin wanted to prevent West German rearmament and integration into NATO and rather preferred to see a unified and

³⁶ Jon Jacobson, *When the Soviet Union Entered World Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), pp. 44-46.

³⁷ Gabriel Gorodetsky, 'The Formulation of Soviet Foreign Policy: Ideology and *Realpolitik*', in *Soviet Foreign Policy 1917-1991*, ed. by Gabriel Gorodetsky (London: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd., 1994), p. 33.

³⁸ Geoffrey Roberts, 'Litvinov's Lost Peace, 1941-1946', *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 4 (2002), p. 52.

³⁹ Hugh Phillips, *Maxim M. Litvinov and the Soviet-American Relations 1918-1946* (Washington D.C. : Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 1996); J. A. Large, 'The Origins of Soviet Collective Security Policy, 1930-1932', *Soviet Studies* XXX (1978), p. 217.

⁴⁰ Peter Ruggenthaler, 'The 1952 Stalin Note on German Unification: The Ongoing Debate', *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 13 (2011).

neutral German state.⁴¹ There are also indications that Beria and Malenkov saw East Germany as an economic liability and were ready to exchange a socialist GDR for détente with the West in 1953.⁴² Perhaps the most important precursor of Gorbachev's European home idea was the 1954 draft treaty prepared by Molotov for the Berlin Conference of Foreign Ministers, which proposed the creation of a pan-European collective security organization as a step towards a peace treaty for Germany.⁴³

In my dissertation, therefore, I am interested in exploring the long-term evolution of Soviet ideas about all-European collective security. The time period under consideration spans from Molotov's 1954 détente initiatives to 1989 when the Soviet control over Eastern Europe crumbled. The year 1954 is also chosen as a starting point because the death of Stalin in 1953 allowed for revision of the notion that war between the capitalist and communist systems was unavoidable, thereby opening the door for Khrushchev's "peaceful coexistence". In 1989, the peaceful revolutions in Eastern Europe, Kohl's Ten-Point Plan and Mitterrand's support for German reunification significantly weakened the Soviet position and compromised Gorbachev's vision of Common European Home.

1.3 Novelty of the research topic

An examination of this question is relevant for two reasons. First, the concept of a common European home and its origins has so far been rather overlooked in the literature on the end of the Cold War. In the last twenty years very few scholars other than Rey, Savranskaya, Lévesque and Newton have written on the topic, which is surprising given its importance for Gorbachev's foreign policy. Moreover, the majority of the pre-1991

⁴¹ Zubok and Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War*, p. 48, 159.

⁴² Zubok and Pleshakov, p. 159.

⁴³ Geoffrey Roberts, *Molotov: Stalin's Cold War Warrior* (Washington DC: Potomac Books, 2012), p. 142-148.

scholarly articles dealing with the concept focus either on its political and cultural aspects or on its role as a practical tool intended to promote East-West European rapprochement and to weaken the NATO alliance. Second, by examining the evolution of the ideas embodied in the concept my ultimate objective is to provide a complementary long-term perspective on the end of the Cold War. While some of the existing explanations (ex. Robert English) adopt a bottom-up approach by focusing on the development of civil society in Eastern Europe and the USSR, my approach is top-down in that it surveys the roots and development of the strategic ideas of the concept inside the Soviet political establishment over a period of thirty-six years. Contrary to Cold War endgame explanations which emphasize the role of Gorbachev (for instance, Archie Brown's "Gorbachev factor"), his personality (Zubok) or his relations with Western leaders, my intention is to examine the Soviet leadership's approach with regard to the policies of détente and peaceful coexistence beginning with Molotov's diplomatic efforts in 1954-1955 to build an all-European system of collective security. The advantage of such an approach is that it helps to see Gorbachev's initiatives in the backdrop of previous policies or proposals by Molotov, Khrushchev and Brezhnev. The long-term perspective also permits an examination of the continuous struggle of the Soviet leadership in the period 1954-1989 in the pursuit of two often conflicting policies – an ideologized foreign policy characterized by Soviet commitment to socialist internationalism on the one hand, and a policy of peaceful coexistence on the other, exemplified by the search for all-European collective security. In this respect, analyzing the Soviet response to the uprisings and crises in Eastern Europe (the case studies of Hungary and Poland in 1956; Czechoslovakia in 1968, Poland in 1980-1981, and the peaceful revolutions in 1989) is particularly appropriate because these crises tested the Soviet commitment to an ideologized foreign policy and Moscow's willingness to allow change to the Cold War status quo. An exploration of the crises also demonstrates that the Soviet commitment to ideological rationales was never total. The Soviets' decisions to use coercive methods were never automatic and were preceded by long debates in the Politburo. Politburo members who were usually considered as the Soviet "hawks" and "doves" frequently shifted sides during the deliberations. For instance, Suslov, Mikoyan and Marshal Zhukov favored a political solution in Hungary in 1956 in the days preceding the second

military intervention.⁴⁴ Similarly, Brezhnev gave his approval for the intervention in Czechoslovakia only after a long period of indecision on his part regarding the use of force and in the context of major disagreements within the Politburo on the appropriate course of action.⁴⁵ An exploration of the Soviet diplomatic initiatives, on one hand, and crisis management, on the other, illuminates the dialectic between the two policies.

1.4 Methodology

My dissertation consists of three sections. The first section provides a brief overview of the Soviet diplomatic initiatives regarding all-European collective security system. The second section analyzes case studies of Soviet crisis management experience in Eastern Europe in order to test Soviet commitment to an ideologized foreign policy (and where appropriate, the dialectic between ideas about collective European security and the Soviet practice of foreign policy). These are Hungary and Poland in 1956, Czechoslovakia in 1968, Poland in 1980-1981 and the peaceful revolutions in Eastern Europe in 1989. A special attention is paid to the Soviet willingness to use force and to the role of leaders in the decision-making process. The third section is analytical in nature and examines the Soviet efforts to reconcile these contradictory policies.

1.5 Sources

In examining the question, I will adopt an inductive and interpretive approach based on the research of primary sources such as memoirs, extracts from diaries, memorandums, addresses and records of conversations between Soviet and Eastern European and Western leaders. The memoirs of Soviet leaders such as Khrushchev and Gorbachev and those of Soviet statesmen, diplomats and foreign policy advisors such as Gromyko, Molotov, Ligachev, Shevardnadze, Arbatov, Chernyaev and Grachev are

⁴⁴ Johanna C. Granville, *The First Domino: International Decision Making during the Hungarian Crisis of 1956* (Texas A&M University Press, 2003), p. 73.

⁴⁵ Svetlana Savranskaya and William Taubman, 'Soviet Foreign Policy, 1962-1975', in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War, Volume II Crises and Détente*, ed. by M. P. Lefler and O.A. Westad (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 144.

crucial since they reveal the internal thinking and the political motives of the Soviet leadership. There is significantly more information in the form of memoirs, interviews and oral history conferences on the views of the new thinkers (Gorbachev, Shevardnadze, Chernyaev and the circle of reformers). As a result, the conservatives' accounts and recollections, often published in Russian, have been rather overlooked by Western scholars. More sources are also available regarding the Soviet leaders' thinking during the last years of the Cold War. To deal with these problems I have attempted to integrate the accounts of both new thinkers and conservatives from the Gorbachev period whenever this was pertinent to the discussion. I have also used the memoirs of Molotov (in the form of conversations), Khrushchev and Gromyko since they offer evidence difficult to find elsewhere on the Soviet foreign policy initiatives in the 1950s. An obvious bias of memoirs is that the authors tend to exaggerate their own role in the described events and attempt to justify or present their actions in a positive light while denigrating the views or the contributions of their adversaries. Memoires and Politburo minutes also might not reveal the thinking of the decision-makers and don't always answer the question of how and why a particular decision was finally reached. For instance, the decision not to intervene militarily in Poland in 1956 seems to have been taken ad-hoc by Khrushchev. In my analysis I have incorporated a variety of Soviet, Czech, Polish and Hungarian primary sources such as minutes from meetings, speeches, reports, cables, letters, dispatches, records of telephone conversations and so on, in order to get an accurate understanding of the events in question. These documents are available in English in collections of historical documents such as: *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution: A History in Documents*, *The Prague Spring 1968: A National Security Archive Documents Reader*, *Soviet Deliberations during the Polish Crisis 1980-1981*, *From Solidarity to Martial Law: The Polish Crisis of 1980-1981: A Documentary History*. Another volume of primary sources on the Soviet policy in the last years of the Cold War which I have used extensively is the recently published *Masterpieces of History: The Soviet Peaceful Withdrawal from Eastern Europe*. Other documents such as the diaries of Anatoly Chernyaev, who was one of Gorbachev's foreign policy advisors during the final years of the Cold War, are accessible on the websites of The National Security Archive of George Washington University and Wilson Center's Cold War

International History Project. Due to time constraints, I have been selective in Russian sources I have used. I have selectively consulted articles from the two major Soviet newspapers *Pravda*, the main political newspaper of the Central Committee of the CPSU, and *Izvestiia*. One of the problems with these articles is that they reflect the official political line that was adopted, but usually don't reveal the real thinking of the Soviet leadership – many are pieces of propaganda and were meant to provide justification for Moscow's foreign policy. For this reason and because the analysis here deals with Soviet foreign policy decision making I have relied more extensively on other Soviet and Eastern European declassified materials.

2. Moscow's Pursuit of Collective European Security, 1954-1989

The Soviet leadership's campaign for an all-European security system from the 1950s to the 1980s can be seen as a continuation of Litvinov's multilateral and collective security approach to international relations from the 1940s which was aimed at achieving Soviet national security by promoting cooperative diplomatic relations with the West.⁴⁶ From the mid-1950s to the 1970s, the Soviet leaders continually pursued the idea of convening a European security conference as a forum for addressing the questions of improving European security and strengthening mutual cooperation.⁴⁷ The creation of an overarching East-West security organization remained a constant long-term objective of the Soviet foreign policy until the late 1980s despite the end of the Thaw and the escalation of the Cold War in the 1960s, late 1970s and early 1980s. Molotov, Khrushchev, Brezhnev and Gorbachev all called for an all-European collective security system as an answer to Soviet political and security concerns in Europe and later on also as a solution to the Soviet bloc increasing economic problems.

The Berlin Conference of Foreign Ministers (January 25 to February 18, 1954) was the first conference after the Second World War where the Soviet proposal for a pan-European collective security system was discussed. The Soviets hoped for the signing of a European collective security treaty which would provide an alternative to the European Defense Community and would prevent German rearmament.⁴⁸ With this objective in mind, on 10 February 1954, Molotov submitted a draft general Treaty on collective security in Europe which foresaw neutralization and confederal arrangements as a step towards German unification.⁴⁹ According to the proposal, participation in an all-European collective security system would have been open to all European states regardless of their political, social or economic systems.⁵⁰ The draft proposal included a collective defense clause stipulating that an armed attack against one or more of the signatories would be

⁴⁶ Gorodetsky, 'The Formulation of Soviet Foreign Policy', p. 33.

⁴⁷ Franz Kernic, 'European Security in Transition: The European Security Architecture since the End of the Second World War - An Overview', in *European Security in Transition*, ed. by Franz Kernic and Gunther Hauser (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Group, 2006), p. 12.

⁴⁸ Roberts, *Molotov*, p. 145.

⁴⁹ Bennett Kovrig, *Of Walls and Bridges: the United States and Eastern Europe*, 'New York University Press, 1991', p.307.

⁵⁰ Kernic, 'European Security in Transition', p. 10.

considered an attack against all of them.⁵¹ Significantly, just as Gorbachev, who saw the creation of a common European house as a first step towards German unification in the late 1980s, in 1954, Moscow perceived pan-European collective security arrangements as the necessary prerequisite for a peace treaty and the unification of Germany.⁵²

In March 1954, Moscow pursued its campaign for all-European security structure by proposing to join NATO and change the nature of the alliance into a collective security system.⁵³ For instance, Moscow announced two amendments to the draft treaty about collective security in Europe presented at the Berlin Conference according to which the United States would be allowed to participate in a system of European collective security and the Soviet Union would consider joining NATO if the organization relinquished its aggressive character.⁵⁴ It was the rejection by the Western states of this Soviet proposal that contributed to the Soviet decision to establish its own military alliance.

It is significant that the creation of the Warsaw Pact on 14 May 1955 was motivated by political reasons and was meant to counter the consolidation of NATO. The significance of political considerations in the establishment of the organization is visible in the fact that the Soviet foreign ministry rather than the general staff was charged with the planning of the alliance.⁵⁵ The timing of the creation of the Warsaw Pact, a day before the signing of the Austrian State Treaty, which was the most substantial achievement of détente, was significant, since it was intended to induce the West to negotiate with Moscow on the creation of a new European security system which would replace NATO and the Warsaw Pact.⁵⁶ The Warsaw Treaty also stipulated the desire of the contracting parties to put in place a “system of European collective security based on the participation of all European states irrespective of their social and political systems”

⁵¹ Kernic, ‘European Security in Transition’, p. 10.

⁵² Roberts, *Molotov*, p. 146.

⁵³ Kernic, p. 11.

⁵⁴ Roberts, *Molotov*, p. 151-152.

⁵⁵ Vojtech Mastny, ‘The Warsaw Pact as History’, in *A Cardboard Castle?: An Inside History of the Warsaw Pact, 1955-1991*, ed. by V. Mastny and M. Byrne (New York : Central European University Press, 2005), p. 3.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

which would allow them to unite their efforts in safeguarding the peace in Europe.⁵⁷ Article 11 of the Treaty also specified that “should a system of collective security be established in Europe, and a General European Treaty of Collective Security concluded, the present Treaty shall cease to be operative from the day the General European Treaty enters into force”.⁵⁸ This provision demonstrated the consistency of the Soviet diplomatic efforts to change the political and military balance in Europe. In this context, the second Conference of European Countries on Safeguarding European Peace and Security and the Warsaw Treaty can be seen as a continuation of the Soviet campaign for pan-European collective security which culminated with the presentation of a draft of the treaty at the four power summit at Geneva.⁵⁹ Simultaneously, in 1955, Khrushchev promoted the concept of neutralism which was designed to prevent the expansion of NATO in Europe and which was part of broader strategy of trying to create a neutral buffer of states Europe between NATO and the Warsaw Pact.⁶⁰ The 1955 Austrian State Treaty was connected to the consolidation of the East-West spheres of influence in Europe. It prevented the integration of Austria into a Western defense system and it had a strategic significance for the Soviet Union by separating the Southern Tier from the rest of NATO.⁶¹

At the Geneva Summit (18-23 July 1955) and the Geneva Conference of Foreign Ministers (26 October to 16 November 1955), the Soviet leaders pursued a European collective security policy similar to that put forward at the Berlin Conference even though some important revisions were made. The Soviets adopted a new staged approach to Germany according to which Germany’s unification would be achieved gradually in the framework of a common collective security system allowing for the initial

⁵⁷ ‘Document No. 1: The Warsaw Treaty, May 14, 1955’, in *A Cardboard Castle?: An Inside History of the Warsaw Pact, 1955-1991*, ed. by V. Mastny and M. Byrne (New York : Central European University Press, 2005), p. 77.

⁵⁸ ‘Document No. 1: The Warsaw Treaty’, p. 79.

⁵⁹ Mastny, ‘The Warsaw Pact’, p. 4.

⁶⁰ Vladislav Zubok, ‘Soviet Policy Aims at the Geneva Conference, 1955’, in *Cold War Respite The Geneva Summit of 1955*, ed. by Günter Bischof and Saki Dockrill (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2000), p. 63.

⁶¹ Hanspeter Neuhold, ‘The Neutral States of Europe: Similarities and Differences’, in *Neutrality: Changing Concepts and Practices*, ed. by A. T. Leonhard and N. Mercurio (New Orleans, La.: Institute for the Comparative Study of Public Policy, University of New Orleans, 1988), p. 111.

coexistence of the two German states.⁶² The two-stage proposal of the Soviet delegation for the Geneva Summit envisioned a two to three year period during which the agreements and the structures of NATO and the Warsaw Pact would remain in place and the two sides would commit to nonaggression and political cooperation which would be then followed by the dissolution of the organizations and their replacement by a new pan-European collective security system.⁶³ The Soviets prepared plans for various proposals in case some of these were rejected by the West which denoted their increasingly flexible position and their unwavering desire for an agreement on European collective security.

Moscow's efforts to reach an agreement with the Western states on European collective security continued after 1955. For example, at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party in 1956, Khrushchev presented once again the Soviet plans for European collective security which entailed the reunification of Germany through the gradual rapprochement between the two states.⁶⁴ By the end of 1957, trying to benefit from the favorable international situation after the flight of Sputnik, Khrushchev returned again to the idea of collective security in Europe and to his old campaign for the simultaneous dissolution of NATO and the Warsaw Pact.⁶⁵ A Soviet draft of the NATO-Warsaw Pact Nonaggression Treaty from 24 May 1958 proposed that the NATO and Warsaw Pact member states would pledge, among other things, not to resort to the use or threat of force against one another jointly or separately and would resolve conflicts only through peaceful means based on the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of states.⁶⁶ Four years later, in 1962, Moscow made several public demands for a NATO-Warsaw Pact nonaggression treaty and solution to the German question.⁶⁷

After a brief interruption in 1962, the Soviet campaign for European collective security resumed in the mid 1960s and climaxed with the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in 1975. In a renewed effort to improve relations with the West,

⁶² Roberts, *Molotov*, p. 161.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

⁶⁴ Roberts, *Molotov*, p. 173.

⁶⁵ Mastny, 'The Warsaw Pact', p. 12.

⁶⁶ 'Document No. 8: Draft of a Warsaw Pact - NATO Nonaggression Treaty, May 24, 1958', in *A Cardboard Castle?: An Inside History of the Warsaw Pact, 1955-1991*, ed. by V. Mastny and M. Byrne (New York : Central European University Press, 2005), p. 96.

⁶⁷ Mastny, 'The Warsaw Pact', p. 20.

the Warsaw Pact's Declaration on Strengthening Peace and Security in Europe from July 1966 called for a European conference on security and co-operation and demanded that the European states "develop good-neighborly relations on the basis of the principles of independence and national sovereignty, equality, non-interference in internal affairs and mutual advantage" established upon the peaceful co-existence between states with different social systems.⁶⁸ The declaration also reiterated the Soviet desire for the dissolution of NATO and the Warsaw Pact and their replacement by an all-European security system and it expressed the Soviet commitment to the resolution of international disputes through peaceful means.⁶⁹

Despite the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and the annunciation of the Brezhnev Doctrine in 1968, both of which challenged the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of the states endorsed previously by Moscow, the Soviet leaders continued to pursue détente and their goal of a European security conference. Contrary to previous plans for a European collective security system put forward by Molotov and Khrushchev, the 1969 proposal for a conference had the limited objective of obtaining the recognition by the West of the territorial and political status quo in Europe and a guarantee that it would not attempt to change it by using force.⁷⁰ The question of German reunification was closed. Brezhnev believed that détente favored Moscow's ideological objectives since "in conditions of relaxed international tensions, the arrow of the political barometer moves to the left".⁷¹ This way of thinking was reminiscent of the Soviet 1920s dual policy of promoting peaceful coexistence and conventional diplomatic relations with the West in order to consolidate the new socialist republic and pursue the anti-imperialist struggle. In their 17 March 1969 appeal for a preparatory meeting to fix the agenda for a European security conference, the Warsaw Pact member states reiterated their usual proposals against the division of the world into military blocs and stated that the question of preventing military conflicts through the respect for the equality, independence and

⁶⁸ 'The Warsaw Pact Declaration', *Survival*, 8 (1966), p. 291-293

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 289-292.

⁷⁰ Mastny, 'The Warsaw Pact', p. 40.

⁷¹ Daniel C. Thomas, *The Helsinki Effect: International Norms, Human Rights, and the Demise of Communism* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 34.

sovereignty of countries was of major significance for the European states.⁷² By October 1969, the Warsaw Pact member states had decided on two proposals on the agenda for the future conference – a declaration on the renunciation of force and a proposal for economic, technical and scientific cooperation.⁷³ The proposals reflected the security, political and economic motivations behind the Soviet search for détente with the Western states. Significantly, by the mid-1960s Soviet and East European demands for collective European security conference were linked increasingly to the need for Western investments and technological assistance – a trend which would continue in the 1970s and 1980s.

Convening of a European security conference and preserving détente in Europe remained one of the major long-term foreign policy objectives pursued by Brezhnev. According to a speech given by the Soviet leader at the January 1972 session of the PCC, Brezhnev expected a rapprochement between NATO and the Warsaw Pact to occur as soon as a consensus was reached with the West regarding the inviolability of borders, the nonuse of force or threat of force and non-interference in the affairs of the two blocs.⁷⁴ Brezhnev saw the Warsaw Pact's future as a political rather than military alliance and anticipated NATO-Warsaw Pact political consultations, the creation of a common European political organ such as a consultative committee of secretariat and ultimately political cooperation.⁷⁵ The Helsinki Final Act was seen by Moscow as the beginning of a new European security system. It included key commitments on political, economic, social, military and human rights issues and provided to the Soviet Union the much needed Western credits.⁷⁶ The achievements of the Helsinki Final Act were, however, overshadowed by decline of détente in the late 1970s with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Desperate to preserve détente and to deal with the challenge of an ascendant

⁷² 'Document No. 63: Appeal for a European Security Conference, March 17, 1969', in *A Cardboard Castle?: An Inside History of the Warsaw Pact, 1955-1991*, ed. by V. Mastny and M. Byrne (New York : Central European University Press, 2005), p. 330.

⁷³ 'Document No. 67: Hungarian Foreign Ministry Memorandum of Soviet-Hungarian Consultations on the European Security Conference, October 18, 1969', in *A Cardboard Castle?: An Inside History of the Warsaw Pact, 1955-1991*, ed. by V. Mastny and M. Byrne (New York : Central European University Press, 2005), p. 348.

⁷⁴ Mastny, 'The Warsaw Pact', p. 42.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Kernic, 'European Security in Transition', p. 13.

NATO, in the early 1980s, the Soviet leadership reviewed old ideas about a non-aggression treaty between NATO and the Warsaw Pact.⁷⁷

Thus, by the late 1970s, it became increasingly obvious that the CSCE would not lead to the fulfillment of the vision of an all-European security structure that Moscow had in mind. The Soviet leadership also grew dissatisfied with the CSCE because of its focus on human rights and its imposition of principles of international and domestic behaviour which turned out to have a long-term destabilizing effect within the Soviet bloc. With Gorbachev becoming general secretary in 1985, however, the Helsinki CSCE process attracted renewed attention, and later in the 1980s it came to be seen by the Soviet reformers as the security framework upon which the common European home would be built. Like his predecessors, Gorbachev showed an interest towards a return to détente for political and economic reasons. Soon after he became general secretary, in a speech celebrating the fortieth anniversary of the Soviet victory over Germany in May 1945, Gorbachev stated that the process of détente had to be revived and described détente as a transitional stage towards the creation of a reliable and comprehensive system of international security.⁷⁸ At the 27th party congress in 1986, Gorbachev reiterated this view by emphasizing the necessity to move forward towards a more “stable, secure détente” and from then on to a more reliable security on the basis of the Helsinki process.⁷⁹ Gorbachev’s calls for collective European security system reflected the concurrent Soviet search for security, which now had not only a military and political, but also a very important economic dimension. The new Soviet understanding and pursuit of the different aspects of security was exemplified by the concept of common European home. According to Gorbachev’s July 1989 address to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, the common European home would be built on collective security (which entailed the rejection of the use and threat of force in international relations), on economic integration of all European states, on protection of the environment, and on

⁷⁷ Mastny, 'The Warsaw Pact', p. 55.

⁷⁸ John Van Oudenaren, 'The Tradition of Change in Soviet Foreign Policy', in *Understanding Soviet Foreign Policy*, ed. by J. Van Oudenaren and Francis Conte (Washington, D.C.: Institute for National Strategic Studies, 1990), p. 11.

⁷⁹ Van Oudenaren, 'The Tradition of Change', p. 11.

respect for human rights and law.⁸⁰ Moreover, Gorbachev foresaw that the military organizations in Europe would dissolve gradually and that their security role would be assumed by the CSCE and the United Nations.⁸¹ Like Molotov before him, Gorbachev saw the creation of such pan-European security structure as a necessary step towards the reunification of Germany and the eventual dissolution of NATO and the Warsaw Pact.⁸²

⁸⁰ 'Document No. 73: Address by Mikhail Gorbachev to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, July 6, 1989', in *Masterpieces of History: the Peaceful End of the Cold War*, ed. by S. Savranskaya, T. Blanton, and V. Zubok (Budapest, New York, NY: Central European University Press, 2010), pp. 494-495.

⁸¹ Svetlana Savranskaya, 'The Logic of 1989: The Soviet Peaceful Withdrawal from Eastern Europe', in *Masterpieces of History: The Peaceful End of the Cold War in Europe, 1989*, ed. by S. Savranskaya, T. Blanton and V. Zubok (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2010), p. 19.

⁸² Julie M. Newton, 'Gorbachev', p. 304.

3. The 1956 Hungarian Revolution and the Polish October

An important feature of Soviet policy during the Polish October was its unpredictability. Decisions seem to have been made in an ad-hoc manner and were influenced by the speed of events and the worsening situation in Hungary. Ideological concerns didn't seem to be initially the main factor behind the Soviet decision-making with regards to Poland. Military issues, for instance, appeared to be the Soviets' main preoccupation during Khrushchev's visit to Poland in October 1956. According to Khrushchev's memoirs, the anti-Soviet feelings of the new Polish leaders alarmed Moscow's officials, who felt that the Soviet lines of communication to the GDR were threatened, and that access to the Soviet troops there would be denied.⁸³ Moscow saw the situation in Poland as serious enough to warrant the Soviets "to be ready to resort to arms".⁸⁴ However, the Soviet delegation which arrived in Warsaw on 19 October 1956 didn't have a clear plan on how to respond to the challenge posed by Poland's political reforms. Despite the large scale mobilization of Soviet troops, it is unclear whether Moscow was actually prepared to proceed with a military intervention on 19 October.⁸⁵ Allusions and statements about resorting to military means in case Poland decided to leave the socialist bloc were made most notably during the Soviet-Polish talks at the Belvedere Palace.⁸⁶ For instance, Khrushchev threatened that the CPSU was ready to "intervene brutally" in Polish internal affairs to protect its interests in Poland.⁸⁷ The talks probably didn't mark a turning point in Moscow's policy as has been often assumed. Even after Khrushchev's return from Warsaw, a final decision with respect to Poland was not immediately reached. According to the notes of the CPSU CC Presidium session on 20 October 1956, the Soviet leadership's view was that there was "only one way out" of

⁸³ Nikita S. Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers: The Glasnost Tapes* (Boston, Mass.: Little, Brown, 1990), p. 114.

⁸⁴ Nikita S. Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers* (London: Penguin Books, 1974), p. 199-200.

⁸⁵ Krzysztof Persak, 'The Polish-Soviet Confrontation in 1956 and the Attempted Soviet Military Intervention in Poland', in *Challenging Communism in Eastern Europe: 1956 and its Legacy*, ed. by Terry Cox (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 262-263.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 269

⁸⁷ Tony Kemp-Welch, 'Dethroning Stalin: Poland 1956 and its Legacy', in *Challenging Communism in Eastern Europe: 1956 and its Legacy*, ed. by Terry Cox (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 210.

the situation in Poland, and plans to proceed with military exercises were made.⁸⁸ In spite of the fact that the military option remained valid, Moscow made significant efforts to find a political compromise with Gomulka.

The Soviet leaders employed a variety of methods, such as persuasion, different forms of coercive diplomacy, and threats in an effort to find a nonmilitary solution in Poland.⁸⁹ For instance, while the Soviet-Polish talks on 19 October were taking place, units of the Northern group of the Soviet military stationed in Poland were advancing towards Warsaw.⁹⁰ At the same time, Soviet warships entered the Bay of Gdansk and a state of increased readiness was introduced in the Belorussian, Kiev and Carpathian Military Districts, all in an effort to increase the pressure on the Polish negotiators.⁹¹ As the pro-Gomulka rallies continued, on 20 and 21 October the Soviet leadership also considered a variety of economic measures and military options, and launched a campaign in the Soviet press centering on the threat to socialism in Poland.⁹² In spite of the fact that a decision to withhold military action was reached by the CPSU Presidium on 21 October, the manoeuvres in Poland continued which led Gomulka to protest against the Soviet interference in Poland's internal affairs during the 24 October satellite leaders' meeting.⁹³ Although the meeting didn't put an end to the Soviet-Polish tensions, after 23 October 1956, Moscow's attention shifted to the worsening situation in Hungary. The Soviet leaders most likely reached the practical decision that an agreement with the Polish leadership was preferable to an armed intervention. This view is corroborated by Khrushchev's statement that finding a reason for an armed conflict with Poland would be very easy, but ending such a conflict would be very hard.⁹⁴

⁸⁸ 'Document No. 23: Working Notes from the Session of the CPSU CC Presidium, October 20, 1956', in *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution: A History in Documents*, ed. by C. Békés, M. Byrne, and J. M. Rainer (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006), p. 186.

⁸⁹ Persak, 'The Polish-Soviet Confrontation', p. 262.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 259.

⁹¹ Kemp-Welch, 'Dethroning Stalin', p. 210; Persak, 'The Polish-Soviet Confrontation', p. 262-263.

⁹² Mark Kramer, 'New Evidence on Soviet Decision-Making and the 1956 Polish and Hungarian Crises', *CWIHP Bulletin*, 8-9 (Winter 1996/1997), p. 361.

⁹³ 'Document No. 27: Jan Svoboda's Notes on the CPSU CC Presidium Meeting with Satellite Leaders, October 24, 1956', in *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution: A History in Documents*, ed. by C. Békés, M. Byrne, and J. M. Rainer (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006), pp. 223.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 224.

Ultimately, several factors might explain the Soviet resolution not to proceed with a military invasion, the main one being that Gomulka did not challenge the status quo by demanding Poland's withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact. In fact, with his sincerity and firm attitude during the Belvedere Palace talks, Gomulka reassured Khrushchev that Poland wanted to have friendly relations with the Soviet Union in order to protect its borders with the West, and that the Soviet-Polish relationship wouldn't be affected by the country's internal political problems.⁹⁵ Gomulka was also insistent that Poland would maintain its communist system, and had no intention of leaving the Warsaw Pact.⁹⁶ This argument was reiterated by the Polish leader at the 24 October CPSU Presidium meeting where he stressed that the presence of Soviet troops in Poland was required because of NATO and the American forces stationed in West Germany.⁹⁷ Moreover, the popular support for Gomulka, who was seen by Moscow as a loyal communist, and the fact that the Polish society was united against Soviet military intervention, also played a role in persuading Moscow to reach an agreement with the new Polish leaders.⁹⁸

In the case of Poland, Moscow demonstrated a degree of tolerance which can be interpreted as an example of *realpolitik* flexibility. The evidence suggests that the Kremlin was somewhat careful in imposing its will upon the Polish leadership, especially once Gomulka made it clear that the country was not going to leave from the Warsaw Pact. In his memoirs, Khrushchev states that for historical reasons he always tried to be sympathetic with the outbursts of anti-Soviet sentiments in Poland.⁹⁹ Gomulka himself was aware of Poland's importance in Moscow's security scheme, and used this fact to his advantage during the Belvedere Palace talks. He pointed out, for example, that Poland was not a Bulgaria or Hungary, but the most important country in the region, thus

⁹⁵ Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers: The Glasnost Tapes*, p. 115.

⁹⁶ Kramer, 'New Evidence on Soviet Decision-Making', p. 362.

⁹⁷ 'Document No. 27: Jan Svoboda's Notes', p. 224.

⁹⁸ Mark Kramer, 'Hungary and Poland, 1956: Khrushchev's CPSU CC Presidium Meeting on East European Crises, 24 October 1956', *CWIHP Bulletin*, 5 (1995), p. 53.

⁹⁹ Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers: The Glasnost Tapes*, p. 116.

emphasizing Poland's geostrategic significance for the Warsaw Pact.¹⁰⁰ The working notes of the 23 October session also indicate that for the majority of the CPSU CC Presidium members, the situation in Poland was different and could not be compared to that in Hungary.¹⁰¹ In this line, Khrushchev later stressed that in the case of Poland nervousness and haste had to be avoided and that the Polish comrades had to be assisted.¹⁰² As a whole, the Soviet decision-making during the Polish crisis shows that the Kremlin's relations with Warsaw were not rigid, and were not always directed from Moscow. In Poland, the Soviets were willing to permit a certain degree of systemic change as long as the country did not defect from the socialist camp. At the same time, however, the Polish crisis probably established the limits of what was acceptable to the Soviets, and influenced to some extent their response to the Hungarian Revolution.¹⁰³

As in the case of Poland, during the Hungarian Revolution, the Soviet leadership initially adopted a *realpolitik* approach. For instance, different options for resolving the crisis were considered, and military invasion was not seen as the only suitable course of action. Between 23 and 30 October, a number of alternatives to resolve the crisis were discussed. On 23 October, for example, Mikoyan proposed a "cheaper" solution by trying political measures, which consisted in leaving Nagy and the Hungarian forces to deal with the situation.¹⁰⁴ Similarly on 28 October, the CPSU CC Presidium decided to support the Nagy government and discussed peaceful options such as issuing an appeal to the workers, peasants and intelligentsia in Hungary and asking the fraternal communist parties to appeal to the Hungarians.¹⁰⁵ Several Soviet leaders also expressed their wariness about using force in the country. Bulganin, for example, suggested that the

¹⁰⁰L.W. Gluchowski, 'Poland, 1956: Khrushchev, Gomulka and the "Polish October"', *CWIHP Bulletin*, 5 (Spring 1995), p. 42.

¹⁰¹'Document No. 25: Working Notes from the Session of the CPSU CC Presidium, October 23, 1956', in *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution: A History in Documents*, ed. by C. Békés, M. Byrne, and J. M. Rainer (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006), p. 217.

¹⁰²'Document No. 27: Jan Svoboda's Notes', p. 223.

¹⁰³Kramer, 'New Evidence on Soviet Decision-Making', p. 362.

¹⁰⁴'Document No. 25: Working Notes', p. 217.

¹⁰⁵'Document No. 40: Working Notes from the CPSU CC Presidium Session, October 28, 1956', in *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution: A History in Documents*, ed. by C. Békés, M. Byrne, and J. M. Rainer (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006), pp. 265-267.

Soviet Union should support the Nagy government, since proceeding with an occupation would be a “dubious venture”, and Khrushchev commented that the English and French were in a real mess in Egypt and implied that Moscow should avoid getting involved in a similar situation.¹⁰⁶ On 30 October 1956 the Presidium adopted the “Declaration by the Government of the USSR on the Principles of Development and Further Strengthening of Friendship and Cooperation between the Soviet Union and Other Socialist States” which opened the prospect of the future withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary and the satellites in Eastern Europe.¹⁰⁷ Khrushchev stated that, in Hungary, Moscow had to choose between a “military path – one of occupation” and “a peaceful path – the withdrawal of troops, negotiations”.¹⁰⁸ The Presidium ended up supporting the latter. For a short period of time it seemed that the Soviet leadership would be able to break away from the constraints of its ideologized foreign policy. This idea is supported by the fact that during the 28 October session, the Presidium ruled against the use of force in Hungary despite the growing anti-Soviet mood in the country and the admission of democrats in the MDP.¹⁰⁹ Moscow also chose the peaceful path even though Suslov’s and Mikoyan’s 30 October report claimed that party organizations in Hungary were collapsing, that the Hungarian army was probably unreliable given that some units were likely to join the rebels and that the Nagy government was preparing to protest against the Soviet military intervention at the UN.¹¹⁰ Nagy’s announcement of the creation of a multi-party system also didn’t seem to affect the CPSU discussions that day.¹¹¹

The final decision to pursue a military solution was not automatic, and the CPSU Presidium did struggle with the issue of whether to send Soviet troops or not. The members of the Soviet Presidium were also not always unanimous in their decisions

¹⁰⁶ ‘Document No. 40: Working Notes’, p. 264-268.

¹⁰⁷ ‘Document No. 49: Working Notes from the Session of the CPSU CC Presidium on October 30, 1956 (Re: Point 1 of Protocol No. 49)’, in *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution: A History in Documents*, ed. by C. Békés, M. Byrne, and J. M. Rainer (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006), pp. 295-296.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 292.

¹⁰⁹ ‘Document No. 40: Working Notes’, p. 266.

¹¹⁰ ‘Document No. 47: Situation Report from Anastas Mikoyan and Mikhail Suslov in Budapest, October 30, 1956’, in *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution: A History in Documents*, ed. by C. Békés, M. Byrne, and J. M. Rainer (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006), p. 292.

¹¹¹ ‘Document No. 46: Proclamation by Imre Nagy on the Creation of a Multi-Party System, October 30, 1956’, in *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution: A History in Documents*, ed. by C. Békés, M. Byrne, and J. M. Rainer (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006), p. 290.

regarding the Soviet policy in Hungary. For example, the differences of opinion within the CPSU CC Presidium are visible during the 23 October session. While Khrushchev made a proposal to send troops to Budapest and was supported in this view by Bulganin, Molotov, Zhukov and Suslov, among others, Mikoyan was more guarded and favoured political measures.¹¹² In fact, throughout most of the crisis, notwithstanding the worsening of the situation, Mikoyan rejected military intervention. Similarly, during the 28 October CPSU CC Presidium session, Zhukov expressed his view that the Soviet Politburo should display “political flexibility” with respect to Hungary.¹¹³ Voroshilov, in fact, was the only Presidium member who didn’t embrace the peaceful path that day. The Malin Notes show that on a number of occasions during the 23, 28, 30 and 31 October sessions the majority of the Presidium members tended to agree with the position adopted by Khrushchev, even though they had previously expressed the opposite view.¹¹⁴ This pattern of supporting Khrushchev’s position probably helps explain the dramatic rejection of the 30 October compromise solution in favour of a military one on 31 October.

As in the case of Poland, the ad-hoc nature of the Soviet decision-making is also apparent with regards to Hungary. The final decision in favour of invasion, which was taken on 31 October 1956, after rejecting the peaceful solution endorsed on the previous day, can be seen as indicative of the ideological concerns of Khrushchev about letting Hungary leave the Soviet bloc. According to the Malin Notes, Khrushchev merely announced to the Presidium that the Soviet troops should not be withdrawn from Budapest and Hungary and that order in the country had to be restored.¹¹⁵ He also stressed the need to defend the Soviet empire’s international reputation and pointed out that leaving Hungary would be a boost for the imperialists.¹¹⁶ Notably, only Saburov was still in favor of the “liberal position” endorsed by the majority of the Presidium members

¹¹² ‘Document No. 25: Working Notes’, p. 217.

¹¹³ ‘Document No. 40: Working Notes’, p. 264.

¹¹⁴ Johanna C. Granville, *The First Domino: International Decision Making during the Hungarian Crisis of 1956* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2003), p. 74.

¹¹⁵ ‘Document No. 53: Working Notes and Attached Extract from the Minutes of the CPSU CC Presidium Meeting, October 31, 1956’, in *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution: A History in Documents*, ed. by C. Békés, M. Byrne, and J. M. Rainer (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006), p. 307.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

the previous day.¹¹⁷ Mikoyan, who was not present during this decisive session, later insisted in front of Khrushchev that the Soviet Union should not use force in Hungary, since this would damage the reputation of the Soviet government and party.¹¹⁸ The existing sources don't reveal the exact reason behind the shift of the Soviet position. It is possible that the Soviet leadership reviewed the worrisome 30 October report of Suslov and Mikoyan and realized that the Soviet declaration on 30 October would be insufficient to preserve communist one-party rule in Hungary. Even though the declaration expressed the Soviet desire to have more balanced relations with its satellite states it also established the limits of what Moscow was willing to tolerate – the envisioned reforms were meant to maintain a socialist system internally, and to strengthen the intra-block alliance system.¹¹⁹ Viewed in this light, it is dubious whether Moscow really was prepared to let Hungary leave the socialist camp. The Soviet leadership apparently felt constrained by official ideology while attempting to move in the direction of flexible *realpolitik*. At the same time, the Soviet zigzags in policy suggest that the Soviet leaders didn't have a program on how to proceed, and that a small window of opportunity did exist for Hungary to break away from the socialist bloc.

The Soviet leaders' abrupt shifts of position during the Hungarian Revolution might be partially explained by their misunderstanding of the processes underway in the country. Earlier Soviet reports on Hungary were contradictory. They ranged from Suslov's June positive assessment of the healthy mood of the peasants and workers, to Mikoyan's more accurate account of the party loosening its grip on power in July, and Andropov's alarming report on "subversive activity" within the population directed against the HWP leadership.¹²⁰ According to Malashenko, even before the first

¹¹⁷ 'Document No. 53: Working Notes', p. 308.

¹¹⁸ Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers: The Glasnost Tapes*, p. 122.

¹¹⁹ 'Document No. 50: "Declaration by the Government of the USSR on the Principles of Development and Further Strengthening of Friendship and Cooperation Between the Soviet Union and Other Socialist States," October 30, 1956', in *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution: A History in Documents*, ed. by C. Békés, M. Byrne, and J. M. Rainer (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006), p. 300.

¹²⁰ 'Document No. 15: Report from Anastas Mikoyan on the Situation in the Hungarian Workers' Party, July 14, 1956', in *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution: A History in Documents*, ed. by C. Békés, M. Byrne, and J. M. Rainer (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006), pp. 143-144; 'Document No. 19: Report from Ambassador Yurii Andropov on Deteriorating Conditions in Hungary, August 29, 1956', in *The 1956*

intervention, the Soviet leadership did not evaluate realistically the situation in the country.¹²¹ A report from 24 October conveyed Mikoyan's and Suslov's impression that the Hungarian authorities were "mastering" the situation, and that Gerő and some other comrades were "exaggerating the opponent's strength and underestimating their own" even though there was evidence that the Hungarian army was performing poorly.¹²² Similarly, on 27 October Suslov and Mikoyan also reported positively that "as a whole the new government [was] reliable, and in the social sense more authoritative".¹²³ Their more sober 30 October assessment of the situation didn't produce an immediate change of the Soviet position. Thus, it can be argued that Soviet initial restraint was probably the result of misinformation and misperception of the events underway.

It is significant that the Hungarian declaration of neutrality was not the reason for the Soviet decision to stage a second invasion. The Soviet decision to proceed with an intervention was taken on 31 October 1956 before the issue of Hungary's neutrality was addressed at the Nagy government meeting on 1 November.¹²⁴ On the same day, 1 November, the Hungarian government decided that the country would leave the Warsaw Pact. The Hungarian demands for neutrality, however, were not new. Following the 20th Congress of the Communist Party in Moscow, some Hungarians had expressed a desire for the country to become neutral, and Soviet officials were informed about this. Calls for Hungary to leave the Warsaw Pact were made on October 31 on Radio Budapest and Béla Kovács, a member of Nagy's cabinet, had called for neutrality during a speech in Pécs on October 31.¹²⁵ While the Malin Notes show that the Soviet leaders received the

Hungarian Revolution: A History in Documents, ed. by C. Békés, M. Byrne, and J. M. Rainer (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006), p. 159.

¹²¹ Y.I. Malashenko, 'The Special Corps Under Fire in Budapest: Memoires of an Eyewitness', in *1956: Soviet Military Intervention in Hungary*, ed. by J. Györkei and M. Horvath (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1999), p. 221.

¹²² 'Document No. 26: Situation Report from Anastas Mikoyan and Mikhail Suslov in Budapest to the CPSU CC Presidium, October 24, 1956', in *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution: A History in Documents*, ed. by C. Békés, M. Byrne, and J. M. Rainer (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006), pp. 220-221.

¹²³ 'Document No. 38: Report from Anastas Mikoyan and Mikhail Suslov in Budapest to the CPSU CC, October 27, 1956', in *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution: A History in Documents*, ed. by C. Békés, M. Byrne, and J. M. Rainer (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006), p. 252.

¹²⁴ 'Document No. 61: Minutes of the Nagy Government's Third Cabinet Meeting, November 1, 1956', in *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution: A History in Documents*, ed. by C. Békés, M. Byrne, and J. M. Rainer (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006), p. 322.

¹²⁵ Granville, *The First Domino*, pp. 71-72.

news about the Pécs speech on 31 October, it is unclear whether they learned about its content on the same day.¹²⁶ It is possible that Moscow foresaw that Nagy might announce Hungary's withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact and acted preemptively by deciding to proceed with a second invasion.¹²⁷ These facts raise the question of whether there was a real possibility for Hungary to leave the Warsaw Pact. As already seen, in the period between the two interventions, the Soviet leaders vacillated between adopting a practical approach and letting Hungary go, and finally deciding to intervene based on ideological considerations. The fact that the Austrian State Treaty was concluded in 1955 and that ideas about Germany's neutrality and the creation of a neutral "buffer" between the two blocs were discussed in Moscow suggests that a small window of opportunity for Hungarian withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact probably did exist.¹²⁸ The Soviet leadership apparently knew about the Hungarians' calls for neutrality in the summer of 1956 but didn't address officially the question. The possibility of Hungary leaving the Warsaw Pact and becoming a neutral state was also not mentioned at the Soviet Presidium sessions in the days preceding the October 31 decision to send troops. Therefore, it is unclear how such an option was viewed by Moscow. In the mid-1950s the Soviet leaders envisioned the creation of belts of neutral or non-aligned states in Europe.¹²⁹ Moscow also sought to strengthen "neutralism" and improve the Soviet relations with the existing neutral states – for example, it attempted a rapprochement with Yugoslavia and gave back the Porkkala naval base to Finland.¹³⁰ Still, the Soviet position on neutrality was somewhat ambivalent. A statement by Molotov in May 1955 that the Austrian example could be applied to other states was followed by an article in Pravda arguing that the West should not challenge the Soviet status quo in Eastern Europe, implying thereby that Austrian neutrality was not "exportable".¹³¹ In 1957, after the suppression of the

¹²⁶ 'Document No. 61: Minutes of the Nagy Government's', p. 72.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Zubok, 'Soviet Policy Aims at the Geneva Conference, 1955', p. 63.

¹²⁹ Gerald Stourzh, 'The Origins of Austrian Neutrality', in *Neutrality: Changing Concepts and Practices*, ed. by A. T. Leonhard and N. Mercurio (New Orleans, La.: Institute for the Comparative Study of Public Policy, University of New Orleans, 1988), p. 52.

¹³⁰ Günter Bischof, *Austria in the First Cold War, 1945-55: The Leverage of the Weak* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), p. 151.

¹³¹ Vojtech Mastny, 'Kremlin Politics and the Austrian Settlement', *Problems of Communism*, 31 (July-August 1982), p. 48.

Hungarian Uprising, Mikoyan also emphasized that Austria was a special case which could not be replicated under the existing conditions.¹³² Thus, it is rather unlikely that the Soviet leaders would have welcomed the decision of a Warsaw Pact member state to become neutral. This would have affected negatively the existing balance of power which, as the case of Hungary in 1956 shows, Khrushchev ultimately decided to preserve. At the same time, Khrushchev's zigzags in policy towards Hungary suggest that for brief moment of time in 1956, the Soviet leaders were ready to abandon the ideologized foreign policy behind in favor of a more flexible realpolitik.

¹³² Michael Gehler, 'From Non-Alignment to Neutrality: Austria's Transformation during the First East-West Détente, 1953-1958', *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 7 (2005), p. 126.

4. The Prague Spring 1968

Unlike the position of the Soviet leadership during the Hungarian Revolution, when Khrushchev and the Presidium members vacillated between peaceful and coercive policy options of resolving the crisis, during the Prague Spring, the position of the Soviet Politburo members remained constrained by the commitment to ideology. This is visible in the fact that even though the Soviet Politburo was not unanimous on how to respond to the challenge posed by the Prague Spring, the differences of opinions were over methods used rather than principle. Everyone seemed to agree that the gains of socialism in Czechoslovakia had to be preserved. For instance, during the months preceding the intervention, the Soviet leadership was divided between those promoting a Soviet military intervention in Czechoslovakia, and those who favored giving Dubček and the KSČ more time to restore order on their own.¹³³ However, there were no “doves”, given that all members of the Politburo fell somewhere on the spectrum of hawkishness.¹³⁴ According to Aleksandrov-Agentov, there were hawks, officials who came close to being doves, and others like Brezhnev who remained cautious.¹³⁵ The KGB Chairman Yuri Andropov and the First Secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party Petro Shelest showed an unwavering support for a military intervention at an earlier stage.¹³⁶ As early as the 21 March 1968 Soviet Politburo meeting, Shelest suggested that the Soviet Union should prepare for “extreme measures” including “military action”, and he was supported in this view by Shelepin, Solomentsev, and Andropov, who also recommended taking “concrete military measures”.¹³⁷ In a report presented at the April 1968 Plenum of the CC CPSU, Shelest compared the 1956 events in Hungary to the situation in Czechoslovakia, where the imperialists were now using “peaceful means” to bring down the communist

¹³³ Kieran Williams, ‘The Prague Spring: From Elite Liberalisation to Mass Movement’, in *Revolution and Resistance in Eastern Europe: Challenges to Communist Rule*, ed. by K. McDermott and M. Stibbe (New York, N.Y.: Berg, 2006), p. 102.

¹³⁴ Kieran Williams, ‘Review Essay: The Russian View(s) of the Prague Spring’, *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 14 (2012), p. 132.

¹³⁵ ‘Document No. 23: Memoir of Andrei Aleksandrov-Agentov on International Soviet Deliberations about Czechoslovakia (Excerpts)’, in *The Prague Spring 1968: A National Security Archive Documents Reader*, ed. by Jaromír Navrátil et al. (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1998), p. 102.

¹³⁶ Williams, ‘The Prague Spring’, p. 102.

¹³⁷ ‘Report by P. Shelest on the April 1968 Plenum of the CC CPSU’, April 25, 1968, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, TsDAHOU, F. 1, Op. 25, Spr. 97, Ll. 1-62.
<http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/112163>

regime, in order to suggest that Moscow should not wait for violence in Czechoslovakia to erupt in order to intervene militarily.¹³⁸ This indicated a shift in the Soviet policy which was later codified in the Brezhnev Doctrine. The Soviet Defence Minister Grechko also demanded the reestablishment of order in Czechoslovakia early on, since the situation in Czechoslovakia could undermine the defence potential of the Warsaw Pact.¹³⁹ Other officials such as Kosygin, Shelepin and Demichev changed their views during the crisis, sometimes privileging military intervention, and at other times opting for a political solution.¹⁴⁰ Aleksandrov-Agentov gives an account of a meeting in the spring of 1968 when the Soviet ambassador to the ČSSR, Chervonenko, warned that if the Soviets intervened without the necessary political preparations, the Czechoslovaks would resist, which would lead to bloodshed and no one wanted this.¹⁴¹ The dislike of the members of the Politburo for spilling blood in a fraternal country partially explains the Soviet efforts to find a political solution to the crisis during the first six months.

A consensus on the use of military force in Czechoslovakia was slow to emerge in the Soviet Politburo which reflects the Soviet usual reluctance to use force as a policy tool. It was only in the mid-summer of 1968 that a general agreement was reached that the situation in Czechoslovakia was extremely serious and that a military intervention would most probably take place.¹⁴² As late as 17 July 1968, Brezhnev emphasized that before adopting extreme measures, Moscow would privilege a political solution, through which the healthy forces in Czechoslovakia would crack down on the anti-socialist and counterrevolutionary forces, and preserve the role of the CPCz as the leading force in society.¹⁴³ The prospects that the CPCz CC Presidium would take decisive measures

¹³⁸ Mark Kramer, 'The Prague Spring and the Soviet Invasion in Historical Perspective', in *The Prague Spring and the Warsaw Pact Invasion of Czechoslovakia*, ed. by G. Bischof, S. Karner, and P. Ruggenthaler (Plymouth : Lexington Books, 2010), p. 43.

¹³⁹ Mikhail Prozumenshchikov, 'Politburo Decision-Making on the Czechoslovak Crisis in 1968', in *The Prague Spring and the Warsaw Pact Invasion of Czechoslovakia*, ed. by G. Bischof, S. Karner, and P. Ruggenthaler (Plymouth : Lexington Books, 2010), p. 106.

¹⁴⁰ Kramer, 'The Prague Spring', p. 45.

¹⁴¹ 'Document No. 23: Memoir of Andrei Aleksandrov-Agentov', p. 102.

¹⁴² Williams, 'The Prague Spring', p. 102.

¹⁴³ 'Document No. 56: Speech by Leonid Brezhnev to the CPSU Central Committee on the Proceedings and Results of the Warsaw Meeting, July 17, 1968', in *The Prague Spring 1968: A National Security Archive Documents Reader*, ed. by Jaromír Navrátil et al. (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1998), p. 258.

were, however, bleak. Simultaneously, Moscow began planning for “extreme measures” and started the preparation of documents intended to be published once the invasion was under way.¹⁴⁴ The evidence shows that the Soviet leaders employed all the means available to them to persuade Dubček to join the “healthy forces” and find a domestic solution. It is only when these efforts failed that the Soviet Politburo decided during the 22, 26 and 27 July meetings that a full-scale invasion was in order if the situation in the country did not change.¹⁴⁵ At the 13, 14 and 15 August 1968 ad-hoc sessions, the Politburo members agreed that a military intervention in Czechoslovakia would lead to complications, but that postponing the Soviet response would entail the loss of Czechoslovakia as a socialist country.¹⁴⁶ The final decision to use force was thus considered as a measure of last resort. Brezhnev’s fear that he would lose his position as General Secretary if Czechoslovakia leaves the socialist camp seems to have played a role in his final decision to opt for an intervention.¹⁴⁷ Brezhnev’s reluctance to use force was also visible in his concern that key and final decisions on Czechoslovakia were made collectively by the leadership, therefore ensuring the “joint liability” for the final outcome.¹⁴⁸ A final decision by the Soviet Politburo to intervene was reached unanimously only on August 17.¹⁴⁹

The transcripts of bilateral meetings, negotiations and summits, the Soviet letters to the KSČ leadership, and Brezhnev’s August telephone conversations with Dubček all demonstrate that the Soviet leaders and Brezhnev, in particular, made significant efforts to find a nonmilitary solution, by forcing Dubček to take more resolute measures to combat the counter-revolutionary forces. This political pressure was combined with a psychological one in the form of the Warsaw Pact Šumava maneuvers on the territory of

¹⁴⁴ Prozumenshchikov, ‘Politburo Decision-Making’, p. 118.

¹⁴⁵ Kramer, ‘The Prague Spring’, p. 46.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 47.

¹⁴⁷ Document No. 23: Memoir of Andrei Aleksandrov-Agentov’, p. 102.

¹⁴⁸ Prozumenshchikov, ‘Politburo Decision-Making’, p. 126.

¹⁴⁹ ‘Document No. 88: The Soviet Politburo’s Resolution on the Final Decision to Intervene in Czechoslovakia, August 17, 1968, with Attachments’, in *The Prague Spring 1968: A National Security Archive Documents Reader*, ed. by Jaromír Navrátil et al. (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1998), p. 377.

Czechoslovakia in June and July 1968.¹⁵⁰ Throughout the spring and summer of 1968, Moscow made consistently the same demands on the Czechoslovak leaders - to restore censorship, replace radical reformers with officials from the healthy forces, dissolve the new political formations and reestablish the unity of the KSČ and its authority over the Czechoslovak society. The Warsaw Letter from 14-15 July was a clear ultimatum to the CPCz CC Presidium. The letter expressed the view that the dangerous policies in Czechoslovakia threatened the position of the communist party, and would lead to the destruction of socialist democracy and of the socialist system, thus undermining the foundations of the Soviet bloc's security.¹⁵¹ The language of the letter and other documents is strongly suggestive of the ideological motivations of the Soviet leaders.

The role of Brezhnev as a general secretary in trying to find a non-military solution in Czechoslovakia is particularly salient. A believer in personal diplomacy, in the days preceding the invasion, Brezhnev tried different methods to exert pressure on Dubček to force him to address the Soviet grievances and to avoid an intervention. For instance, during his telephone conversation with Dubček on 9 August, Brezhnev extended an offer for help. He also repeatedly voiced his concern that the commitments agreed upon during the Soviet-Czechoslovak talks at Čierna nad Tisou in July 1968 were not being fulfilled by the Czechoslovak leaders and warned Dubček that “this is very serious now”.¹⁵² During the 13 August conversation, Brezhnev urged Dubček to “resort to concrete measures”, and to say more openly along with the other Czechoslovak officials which types of measure they were expecting from the Soviet Union.¹⁵³ Even though military assistance is not mentioned explicitly, it is clear that this is what Brezhnev implied when he said that the Soviet Politburo would take whatever measures it

¹⁵⁰ Jiri Valenta, *Soviet Intervention in Czechoslovakia, 1968: Anatomy of a Decision* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1979), p. 13.

¹⁵¹ ‘Document No. 53: The Warsaw Letter, July 14-15, 1968’, in *The Prague Spring 1968: A National Security Archive Documents Reader*, ed. by Jaromír Navrátil et al. (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1998), p. 235.

¹⁵² ‘Document No. 77: Summary Report and Transcript of Telephone Conversation between Leonid Brezhnev and Alexander Dubček, August 9, 1968’, in *The Prague Spring 1968: A National Security Archive Documents Reader*, ed. by Jaromír Navrátil et al. (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1998), pp. 336.

¹⁵³ ‘Document No. 81: Transcript of Leonid Brezhnev's Telephone Conversation with Alexander Dubček, August 13, 1968’, in *The Prague Spring 1968: A National Security Archive Documents Reader*, ed. by Jaromír Navrátil et al. (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1998), pp. 346-353.

believed were necessary in the ČSSR.¹⁵⁴ Given the fact that by 13 August 1968, Brezhnev had already received a formal letter of invitation from the anti-reformist faction of the CPCz leadership requesting military assistance, it's clear that the Soviet leader was eager to make a last effort to exert his influence on Dubček and make him join ranks with the pro-Soviet faction. On a number of occasions during his 13 August 1968 conversation with Brezhnev, Dubček said that he had the intention of stepping down from the position of CPCz CC first secretary, and that the Soviet leadership should take the measures they see as appropriate in Czechoslovakia.¹⁵⁵ It was these comments and Dubček's inability to provide a reasonable deadline for the implementation of the agreements reached at Čierna nad Tisou that ultimately convinced Brezhnev that the Czechoslovak leader was not in control of the situation, and that a military intervention was inevitable.

Contrary to statements to the opposite, the Soviet invasion wasn't motivated by the geostrategic objective of returning the Soviet troops in Czechoslovakia as has been previously claimed.¹⁵⁶ Despite the fact that in 1966 Novotný hadn't acquiesced to Brezhnev's demand to station Soviet armed forces in Czechoslovakia, which had opened a gap between the battle groups in Poland and those in Hungary, it doesn't appear that Brezhnev was resentful of the decision.¹⁵⁷ Some evidence suggests that Brezhnev saw Novotný as a loyal ally if not an especially strong leader, and that his initial intention when he visited Prague in December 1967 was to "save" Novotný.¹⁵⁸ It's possible that the Soviets expected that Dubček, whom they called "our Sasha", would be more accommodating on the question of stationing troops.¹⁵⁹ After the invasion, the Moscow Protocol didn't provide a precise date for the withdrawal of Soviet and allied forces. One clause stipulated that the latter were supposed to leave the ČSSR in stages, once the "threat to the gains of socialism in Czechoslovakia and threat to the security of the

¹⁵⁴ 'Document No. 81: Transcript of Leonid Brezhnev's', p. 355.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 350-353.

¹⁵⁶ Williams, 'Review Essay: The Russian View(s)', p. 132.

¹⁵⁷ Nikita Petrov, 'The KGB and the Czechoslovak Crisis of 1968: Preconditions for the Soviet Invasion and Occupation of Czechoslovakia', in *The Prague Spring and the Warsaw Pact Invasion of Czechoslovakia*, ed. by G. Bischof, S. Karner, and P. Ruggenthaler (Plymouth : Lexington Books, 2010), pp. 145-146.

¹⁵⁸ 'Document No. 5: Andrei Aleksandrov-Agentov's Memoir of the Pre-Crisis Period (Excerpt)', in *The Prague Spring 1968: A National Security Archive Documents Reader*, ed. by Jaromír Navrátil et al. (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1998), pp. 23-24.

¹⁵⁹ Petrov, 'The KGB and the Czechoslovak Crisis', p. 159.

countries of the socialist commonwealth had been eliminated".¹⁶⁰ In fact, the Soviet troops remained in the ČSSR until 1990. The invasion of Czechoslovakia thus reached the Soviet objective of stationing of troops in the country, thereby strengthening the Warsaw Pact's security, even though this wasn't the intended goal of the invasion.¹⁶¹

Military issues such as Czechoslovakia's commitment to the Warsaw Pact were as important for the Soviet decision to intervene in Czechoslovakia as were ideological concerns. Despite the fact that the KSČ leadership expressed several times its loyalty to the Warsaw Pact, the Soviets clearly felt that the Prague Spring could undermine the Czechoslovak commitment to the Pact, and thereby Soviet interests in the region. For instance, the relaxation of the border controls of Czechoslovakia with respect to Western tourists entering the country posed a serious concern for Moscow, and was addressed on a number of occasions. During the May 1968 Soviet-Czechoslovak summit meeting in Moscow, Brezhnev criticized the fact that the Czechoslovak border with the FRG was open and allowing 40,000 tourists from the West to enter daily into Czechoslovakia without a background check.¹⁶² Brezhnev explained that this posed a problem for Poland, the GDR and the Soviet Union, which shared common interests through the Treaty of Mutual Defense.¹⁶³ A July 1968 Soviet government diplomatic note to the Czechoslovak government, denouncing General Prchlík's July criticism of the Warsaw Pact structures, similarly stressed that the defense of the ČSSR's western borders was not a purely internal issue but that it touched upon the safety of all the Warsaw Pact member states.¹⁶⁴ The borders and security interests of the satellite states were seen as identical to those of the Soviet Union and the entire socialist camp. In this line, the 3 August 1968 Bratislava

¹⁶⁰ 'Document No. 119: The Moscow Protocol, August 26, 1968', in *The Prague Spring 1968: A National Security Archive Documents Reader*, ed. by Jaromír Navrátil et al. (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1998), pp. 478.

¹⁶¹ Petrov, 'The KGB and the Czechoslovak Crisis', p. 160.

¹⁶² 'Document No. 28: Stenographic Account of the Soviet-Czechoslovak Summit Meeting in Moscow, May 4-5, 1968 (Excerpts)', in *The Prague Spring 1968: A National Security Archive Documents Reader*, ed. by Jaromír Navrátil et al. (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1998), p. 122.

¹⁶³ 'Document No. 28: Stenographic Account', p. 122.

¹⁶⁴ 'Document No. 60: Soviet Government Diplomatic Note to the Czechoslovak Government, July 20, 1968', in *The Prague Spring 1968: A National Security Archive Documents Reader*, ed. by Jaromír Navrátil et al. (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1998), p. 266.

Declaration stipulated that the Warsaw Pact countries would “resist any attempt to revise the results of the Second World War and to change existing borders in Europe”, and would “pursue a coordinated policy on European matters” consistent with the interests of the socialist countries and European security.¹⁶⁵ The implication was that the Soviet Union would not allow the revision of the borders in Europe and the withdrawal of Czechoslovakia from the Warsaw Pact.

The Soviet decision to intervene in Czechoslovakia can also be seen as a practical decision motivated by realpolitik considerations in the context of the Soviet calls for an all-European collective security system based on the geo-political status quo in Eastern Europe. The Soviet leaders seem to have had a clear understanding of the situation in Czechoslovakia in so far as they acknowledged the fact that the KSČ was losing its control over the reform process and Dubček was unwilling or unable to adhere to the agreements at Čierna nad Tisou.¹⁶⁶ The KSČ’s Action Program from April 1968 proclaimed the autonomy of the organs of the state and redefined the role of the Communist Party, which now only determined the political terms of the direction of society.¹⁶⁷ This was a radical departure, since the party could no longer exert tight control over all social organizations and institutions. The reforms in Czechoslovakia were, therefore, clearly leading to the collapse of the communist regime, and to the possible reassessment of the country’s membership in the Warsaw Pact. For Brezhnev, who saw Czechoslovakia, the GDR and Poland as the core of the Warsaw Pact, and who considered relations with Czechoslovakia to be an essential component for the Soviet European policy and the East-West balance of forces, these were dangerous developments.¹⁶⁸ Equally dangerous was the prospect that the liberalization of Czechoslovakia would produce a political spill-over and undermine the stability of other

¹⁶⁵ ‘Document No. 73: The Bratislava Declaration, August 3, 1968’, in *The Prague Spring 1968: A National Security Archive Documents Reader*, ed. by Jaromír Navrátil et al. (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1998), p. 328.

¹⁶⁶ Oldřich Tušma, ‘Reforms in the Communist Party: The Prague Spring and Apprehension about a Soviet Invasion’, in *The Prague Spring and the Warsaw Pact Invasion of Czechoslovakia*, ed. by G. Bischof, S. Karner, and P. Ruggenthaler (Plymouth : Lexington Books, 2010), p. 69.

¹⁶⁷ Tušma, ‘Reforms in the Communist Party’, p. 68.

¹⁶⁸ ‘Document No. 5: Andrei Aleksandrov-Agentov’s’, p. 23.

Warsaw Pact countries in the region precisely at a moment when Brezhnev was seeking recognition of the post-Second World War borders in Europe. This would have threatened Brezhnev's idea of a European Security System linking the two blocs based on the post-war status quo.¹⁶⁹ Moscow's intervention in Czechoslovakia thus had a lot to do with preserving the gains of socialism and the Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe.

¹⁶⁹ S. Savranskaya and W. Taubman, 'Soviet Foreign Policy, 1962-1975', in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War, Volume II Crises and Détente*, ed. by M. P. Lefler and O.A. Westad (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 146.

5. Polish Crisis 1980-1981

Similar to the previous crises of Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968, the military option for resolving the Polish crisis was considered by the Kremlin before being abandoned in the summer of 1981. The Soviet Politburo's initial response to the rise of Solidarity in 1980 and its challenge to the Communist Party monopoly of power was to issue a resolution on 28 August 1980 authorizing the mobilization of 100,000 military reservists and 15,000 vehicles to ensure that a large segment of the Russian forces would be in full combat readiness in case military assistance was needed in Poland.¹⁷⁰ Even though the divisions returned to their previous state of readiness shortly afterwards, the military planning that took place suggests that at that point Moscow was initially ready to contemplate the option of using armed force in support of the Polish leadership.¹⁷¹ By the end of the year, however, the Soviet leadership opted for a political solution of the crisis. For instance, during the 5 December 1980 Warsaw Pact meeting Brezhnev indicated that while the Polish leadership was allowed to solve the crisis by political means and the Soviets did not "favour extreme measures without extreme circumstances", Moscow would not hold back if the enemy took power.¹⁷² At this point, the plans for a Warsaw Pact intervention were not yet completely abandoned, and new manoeuvres of the Polish military and foreign troops were planned.¹⁷³ Even though Moscow chose to compromise with Kania and leave the resolution of the crisis in his hands, at this point the Soviet leadership was not ready to let Poland leave the socialist bloc or the Warsaw Pact.

As in the previous cases of Hungary and Czechoslovakia, as the crisis developed, Moscow adopted a cautious approach, and employed simultaneously different methods

¹⁷⁰ 'Document No. 5: CPSU CC Politburo Commission Order to Enhance Readiness of Military Units for Possible Use in Poland', August 28, 1980, in *From Solidarity to Martial Law: The Polish Crisis of 1980-1981: A Documentary History*, ed. by A. Paczkowski and M. Byrne (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006), pp. 64-65.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

¹⁷² 'Document No. 22: Minutes of Warsaw Pact Leadership Meeting in Moscow', December 5, 1980, in *From Solidarity to Martial Law: The Polish Crisis of 1980-1981: A Documentary History*, ed. by A. Paczkowski and M. Byrne (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006), p. 159.

¹⁷³ Vojtech Mastny, 'The Warsaw Pact as History', in *Cardboard Castle?: An Inside History of the Warsaw Pact, 1955-1991*, ed. by V. Mastny and M. Byrne (New York: Central European University Press, 2005), pp. 52.

such as intimidation, military manoeuvres, and political and economic pressure to try to induce the Polish leadership to implement martial law. For instance, from the spring of 1981, the Soviet strategy was to exert pressure on the Polish leaders by exploiting to the maximum the Polish fears of Soviet intervention.¹⁷⁴ Brezhnev articulated the Soviet dual strategy towards Poland as trying not to exasperate the Polish leaders and “build up their nervousness so that they lose heart” while exerting constant pressure on them to make them see their policy mistakes and provide them with guidance in a comradely way.¹⁷⁵ This resolution was accompanied by military pressure in the form of the Soiuz-80, Soiuz-81 and later that year Zapad-81 exercises. Yet, despite Andropov’s and Ustinov’s efforts at the April Brest meeting to force Kania and Jaruzelski to proceed with a crackdown on Solidarity, no precise date for implementing martial law was set.¹⁷⁶ The Soviets increasingly adopted the view that the Polish leadership should take the initiative in finding an internal solution by deploying its security organs and the army before demanding outside support, otherwise, difficulties on the international level could ensue.¹⁷⁷ By the spring of 1981, there was a clear sense of Soviet concern about the international complications in the Soviet relations with Western Europe and the United States that would arise if Soviet troops were introduced in Poland.

It can be argued that the Soviet rejection of the option of providing military assistance to the PUWP presaged a major turn in Soviet foreign policy. By abandoning the idea of sending Soviet and Warsaw Pact troops to Poland in the summer of 1981, in practice, the Soviet leadership chose to leave Marxist-Leninist ideology behind in favour of a more flexible realpolitik, which served better Soviet interests. This foreshadowed the official death of the Brezhnev Doctrine later on. For instance, as early as mid-June 1981,

¹⁷⁴ ‘Document No. 45: Extract from Protocol No. 7 of CPSU CC Politburo Meeting’, April 23, 1981, in *From Solidarity to Martial Law: The Polish Crisis of 1980-1981: A Documentary History*, ed. by A. Paczkowski and M. Byrne (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006), p. 271.

¹⁷⁵ ‘Document No. 44: Transcript of CPSU CC Politburo Meeting’, April 16, 1981, in *From Solidarity to Martial Law: The Polish Crisis of 1980-1981: A Documentary History*, ed. by A. Paczkowski and M. Byrne (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006), p. 265.

¹⁷⁶ Roy Medvedev, ‘The Unknown Andropov: Crisis in Poland, 1980-81’, *Russian Studies in History*, 44 (2005-2006), p. 91.

¹⁷⁷ ‘Document No. 41: East German Report of Discussion with Marshal Viktor Kulikov’, April 7, 1981, in *From Solidarity to Martial Law: The Polish Crisis of 1980-1981: A Documentary History*, ed. by A. Paczkowski and M. Byrne (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006), p. 253.

all the attendees of a military consultation of the Soviet General Staff except for Marshal Kulikov agreed that the decision to intervene in Poland would be unwise, as the Soviet forces were likely to encounter heavy armed resistance.¹⁷⁸ During the meeting, General Gribkov, Sokolov and Epishev emphasized that an invasion might have a negative impact on the Soviet national interest and international prestige.¹⁷⁹ The same decision was reached at a Politburo meeting taking place simultaneously, during which Suslov concluded that under no circumstances Soviet troops should be introduced into Poland.¹⁸⁰ In fact, the Kremlin even considered the possibility that if the social democrats came to power in Poland, the Soviet Politburo would work with them.¹⁸¹ Thus, by the summer of 1981, Moscow had secretly ruled out a military intervention even though the Polish leaders were not made aware of that and the Soviet political and economic pressure continued. The Soviets' intention to abstain from using force in Poland was subsequently reiterated on at least two occasions. During the 29 October Politburo meeting, both Andropov and Ustinov commented that the introduction of Soviet troops into Poland was out of the question.¹⁸² At the decisive 10 December Politburo meeting, Andropov, Gromyko, Ustinov and Suslov were unanimous that Soviet troops should not be introduced into Poland.¹⁸³ Moreover, Suslov pointed out that the Soviet Union should not have to exert pressure on Poland to take more decisive action, and that the country's leadership should be left to choose its policy.¹⁸⁴ Even more radical was Andropov's comment that if Solidarity came to power in Poland, then that's the way things would be.¹⁸⁵ This suggests that the Soviet leadership was resigning itself to the course of events in Poland. In this context, it is significant that Solidarity had not called for Poland's

¹⁷⁸ Matthew J. Ouimet, *The Rise and Fall of the Brezhnev Doctrine* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), p. 200-201.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 202.

¹⁸¹ Mastny, 'The Warsaw Pact as History', p. 53.

¹⁸² 'Document No. 72: Transcript of CPSU CC Politburo Meeting on Rusakov's Trip to Eastern Europe', October 29, 1981, in *From Solidarity to Martial Law: The Polish Crisis of 1980-1981: A Documentary History*, ed. by A. Paczkowski and M. Byrne (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006), p. 397.

¹⁸³ 'Document No. 81: Transcript of CPSU CC Politburo Meeting', December 10, 1981, in *From Solidarity to Martial Law: The Polish Crisis of 1980-1981: A Documentary History*, ed. by A. Paczkowski and M. Byrne (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006), p. 450.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 452.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 450.

withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact, or for an end of the communist regime in the country even though it had made political demands.¹⁸⁶ In fact, most Poles were in favour of maintaining military ties with the Soviet Union because of the perceived German threat.¹⁸⁷ Soviet leaders most likely expected that even if Poland fell under Solidarity's control, it would continue to abide by its Warsaw Pact obligations. Perhaps, this idea was reinforced by Moscow's awareness that Walesa was a moderate, and by the hope that the extremists would not take control over Solidarity.

The Polish crisis also marked a turning point in the way Moscow saw its own interests and those of the satellite states. The change in the Soviet policy towards Poland in 1980-1981 testifies to Moscow's increasing concern about its own national interests, which were now seen as separate from those of the satellite states. This is exemplified by the Soviet preoccupation with anti-socialist spillover effects of the Polish crisis in the Soviet Union in three different areas in particular. First, the Soviet leadership was especially worried that the developments in Poland were affecting the Soviet Army. In a 1981 report on the work of the Committee on State Security of the USSR, Andropov reported to Brezhnev that "mass subversive ideological actions" targeting the personnel of Soviet military units in Poland and Afghanistan had taken place.¹⁸⁸ A second disturbing development for the Kremlin was the rise of nationalist sentiments within the Soviet Union and the Western republics in particular. Related to that, there was an increasing preoccupation in Moscow with the liberalization of the Polish media and its effects in the Soviet Union and the western provinces in particular. During an April 1981 CPSU CC Politburo meeting, Andropov pointed out that Polish-language radio and television could be picked up in many villages in Belorussia.¹⁸⁹ He also expressed his concerns that unrest had erupted in different regions, most notably in Georgia, where

¹⁸⁶ Ouimet, *The Rise and Fall*, p. 277-313.

¹⁸⁷ Mastny, 'The Warsaw Pact as History', p. 53.

¹⁸⁸ Mark Kramer, *Soviet Deliberations during the Polish Crisis, 1980-1981* (Washington, D.C.: Cold War International History Project, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 1999), p. 173.

¹⁸⁹ 'Document No. 39: Transcript of CPSU CC Politburo Meeting', April 2, 1981, in *From Solidarity to Martial Law: The Polish Crisis of 1980-1981: A Documentary History*, ed. by A. Paczkowski and M. Byrne (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006), p. 243.

anti-Soviet slogans had been heard and strong measures needed to be implemented internally.¹⁹⁰ A 1981 report from Andropov also accounted for the suppression of attempts to form nationalist groups in Ukraine, the Baltic republics, Armenia and other republics.¹⁹¹ What is notable about these comments and reports are Soviet worries about the political situation within the USSR. The Soviet Union took internal measures to put a stop to the unrest rather than deciding to tackle the source of the problem, which was the PUWP's lack of control over the mass media in Poland. Considering past Soviet decision-making in similar circumstances, it is noteworthy that the Soviet Politburo waited for months for Jaruzelski to impose martial law and did not undertake more drastic measures to ensure that the control of the PZPR over Polish society was restored.

Third, as the crisis in Poland progressed, considerations about the economic issues within the Soviet Union took precedence over the strategic implications of losing Poland. This suggests that by 1981 the Soviet leaders were already redefining the way in which the Soviet leaders were thinking about security. Contrary to the previous crises in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, economic factors were discussed very often during the Polish crisis deliberations. Numerous transcripts of CPSU CC Politburo meetings from 1980-1981 account for Moscow's acute awareness of Poland's economic difficulties and its dependence on Western credits.¹⁹² However, as the crisis progressed, Moscow also became concerned about being overstretched and restricted in its ability to provide aid to Poland.¹⁹³ There was also an increasing feeling that the Soviet Union's support in raw materials was not sufficiently appreciated by the Poles.¹⁹⁴ At the 10 December Politburo meeting, for example, Suslov expressed the opinion that Jaruzelski was being cunning and was making requests for aid that the Soviet Union didn't have the physical

¹⁹⁰ 'Document No. 39: Transcript of CPSU CC Politburo Meeting', p. 243.

¹⁹¹ Kramer, *Soviet Deliberations*, p. 172.

¹⁹² 'Document No. 15: Transcript of CPSU CC Politburo Meeting', October 29, 1980, in *From Solidarity to Martial Law: The Polish Crisis of 1980-1981: A Documentary History*, ed. by A. Paczkowski and M. Byrne (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006), p. 127; 'Document No. 17: Letter from Leonid Brezhnev to Erich Honecker', November 4, 1980, in *From Solidarity to Martial Law: The Polish Crisis of 1980-1981: A Documentary History*, ed. by A. Paczkowski and M. Byrne (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006), p. 132.

¹⁹³ 'Document No. 38: Transcript of CPSU CC Politburo Meeting', March 26, 1981, in *From Solidarity to Martial Law: The Polish Crisis of 1980-1981: A Documentary History*, ed. by A. Paczkowski and M. Byrne (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006), p. 234.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 235.

ability to fulfill.¹⁹⁵ Moscow's shift in focus towards Soviet national interests was most clearly articulated by Andropov. For him, the imposition of economic and political sanctions on the Soviet Union by the West would be more damaging for Soviet interests than the rise to power of Solidarity in Poland.¹⁹⁶

The Soviet military non-intervention in Poland and the patience which Moscow showed towards Kania and Jaruzelski are surprising in light of the Soviet decision-making during previous crises. Many of the conditions which had led to the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia were present in Poland. For instance, the fact that the Polish mass media was not controlled by the party was a major source of worry for the Soviet leaders. Among other appeals to the Polish leadership, a protest note by the Soviet Politburo to the PUWP CC expressed Moscow's frustration about the anti-Soviet campaign in Poland, exemplified by the "Appeal to the Peoples of Eastern Europe", which aimed to destroy the ties between the socialist countries and to make Poland leave the socialist camp.¹⁹⁷ Significantly, by April 1981 the Politburo already recognized that the PUWP was no longer in control of the social processes taking place in Poland, and that Solidarity as an organized political force threatened the authority of the party and the state organs.¹⁹⁸ As the crisis progressed, Moscow also grew increasingly distrustful of Kania and Jaruzelski, but also realized that there wasn't a viable alternative to their leadership. Last but not least, the loyalty and reliability of the Polish security forces were also questioned. Both Kania and Jaruzelski claimed that the Polish army and the security forces could not be counted on to provide support to the party and the Polish leadership in a critical situation.¹⁹⁹ With the Soviet decision not to send Soviet troops to Poland in December, it is possible that Poland would have experienced a "Finlandization" if Jaruzelski's crackdown had not occurred in December 1981.²⁰⁰ The Soviet decision not to

¹⁹⁵ 'Document No. 81: Transcript of CPSU', p. 452.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 450.

¹⁹⁷ 'Document No. 63: CPSU CC Communication to the PUWP CC, "Intensifying Anti-Soviet Feelings in Poland"', September 14, 1981, in *From Solidarity to Martial Law: The Polish Crisis of 1980-1981: A Documentary History*, ed. by A. Paczkowski and M. Byrne (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006), p. 357.

¹⁹⁸ 'Document No. 45: Extract from Protocol', p. 267.

¹⁹⁹ 'Document No. 41: East German Report', p. 249.

²⁰⁰ Vojtech Mastny, *The Soviet Non-Invasion of Poland in 1980-81 and the End of the Cold War* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 1998), p. 33.

intervene in Poland was indicative of a major change in Moscow's foreign policy, as socialist internationalism ceased to be its main principle.²⁰¹ The Soviet national interests were redefined, making Soviet economic and political relations with the West more important than maintaining Moscow's control over the Eastern bloc. Significantly, the shift of focus in Moscow's foreign policy priorities had already occurred when Mikhail Gorbachev became General Secretary in 1985 and developed the concept of a common European home.

²⁰¹ Ouimet, *The Rise and Fall*, p. 202.

6. The 1989 Peaceful Revolutions

Contrary to the previous crises in 1956, 1968 and 1981, when differences of opinion existed within the Politburo regarding the necessity of using coercive measures, by the autumn of 1989, no one in the Soviet leadership was in favour of employing military force to prevent the fall of the socialist regimes in Eastern Europe. According to Shevardnadze, in 1989, following the scenarios of 1953, 1956 and 1968 was not an option, since it would have meant sacrificing the principles of freedom of choice and non-interference, as well as the idea of common European home Gorbachev was trying to build.²⁰² Significantly, even Gorbachev's critics who were in charge of security and foreign policy affairs, Vladimir Kryuchkov and Marshal Dmitry Yazov for instance, abstained from holding the general secretary responsible for the loss of Eastern Europe.²⁰³ As late as 1990, the hawkish Soviet defense minister Yazov was of the opinion that coercive measures should not be employed outside of the Soviet Union, and neither the KGB nor the Soviet military ever suggested a plan to crack down on the anti-government unrest in the socialist bloc.²⁰⁴ Perhaps most revealing of the general mood at the time was a comment made by Kryuchkov who admitted that, in the 1980s, the use of force in Eastern Europe became impossible due to the negative views of Soviet society towards such methods.²⁰⁵ Despite the fact that the Soviet troops in the GDR were prepared to restore order in 1989, Soviet society as a whole was averse to such actions.²⁰⁶ Similarly, Gorbachev's main concern in November 1989 was making sure that the Soviet troops in East Germany would not resort to force, since such a decision would have been against his principles and would have jeopardized his plans for a common European home.²⁰⁷ All the available sources thus, show that in 1989 neither Gorbachev and his circle of reformers, nor the conservatives in the Soviet establishment believed that

²⁰² Eduard Shevardnadze, 'No One Can Isolate Us, Save Ourselves. Self-Isolation Is the Ultimate Danger', *Slavic Review*, 51 (1992), p. 118.

²⁰³ Zubok, 'New Evidence', p. 5.

²⁰⁴ Savranskaya, 'The Logic of 1989', p. 46.

²⁰⁵ Bennett, 'The Guns', p. 104.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁷ Vojtech Mastny, 'Why did the Cold War End Peacefully?: The Importance of Europe', *Historically Speaking*, 9 (2007), p. 10.

invoking the Brezhnev doctrine and intervening in the satellite states' internal affairs was a plausible option.

The Soviet use of force in Eastern Europe in 1989 to preserve the status quo was also very unlikely for a number of reasons. First, from 1985 on, Gorbachev made numerous statements to the Soviet leadership and signaled to the party leaders of Eastern Europe that the Brezhnev doctrine would no longer be enforced and that the relations with the satellites would be governed by new principles. For instance, at the meeting of the PCC of the Warsaw Pact on 21 October 1985, Gorbachev presented his new approach towards the East European allies which emphasized equality, respect for national sovereignty and independence, and also suggested that the ruling parties in the satellite states were now accountable for the conditions in their countries.²⁰⁸ On 28 May 1986, during a speech to the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Gorbachev also spoke of the new type of relationship between Moscow and the East European states in which the latter would be allowed to adopt national approaches even though some of their decisions might be detrimental to the common objective of the bloc.²⁰⁹ Gorbachev's rejection of the Brezhnev Doctrine became even more apparent at the CPSU Politburo session on 3 July 1986 when he stated clearly that "the methods that were used in Czechoslovakia and Hungary now are no good" and won't work.²¹⁰ This position was reiterated during a session of the CPSU Politburo in May 1989 where Gorbachev emphasized that the "use of force is out of the question" – coercive methods were excluded from Soviet foreign policy and were ruled out by the general secretary even within the Soviet Union.²¹¹ Gorbachev's speech to the United Nations General Assembly in December 1988 with its rejection of the use and threat of force as a foreign policy tool, its proclamation of the freedom of choice as a universal principle and its emphasis on the primacy of common

²⁰⁸ Savranskaya, 'The Logic of 1989', p. 6.

²⁰⁹ 'Document No. 4: Speech by Mikhail Gorbachev to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 28, 1986', in *Masterpieces of History: the Peaceful End of the Cold War*, ed. by S. Savranskaya, T. Blanton, and V. Zubok (Budapest, New York, NY: Central European University Press, 2010), p. 224.

²¹⁰ 'Document No. 7: Notes of CC CPSU Politburo Session, July 3, 1986', in *Masterpieces of History: the Peaceful End of the Cold War*, ed. by S. Savranskaya, T. Blanton, and V. Zubok (Budapest, New York, NY: Central European University Press, 2010), p. 234.

²¹¹ 'Document No. 60: Session of the CC CPSU Politburo, May 11, 1989', in *Masterpieces of History: the Peaceful End of the Cold War*, ed. by S. Savranskaya, T. Blanton, and V. Zubok (Budapest, New York, NY: Central European University Press, 2010), p. 451.

human values signaled to the Western governments Moscow's official repudiation of the Brezhnev Doctrine.²¹² Given these statements, using military measures to suppress the anti-government uprisings in 1989 would have been against Gorbachev's new thinking and would have discredited him in the eyes of the Western governments whose economic and political cooperation Gorbachev needed.

Second, it was also highly unlikely that Moscow would employ coercive methods to prevent the peaceful revolutions in 1989 because Gorbachev had already demonstrated in practice to the socialist countries that the Soviet Union would not interfere in their internal affairs. For instance, in September 1988, Gorbachev endorsed the Roundtable negotiations and the program of reforms in Poland.²¹³ Gorbachev also acted according to the principles he had discussed with Czyrek in 1988 and Jaruzelski in April 1988, and avoided interfering in Polish internal affairs and criticizing the Polish Communists when they lost in the elections.²¹⁴ Moreover, when Miklós Németh informed Gorbachev in March 1989 that the Hungarian leadership had decided to remove the electronic and technological defenses from the country's Western and Southern borders since they were no longer useful, Gorbachev merely replied that the Soviet Union had a strict regime on its borders, but was becoming more open.²¹⁵ Despite the fact that the removal of the barbed wire fence could possibly affect the stability of the neighboring bloc countries, as it turned out to be the case, faithful to his principles, Gorbachev avoided interfering in the internal affairs of Hungary. The Hungarian government's decision to open its borders to permit East German tourists to go to West Germany via Austria was fatal for the stability of the government of the GDR.²¹⁶ Similarly, during the summer of 1989, in a telephone

²¹² 'The Gorbachev Visit; Excerpts From Speech to U.N. on Major Soviet Military Cuts', *The New York Times*, 8 December 1988, U.N. <http://www.nytimes.com/1988/12/08/world/the-gorbachev-visit-excerpts-from-speech-to-un-on-major-soviet-military-cuts.html?pagewanted=all>

²¹³ 'Document No. 28: Record of Conversation between Mikhail Gorbachev and Józef Czyrek, September 23, 1988', in *Masterpieces of History: the Peaceful End of the Cold War*, ed. by S. Savranskaya, T. Blanton, and V. Zubok (Budapest, New York, NY: Central European University Press, 2010), p. 304.

²¹⁴ Svetlana Savranskaya, 'The Fall of the Wall, Eastern Europe, and Gorbachev's Vision of Europe after the Cold War', in *Imposing, Maintaining and Tearing Open the Iron Curtain: the Cold War and East-Central Europe, 1945-1989*, ed. by M. Kramer and V. Smetana (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2014), p. 343.

²¹⁵ 'Document No. 50: Record of Conversation between Mikhail Gorbachev and Miklós Németh, March 3, 1989', in *Masterpieces of History: the Peaceful End of the Cold War*, ed. by S. Savranskaya, T. Blanton, and V. Zubok (Budapest, New York, NY: Central European University Press, 2010), p. 412.

²¹⁶ Mastny, 'Why did the Cold War', p. 10.

conversation with Rakowski, Gorbachev pursued his policy of non-interference by accepting the election of a coalition government in Poland despite the fact that this meant that Poland could decide to exit the Warsaw Pact.²¹⁷ Gorbachev's response in 1989 can be contrasted with that of Brezhnev in 1968, when the border issues in Czechoslovakia and the Soviet concerns about the country's alignment were seen as an important threat to the security the Warsaw Pact. Obviously, by 1989, the Soviet perception of the concept of security was very different from that in 1968. While for Stalin and Brezhnev Eastern Europe was a buffer zone necessary for the Soviet security as they perceived it, for Gorbachev, the region was valuable in so far as it could contribute to Soviet security as a bridge to Western Europe in an integrated European continent.²¹⁸

Third, from the very beginning of Gorbachev's tenure as general secretary, Eastern Europe was not high on his list of priorities which included more pressing issues such as domestic reforms, withdrawal from Afghanistan and arms control. In 1985-1986, Eastern Europe seemed important to Gorbachev mostly in relation to improving integration in the CMEA which was necessary in order to deal with the ECC collectively in a more efficient manner.²¹⁹ By 1987, however, there was already a sense in Moscow that the CMEA was unsustainable and that the economic costs of the socialist countries were exceeding the benefits of sustaining the status quo in the region. For instance, during the CPSU Politburo session on 10 March 1988, the problems of the falling price of oil and the lack of real trade with the socialist countries, for which the Soviet Union was a provider of cheap resources, were addressed.²²⁰ Significantly, Gorbachev pointed out that, in its relations with the CMEA, Moscow should take care of its own people first while suggesting at the same time that the political stability in the socialist bloc was a vital interest for Moscow in terms of security and economic interests.²²¹ Even though this statement suggests that Moscow was concerned about the political and economic stability in the region, Gorbachev was not willing to intervene to maintain the conservative

²¹⁷ Savranskaya, 'The Logic of 1989', p. 29.

²¹⁸ Mastny, 'Why did the Cold War', p. 10.

²¹⁹ Savranskaya, 'The Logic of 1989', p. 8-16.

²²⁰ 'Document No. 19: Notes of CC CPSU Politburo Session, March 10, 1988', in *Masterpieces of History: the Peaceful End of the Cold War*, ed. by S. Savranskaya, T. Blanton, and V. Zubok (Budapest, New York, NY: Central European University Press, 2010), p. 265-267.

²²¹ 'Document No. 19: Notes of CC CPSU Politburo Session, March 10, 1988', p. 266-267.

regimes in power. Stability in Eastern Europe was important in Gorbachev's plans for Soviet bloc to bloc cooperation with the West, and maintaining socialism in Eastern Europe seemed to be of secondary importance.

Fourth, intervening militarily in Eastern Europe was deemed as unwise because of the implications of such a move for Soviet relations with the Western states. A memorandum from CC CPSU International Department prepared in February 1989 stated that, in the future, it is unlikely that the Soviet Union would be able to "employ the methods of 1956 and 1968 both as a matter of principle and because of unacceptable consequences".²²² Another memorandum drafted by the Bogomolov Institute during the same month made it even more obvious that the Soviet use of force in Eastern Europe was not in the best Soviet interest. The memorandum pointed out that "attempts to preserve the status quo will weight as an excessive burden on our economy" and warned that intervening in support of the conservative forces in the satellites "will signify the end of perestroika and the crumbling of trust on the part of the world".²²³ The arguments used in the memorandum were reminiscent of those employed in December 1981 by the Soviet leaders when they rejected armed intervention in Poland. In both cases, maintaining cooperative relations with the West was judged more important than preserving the status quo in Eastern Europe. Ultimately, ensuring Soviet security through relations with the West took precedence over commitment to ideological rationales.

²²² 'Document No. 41: Memorandum from CC CPSU International Department, "On a Strategy for Relations with the European Socialist Countries", February 1989', in *Masterpieces of History: the Peaceful End of the Cold War*, ed. by S. Savranskaya, T. Blanton, and V. Zubok (Budapest, New York, NY: Central European University Press, 2010), p. 357.

²²³ 'Document No. 42: Memorandum from the Bogomolov Institute, "Changes in Eastern Europe and their Impact on the USSR", February 1989', in *Masterpieces of History: the Peaceful End of the Cold War*, ed. by S. Savranskaya, T. Blanton, and V. Zubok (Budapest, New York, NY: Central European University Press, 2010), p. 375-376.

7. Analysis – The Soviet Dual Policy

Moscow's long-term quest for all-European collective security and the Soviet commitment to an ideologized foreign policy, as seen through the case studies of crisis management, demonstrate that from the 1950s to the late 1980s Moscow attempted to balance between two often contradictory foreign policies. The Soviet decision-making during the crises in Hungary (1956) and Czechoslovakia (1968) shows that until the early 1980s, when the Soviet security interests were threatened in Europe, the Kremlin leaders prioritized their commitment to an ideologized foreign policy over the need for security and cooperation with the West. The evidence from case studies demonstrates, however, that Moscow's commitment to an ideologized foreign policy was not total. For instance, use of force was never the Soviet leaders' preferred method of resolving crises, disagreements between Politburo members were frequent and sometimes dramatic shifts in opinion preceded the final decision. Khrushchev's zigzags in foreign policy included his efforts to strengthen Moscow's ties with the Soviet satellites in Eastern Europe and the neutral states (Yugoslavia and Finland), while trying to promote an all-European collective security.²²⁴ Brezhnev also tried to reconcile the need to preserve the integrity of the Soviet bloc with the desire for cooperation with the West in the framework of the CSCE. Until the late 1970s, Moscow was able to pursue both policies in Europe without one impeding the other in major ways. For instance, Khrushchev's efforts to convene an all-European collective security in Europe was followed by the Soviet military intervention in Hungary in 1956, which didn't prevent the Soviets from continuing their campaign for a multilateral European security conference in the following years. Similarly, under Brezhnev, the Soviets tried to balance their commitment to Marxist-Leninist ideology with the need for détente with the West in order to insure security, recognition of borders, and Western credits and investments. Brezhnev's choice in 1968 to send troops to Czechoslovakia to prevent the country from leaving the Soviet bloc and the Warsaw Pact coincided with Moscow's objective of convening a multilateral European security conference to codify the geopolitical status quo in Europe. Significantly, the invasion of Czechoslovakia also did not have a major negative effect on

²²⁴ Zubok, 'Soviet Policy Aims at the Geneva Conference, 1955', p. 63.

Soviet foreign affairs and didn't prevent the upsurge of détente in the late 1960s.²²⁵ Brezhnev's commitment to the Helsinki CSCE process was demonstrated notably by his controversial decision to elevate détente over class struggle in 1973, despite the protests of other Soviet officials such as Suslov.²²⁶ At the same time, Moscow's commitment to the CSCE also did not necessarily prevail over the Soviet leaders' determination to preserve the integrity of the Soviet bloc and abide by ideological rationales. For instance, the signing of the Helsinki Final Act did not stop the Warsaw Pact's chief of staff Sergei Shtemenko from stating that the main function of the Pact was to provide fraternal assistance in defense of socialism.²²⁷

The late 1970s and early 1980s were a turning point for the Soviets' foreign policy in Europe since, as the case study of Poland and the Soviet preoccupation with the fall of détente demonstrate, the Soviet commitment to an ideologized foreign policy in Europe became increasingly incompatible and difficult to balance with Moscow's efforts to reduce the tensions with the West for the sake of political and economic cooperation. The simultaneous fall of détente, the slowdown in the Soviet economy, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, which damaged Moscow's international reputation and had serious repercussions for the Soviet economy and technological development, and the eruption of the Polish crisis, in particular, forced Moscow to reevaluate Soviet security interests and to choose between détente and cooperation with the West, and preserving the Soviet "empire" in Eastern Europe, which was increasingly seen as a liability. The 1980-1981 Polish crisis demonstrated to the Soviet leaders in a practical way that Moscow's ideologized policy in Europe was no longer favouring the Soviet national interest given the fact that it had led to isolation and had political and economic consequences which Moscow could not afford.²²⁸ The transcripts of CPSU CC Politburo meetings during the Polish crisis demonstrate that even before Gorbachev's rise to power, Moscow was redefining its security interests. Notably, in December 1981, the Soviet leadership had already decided that the imposition of economic and political sanctions by

²²⁵ Georgi Arbatov, *The System: An Insider's Life in Soviet Politics* (New York: Times Books, 1992)

²²⁶ 'Anatoly S. Chernyaev Diary, 1973', May 25, 2013, ed. by Svetlana Savranskaya *National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book* No. 430 <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB430/>

²²⁷ Kovrig, p. 310.

²²⁸ Valdez, p. 125.

the West in case Soviet troops were introduced into Poland would be worse for Moscow's interests than Solidarity taking power in Poland, and had resolved that strengthening the Soviet Union should be the leadership's priority.²²⁹ During Andropov and Chernenko's time as general secretaries, the Soviet rulers already believed that a return to the policy of détente and scaling down the arms race were vital for the Soviet Union.²³⁰ Historically, the Soviet state had always needed "breathing spaces" which took the form of the NEP, the thaw and détente, and a long term trend in Soviet foreign policy had been the prolongation of these breathing spaces in a search for peaceful coexistence with the West.²³¹ The extension of these transitional periods, however, led to the progressive erosion of ideology.²³² By 1985, the role of ideology in the Soviet society was severely weakened both in theory and in practice. The principle of socialist internationalism was increasingly missing from official documents. For instance, proletarian or socialist internationalism were not cited in the documents espoused at the January 1983 Prague PCC meeting of the Warsaw Pact and instead there was a mention of a new type of international relations centered on "voluntary equal cooperation and international solidarity of sovereign socialist states".²³³

It can be argued that to some extent with his advancement of "new thinking" and the development of the concept of common European home, Gorbachev continued and accelerated trends that had already been visible in the 1970s and early 1980s. For instance, one of the main ideas of Gorbachev's common European home concept was the rejection of the use or threat of force within or between alliances as Gorbachev proclaimed during his council of Europe speech.²³⁴ As the case study of the Polish crisis demonstrated, in the summer and fall of 1981, the Politburo had decided for practical reasons that the Soviet military intervention in Poland would be counterproductive. Stating that the Brezhnev Doctrine was dead in 1981 might be inaccurate since no major

²²⁹ 'Document No. 81: Transcript of CPSU CC Politburo Meeting', December 10, 1981, in *From Solidarity to Martial Law: The Polish Crisis of 1980-1981: A Documentary History*, ed. by A. Paczkowski and M. Byrne (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006), p. 450.

²³⁰ Zubok, 'Gorbachev and the End of the Cold War', p. 64.

²³¹ Gorodetsky, p. 42.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Valdez, p. 95-96.

²³⁴ 'Document No. 73: Address by Mikhail Gorbachev to the Council of Europe', p. 494-495.

crisis took place in the East European states until the peaceful revolutions in 1989 to test the Soviet willingness to employ coercive measures. However, nothing suggests either that after 1981 the Soviet leadership was ready to apply the Brezhnev Doctrine in Eastern Europe. In relation to this, one thing that all the case studies show is that Moscow was always reluctant to employ force in Eastern Europe as an instrument of foreign policy. Military intervention was seen as a measure of last resort to be used once all other political and psychological means of exerting pressure were exhausted. Gorbachev's decision not to use force in 1989 has been often cited as one of the reasons that made the peaceful end of the Cold War possible. As the last two case studies, however, demonstrate, even in 1981 the Soviet leaders ruled unanimously against Soviet intervention in Poland and in 1989, the Politburo, the KGB and even the military were against the use of military means to preserve the status quo. Their behavior was motivated by *realpolitik* considerations. Gorbachev's pursuit of the policy of non-interference in Eastern Europe, on the other hand, was driven by new thinking, by the desire not to jeopardize the prospect of common European home and by naivety and by utopianism, according to his own admission.²³⁵

Another important element of continuity between Gorbachev and his predecessors is the fact that like them, Gorbachev tried to find a balance between the Soviet commitment to ideology and the need for security and cooperative relations with the West - this time, in the form of common European home. It is clear that Gorbachev saw reformed socialism as compatible with the idea of a common European home. In this sense, it is important to note that Gorbachev and his advisers wanted to preserve and reform socialism, not to replace it with Western liberalism. Gorbachev and the officials responsible for the relations with Eastern Europe were convinced that the Soviet Union didn't have the right to intervene in the internal affairs of the East European satellite states, while at the same time they believed that the best way forward was the democratization of the socialist countries' systems by adopting the Soviet reforms.²³⁶

²³⁵ Zubok, 'Gorbachev and the End of the Cold War', p. 76.

²³⁶ Savranskaya, 'The Logic of 1989', p. 13.

Even though under Gorbachev the Soviet Union renounced the use and threat of force as an instrument of foreign policy and promoted new principles in its relations with the satellites, Gorbachev abandoned the principles of Marxism-Leninism late in 1989 only under the pressure of events. This unwillingness of Moscow to completely leave the Leninist legacy behind was responsible to a certain extent for the lack of clarity regarding the limits of Soviet tolerance to change in Eastern Europe. For example, many discussions in late 1987 and 1988 among Soviet policy makers centred on whether the Soviet foreign policy should continue to be based on class values or on common human values, and Gorbachev remained ambivalent on the meaning of socialist internationalism in his speeches.²³⁷ As late as March 1989, in a conversation with the Hungarian party leader Károly Grósz, Gorbachev described the limit to the Soviet non-interference policy as the “safekeeping of socialism and assurance of stability” in the country.²³⁸ Yet, Moscow accepted the election of the first non-communist government in Poland in July 1989 and didn’t protest when Hungary adopted a multi-party system and rejected Leninism as an ideology later on in 1989. Ultimately, Gorbachev became supportive of coalition governments in Eastern Europe as long as the changes of the regimes remained peaceful, did not pose a direct challenge to the Warsaw Pact and remained compatible with the common European home project.²³⁹ In the autumn of 1989, Gorbachev still seemed to think that the path for the East European satellites was that of democratic socialism, even as other officials such as Chernyaev observed that “dismantling of socialism as a factor of world development” was already taking place.²⁴⁰ According to Chernyaev, it was only late in 1989 that Gorbachev stopped being concerned about the ideological consequences of the GDR ceasing to be an “outpost of socialism” in central Europe and his major priority became making sure that the process towards unification

²³⁷ Jonathan C. Valdez, *Internationalism and the Ideology of Soviet Influence in Eastern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 111.

²³⁸ ‘Document No. 52: Record of Conversations between Mikhail Gorbachev and Károly Grósz, March 23-24, 1989’, in *Masterpieces of History: the Peaceful End of the Cold War*, ed. by S. Savranskaya, T. Blanton, and V. Zubok (Budapest, New York, NY: Central European University Press, 2010), p. 419.

²³⁹ Savranskaya, ‘The Logic of 1989’, p. 30-32.

²⁴⁰ ‘Document No. 87: Diary of Anatoly Chernyaev regarding Mikhail Gorbachev's Visit to the GDR, October 5, 1989’, in *Masterpieces of History: the Peaceful End of the Cold War*, ed. by S. Savranskaya, T. Blanton, and V. Zubok (Budapest, New York, NY: Central European University Press, 2010), p. 542.

would not lead to violence or impede the all-European process underway.²⁴¹ Ultimately, as the revolutions in Eastern Europe took place and the Soviet Union was threatened by dissolution, Gorbachev was finally forced to abandon the commitment to socialism and his number one foreign policy objective became the building of a common European home. The idea of the latter, however, was soon severely compromised by the announcement of Kohl's Ten-Point Program and the Western governments' decision to support German reunification before Gorbachev's common European home had the time to come to life.

Finally, it can be argued that what made the peaceful end of the Cold War in 1989 possible was Gorbachev's attempt to reform socialism and make it more compatible with the ideas embodied in the concept of common European home. The Soviet reformers tried to give socialism a new meaning by redefining it, which would have made it more attractive both at home and in Eastern Europe. This redefinition would also allow for social democracy to be viewed as an acceptable variant of socialism.²⁴² Doctrinal changes were nothing new – such changes were made by Khrushchev and Brezhnev in an effort to preserve the credibility of Marxism-Leninism, to make Marxism compatible with détente and ultimately to bridge the gap between doctrine and reality.²⁴³ Gorbachev and his circle of reformers, however, made sweeping changes, by rejecting the class-based “internationalism” which had been the foundation of Moscow's foreign policy since the 1920s. In 1988, the Warsaw Pact espoused the concept of common human values, and in July 1989 it established that there wasn't a universal model of socialism and that no one possessed monopoly over the truth.²⁴⁴ From this moment on, the parties in Eastern Europe had the right to choose their own path of developing socialism. These were, however, fundamental changes to the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism which contributed to the loss of its legitimacy.²⁴⁵ Moreover, once it became clear that Moscow would abide by the principles imbedded in the common European home concept and

²⁴¹ Anatoly S. Chernyaev, *My Six Years with Gorbachev* (University Park, Pa.: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), p. 235.

²⁴² Jonathan C. Valdez, *Internationalism and the Ideology of Soviet Influence in Eastern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 2.

²⁴³ Van Oudenaren, 'The Tradition of Change', p. 9.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

²⁴⁵ Valdez, p. 2.

would not use force to preserve the regimes in Eastern Europe in power, popular revolutions in the satellites erupted and these countries turned their back to Gorbachev's "socialism with a human face". By the late 1980s, the Soviet use of ideology to legitimize Moscow's intervention in the internal affairs of the East European states and the more general long-term erosion of ideology had contributed to discredit socialism in Eastern Europe. By 1989 it was seen as unredeemable and held no attraction in most East European countries. Therefore, by the end of the 1980s, socialism hardly stood the chance of being reformed and reconciled with the common European home Gorbachev had in mind. As it turned out to be the case after 1990, the states in Eastern Europe chose to join the EEC and NATO rather than to look for a place within the common European home Gorbachev envisioned. Thus, Gorbachev falsely assumed that the Soviet bloc countries could not do without the Soviet Union in the long-run, while Moscow could manage without its empire in Eastern Europe.²⁴⁶

In conclusion, as has been argued here, the end of the Cold War can be seen as the result of the pursuit by Moscow of two policies which became irreconcilable in the long run. At the same time, the immediate reason for the peaceful end of the Cold War in 1989 was Gorbachev's attempt to reform socialism by rejecting the use of force and trying to reconcile it with the idea of common European home. In this sense, Gorbachev's personality and his ascension to the position of general secretary were decisive for the dramatic reforms undertaken by the Soviet Union in the Cold War.²⁴⁷ The implementation of the new thinking and promotion of the idea of common European home would have been impossible without the power of the office of the general secretary. Under the highly hierarchical Soviet system only someone possessing vast arbitrary powers such as Gorbachev could have brought about such a decisive shift in foreign policy given the fact that reform could only begin from above.²⁴⁸ In relation to that, the appointment by Gorbachev of reformers to key positions was crucial for the transformation of the ideas of

²⁴⁶ Chernyaev, p. 347.

²⁴⁷ Voitech Mastny, 'Why did the Cold War End Peacefully?: The Importance of Europe', *Historically Speaking*, 9 (2007), p. 8.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

the new thinkers into policies. Robert English has demonstrated how some key ideas advanced by the reformers such as global interdependence and indivisible security of the world were first put forward by the Soviet intelligentsia. The persistence of the idea of all-European collective security, on the other hand, shows that some of the ideas which helped bring about the end of the Cold War were first promoted by the Soviet establishment.

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