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Abstract

An intense debate has emerged among scholars over how to best explain the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union. One school of thought, closely linked to former officials and supporters of the Reagan and Bush administrations, emphasizes external pressure, in particular the American defense build-up of the 1980s, for producing the reforms of the Gorbachev era. An alternative, "internal" interpretation dismisses the significance of Western policy and focuses upon the structural weaknesses of the Soviet system and the extent to which it had been allowed to "run down" during the Brezhnev era.

The purpose of the following paper is to present a broader explanation for the collapse of the Soviet system, one which incorporates but also goes beyond the essentially mono-causal explanations above. The central hypothesis is that the Soviet collapse can only be explained by a combination of internal decay, external pressure, and changing Soviet elite perceptions of the necessity for reform. The decisive factor in this scenario was not, then, either internal stagnation or hard-line Western policies in themselves, but the decision made by key Soviet leaders, in particular Mikhail Gorbachev, to initiate structural reforms in the face of those adverse circumstances. Once initiated, however, those reforms in turn propelled the USSR down a path which led inexorably to the collapse of its basic structures and of the ideology upon which it was based.

Introduction

The recent publication of Mikhail Gorbachev's memoirs has rekindled discussion of his role in the events producing the collapse of the Soviet Union. More precisely, it has renewed the scholarly debate over whether Gorbachev's "Perestroika" was the work of a visionary statesman or simply a bumbling, inevitable response to system decline. Now that both Gorbachev and the USSR have each found their way into the "dustbin of history," the answer has be-

come clearer: it was both. Gorbachev's recognition of the disastrous condition of Soviet society and his willingness to proceed with reform in the face of certain opposition remain among his most enduring contributions (another being his unwillingness to later use force to stem the revolutionary tide that he had unleashed). Clearly it is impossible to explain the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War without placing Gorbachev at the center of the story.

At the same time, and perhaps more importantly, the malaise afflicting the Soviet imperium when Gorbachev assumed power suggests that at least some kind of reform effort was inevitable. This is because, as a result of the outpouring of information on Soviet conditions made possible by "glasnost" and post-1991 revelations, we now know that the problems facing Gorbachev were far more serious than thought at the time in the West. The dismal performance of Western "Sovietology" in depicting the Soviet project as generally successful and based upon only modest degrees of coercion will never, of course, be expunged.¹ Suffice it to say that everyone now has a better (though inevitably still imprecise) grasp of the extent of the gulag, the Stalin purges, and the genocide of "dekulakization" upon which the Soviet system was built, just as everyone now also interprets "real existing socialism" in terms of empty store shelves, falling life expectancy, and environmental catastrophe.²

The Legacy of Stalinism

Thus, at the heart of any effort to examine Gorbachev's role in the Soviet collapse, lies the fact that he inherited a system that was, in its essentials at least, much the same as Stalin had made it. There had undoubtedly, and out of necessity, been some changes - the level of terror had been reduced, vague forms of collective leadership had replaced the "cult of personality," the ideological precepts had grown stale for most - but in terms of basic characteristics (the one-party Leninist state, the pervasive power of the secret police, public adherence to an all-encompassing Marxist-Leninist ideology) the USSR continued to function (or malfunction) just as Stalin had designed it.

This was particularly the case for the "command-administrative" economic model, an approach based upon bureaucratic edict (rather than market forces), the nationalization of all means of production (as opposed to private property), and a focus upon heavy industry and military accumulation (at the expense of agriculture and light industry). This Stalinist or "State Socialist" model was

intended by its progenitor to produce an accelerated rate of modernization; to build the sinews of a modern industrial infrastructure in a single generation.

For decades Western analysts, prodded by fictitious Soviet economic reports, gave this “revolution from above” more credit than deserved for producing high rates of economic growth, and less credit than deserved for the hideous human costs that went with it. We also now know that the impressive Soviet growth rates of the 1930s and for the two decades after World War II were largely deceptions. What little growth that was achieved slowed by the 1960s and ground to a halt altogether during the Brezhnev era. It is clear from the present vantage point that almost any other developmental strategy would have made more sense, in economic as well as moral terms, than that adopted with the first Five-Year Plan in 1928. Certainly any other strategy would have left the current Russian leadership with fewer obstacles as they struggle to rise above the rubble of Sovietism.

The Brick Wall of Post-Industrialism

But knowledge of the the limitations of “State Socialism” and other forms of central planning had long been available to scholars interested in knowing the truth about the Soviet experiment. For a broader understanding of the Soviet dilemma, and of Gorbachev’s efforts to solve it, one has to go still further to take into account what Western analysts call “Post-Industrialism” and what Soviet writers mysteriously referred to as the “Scientific-Technological Revolution” (STR).³

The transition from industrial to post-industrial society, a transition characterized by lap-top computers, fax machines, and cellular phones in terms of technology and by the shift from labor-intensive blue-collar to white-collar professional jobs in terms of employment patterns, had begun to radically transform western economies as early as the 1960s, not coincidentally the point at which the Soviet economy began to atrophy. Implicit in this economic and social revolution was a more specific shift from extensive to intensive modes of production; that is, from attempts to increase production through the constant addition to new inputs of labor and raw materials to production methods based upon the more efficient use of already existing resources and the integration of innovative technologies.⁴ Called by whatever name, this revolution inevitably featured the progressive replacement of Youngstown, Ohio as a model for economic development with North Carolina’s Research Triangle or

California's Silicon Valley. It also introduced a whole new range of complex technologies - information processing systems, robotics, lasers, and fiber optics - largely derived from the still unfolding wonders of the transistor.

As Seweryn Bialer, Anders Aslund and others accurately noted, it was this transition from the industrial to post-industrial society, from extensive to intensive production processes, which communist societies proved incapable of making. Precisely because of the inefficiencies and lack of innovation intrinsic to a centrally-planned economy and the restricted information flow characteristic of a closed, totalitarian state, the USSR was structurally incapable of emulating the unfolding revolution taking place in the West. The frantic Soviet attempt to jumpstart a dying economy by importing (and stealing) Western technology during the "detente" decade of the 1970s indicates that the Brezhnev leadership at least recognized the symptoms, if not the fundamental cause, of the dilemma. Yet the "shortcut" of importing Western technology and harnessing it to Soviet production processes as a solution to the USSR's economic travails, and as an alternative to the risky strategy of admitting the structural deficiencies of "real existing socialism," only made the disease worse by postponing the necessary treatment.

By the time Gorbachev came to power, then, the USSR had come to resemble a giant, crudely sketched version of Allentown, Pennsylvania or Gary, Indiana, but in this case one which never worked as well as its Western counterparts and was now also beginning to rust away as well. In one of history's cruelest jokes, Stalin's heirs had finally arrived after arduous sacrifice at the promised land of industrial modernity, had matched in at least some respects the industrial forms and sinews of the capitalist West, only to find that the elusive target had mutated beyond reach and that they were now "stuck" in place with no ability to go forward. What made matters immeasurably worse was the realization that it was the system itself which had both produced the present conundrum and would subsequently act as the major source of resistance to any solution.

Gorbachev's inheritance thus included not only the dead-end of a Stalinist developmental model, but also a powerful institutional source of inertia in the form of what Milovan Djilas called "the New Class" - the millions of entrenched party apparatchiks who drew sustenance from the prevailing sociopolitical order and were adamantly opposed to its reform. Any would-be modernizer thus faced a task which was even more daunting than that pre-

sented by most "third world" contexts. In the Soviet case there was not only the challenge of finding the correct developmental recipe for a successful transition to modernity (what Gorbachev called a "more normal nation" and which was defined by the post-industrial West), but also the need to undo the damage done by a 70-year detour from the path of natural development; a detour which had taken Russia so far off course that a simple shift into reverse would prove too little too late.

The Military Implications of Decline

Nonetheless, despite all of the warnings of failing socioeconomic health, it is likely that what ultimately clinched the argument in favor of at least some kind of "reform from above" (ie. bought Gorbachev a few years of cushion for tinkering at the margins of the system) was not the dramatic deterioration of Soviet living standards or rates of economic growth per se. After all, Soviet leaders were hardly suffering themselves and were seldom known to lose sleep over the deprivations experienced by the masses over whom they ruled. Rather, it was only the dawning realization that continued social and economic decline threatened to erode the USSR's status as a global superpower that finally produced a willingness to consider ideas like "Perestroika" and "Glasnost."

It was that imperial status, best captured in Andrei Gromyko's famous remark in the 1970s that "there is no question of any importance which can be decided without the Soviet Union or in opposition to it," that was the one undeniable accomplishment that the party elite could point to as compensation for their abject failure on other fronts. Unfortunately, that superpower status was also, in Zbigniew Brzezinski's succinct phrase, clearly "one-dimensional" in nature; that is, it depended almost entirely upon the power of the Red Army and the Soviet Strategic Rocket Forces for its sustenance.⁵

As such, evidence indicates that by the mid-1980s even hardline apparatchiks and members of the Soviet military elite were growing concerned over the military implications of the Scientific-Technological Revolution. In other words, there was increasing doubt that the USSR, with its de-industrializing economy and weak technological base, could remain competitive with an adversary now apparently determined to "spend it into bankruptcy" and busily integrating the "emerging technologies" of the STR into military hardware and doctrine. Just as the eventual application of the industrial revolution to warfare had transformed the battlefield of the 20th century, Soviet analysts

like Marshal Ogarkov worried that the integration of the new technologies into the military realm could quickly make Moscow's huge tank and ICBM arsenals as obsolete as the long bow.⁶ The incredible ratio of Israeli to Syrian aircraft losses (0-70) over the Bekaa Valley during the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the later success of "Stinger" missiles against Soviet aircraft in Afghanistan suggested that the traditional Soviet reliance upon quantity to compensate for superior Western quality was now insufficient.

We also know that Gorbachev himself made use of such fears when initially selling his reform program to the Soviet military. His message within this context was straightforward: the Red Army would have to make do with less in the short-term in order to facilitate the success of economic restructuring. On the other hand, those initial sacrifices would be made up for down the road by the kind of advanced weaponry that only a high-technology, post-industrial economy could provide. As Francis Fukuyama concisely put it, "Soviet leaders, including many in the military, understood that the corrupt economic system inherited from Brezhnev would be unable to keep up in an SDI-dominated world, and were willing to accept short-run retrenchment for the sake of long-run survival."⁷ Economic restructuring (ie. Perestroika) was thus presented to the military elite as a necessary step to enable the USSR to modernize and, by so doing, retain the military competitiveness upon which its superpower status rested.

Western analysts who casually dismiss the impact of the U.S. defense build-up of the early 1980s upon the subsequent Soviet reform program are therefore in danger of missing a key part of the overall picture. At the same time (the first Reagan term) that Moscow responded to the U.S. challenge by increasing its defense expenditures and adopting a more intransigent posture in arms control negotiations - responses usually cited by critics to demonstrate the ineffectiveness of Reagan's hardline policies - a thorough reconsideration of the Brezhnev approach to the arms race was taking place within the Soviet political and military hierarchy.⁸ And at the center of this reassessment was a growing pessimism regarding the ability of the struggling Soviet system to meet the latest Western military challenge; a challenge which rested upon a broader technological revolution now being translated into the military realm by increased Western defense expenditures.

It was precisely from this vantage point of imminent weapons obsolescence, with all that it implied for the Soviet Union's cherished superpower

status, that the Kremlin viewed Western military programs such as the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). The American response to the massive Soviet arms build-up of the late 1960s and 1970s could not have come at a worse time for the Soviet Union, suffering as it was from a combination of "imperial overstretch" and economic-technological decline.⁹ Most importantly, the American challenge could not have been met through the usual Soviet stragem of simply increasing the already massive share of resources devoted to military accumulation. Because the threat was a direct byproduct of the Scientific-Technological Revolution, and could only have been countered by drawing upon a stream of advanced technology which Soviet society pointedly could not produce, it threw into sharp relief the rotting foundations upon which the USSR's status as a global superpower rested.

While it is true, as some have argued in an effort to minimize the impact of Western military pressures on the USSR, that the Soviet system had withstood both challenges from abroad and serious internal crises on occasion before, what was unique about the challenges of the 1980s is that they (external pressure and internal decay) were presented simultaneously and that all options other than the reform course were now precluded. Indeed, the only viable response to this kind of Western challenge at this particular historical moment was the initiation of some kind of domestic reform; reform which would soon become uncontrollable and obliterate both the Soviet leadership and the system they presided over.

Gorbachev's Grand Failure

Whatever other objectives might have emerged at a later stage, it is now clear that Gorbachev's initial goal was to modernize the Soviet system without, in the process, significantly altering its Marxist-Leninist substance. To be sure, Gorbachev wanted a more open and humane society, one which could realize his notion of "communism with a human face" in practice. But his primary objective, and one to which all other considerations were subordinate and purely tactical, was to rescue the system he had inherited, to make it work better, to make it more dynamic and productive. And it was in an effort to achieve this goal of system preservation that Gorbachev eventually put forth his hazy reform program with its ubiquitous buzzwords like "Perestroika," "Glasnost," and the "New Thinking."

What impresses most from the vantage point of the late 1990s, however, is the incredible discrepancy between Gorbachev's intentions and the consequences of his policies. And in explaining this dramatic gap between goals and results, between the hope of renewal and the reality of collapse, it is especially important to remember that the events of Fall 1991 represented both an anti-colonial revolution that destroyed an archaic empire and an anti-communist revolution that shattered an equally archaic ideological system. While anti-Russian and anti-communist sentiments ultimately became mutually reinforcing in the sense that each worked inexorably toward the same conclusion (the breakup of the union), it was the unintended impact of Gorbachev's policies that brought each to the fore by the beginning of the 1990s.

Within this context, the peeling away of the 14 non-Russian republics in the Fall of 1991 was itself an inevitable consequence of the collapse of the outer, East European rim of the Russian empire two years earlier; a break so vividly symbolized by the piece-by-piece demolition of the Berlin Wall. Already smoldering demands for greater autonomy within the various republics could not have been but exacerbated by the spectacle of Poles, Germans, and Czechs being set free. In other words, Eastern Europe and the non-Russian republics of the USSR formed the inner and outer rings of an archaic multinational empire, one forged not through overseas colonialism of the British and French variety, but rather through a relentless process of expansion radiating from the Russian center into contiguous geographical regions. Eastern Europe had simply represented the latest (post-1945) addition to this imperial bounty and it was this outer rim or "periphery" of the empire which crumbled first.

Like the earlier collapse of Soviet control over Eastern Europe, though, the shattering of the union itself was also directly attributable to Gorbachev's own actions, more accurately to the incompatibility between the logic of reform and the logic necessary to preserve a multinational imperium. Although they adopted what were in many respects contradictory ways of dealing with the problem (one opting for uneasy accommodation, the other waging relentless war), both Lenin and Stalin nonetheless recognized the seriousness of ethnic nationalism within their realms. Their successors, Gorbachev in particular, conspicuously failed to do so. Indeed, as late as 1986 the Gorbachev-inspired CPSU programme boldly asserted that "the nationalities question inherited from the past has been successfully solved in the Soviet Union;" an incredible statement of naivete but one which was also later echoed with equal force in

Gorbachev's own book *Perestroika*.¹⁰ Given such a huge blindspot, it was not surprising that the fury of unleashed nationalism caught Gorbachev unprepared and that, even to this day, he still demonstrates so little understanding of it.

Nationalism and ethnic unrest had, of course, been present throughout both the Khrushchev and Brezhnev eras, with only their outward manifestations effectively suppressed. The problem with Gorbachev was that each element of his reform program worked to bring such sentiments into the open and to progressively sever the key links between the republics and the center - Perestroika transferred control over resources and economic decision-making away from Moscow to the republics; Glasnost allowed for the revival of ethnic identities and for criticism of past abuses; and democratization went even further by allowing the republics to use local elections to replace Muscovites with pro-independence parties and leaders.

Ironically, the "New Thinking" in Soviet foreign policy may have made the most important contribution of all to the breakup by effectively insulating the independence movements from harsh regime reprisals. By having staked so much of his reform effort on good relations with, and economic aid from, the West, Gorbachev ultimately gave up the most important source of leverage used by his predecessors to keep the empire together - military force. As the sharp Western response to the limited military crackdown in the Baltics in January 1991 demonstrated, a return to Cold War and a cessation of economic aid were likely consequences of any Kremlin effort to forcibly prevent republic independence. Clearly, by 1991, the time for such action had long since passed, what with the sheer magnitude of unrest in the republics, the fracturing of opinion within the CPSU itself, and the passive precedent established in the Fall of 1989.

In essence, the process of decentralization inherent in Gorbachev's reforms worked to dissolve the glue which had kept the Russian empire together long past the time when comparable colonial structures had been laid to rest. Each mechanism of imperial control - the single-party state represented by the CPSU, the centrally-planned economy, the ideological orthodoxy of Marxism-Leninism, and the coercive powers of the Red Army and KGB - was inevitably weakened by the unfolding logic of reform. All along Gorbachev faced a dilemma that required a choice - reform at the expense of empire or empire at the expense of reform - yet he disastrously refused to choose.

The Mote in Gorbachev's Eye

Mikhail Gorbachev's inability to understand the incompatibility between his reform ideas and the preservation of the USSR as a multinational empire points, of course, to a larger flaw which doomed his efforts all along - his own ideological and conceptual limitations. Precisely because his goal was to reinvigorate the Soviet order without damaging the basic principles upon which it was based, Gorbachev consistently clung to the myth of "the socialist choice" long after it should have been obvious that it was precisely that "choice" (ie. Marxism-Leninism) that was the fundamental problem. In other words, his "bounded" reforms were incapable of solving the Soviet crisis because the implicit notion of "reform communism" was itself oxymoronic.

Apart from the issue of nationality policy, in no area were those contradictions more obvious, and damaging, than with respect to Gorbachev's efforts to reform the command-administrative economy. Perestroika, ambiguously envisioned as a limited infusion of capitalism and market mechanisms, ended up destabilizing the centrally-planned economic order but never went far enough to put the elements of an alternative market system - a convertible currency, a real pricing system, and private property - in its place. The Soviet economy was therefore suddenly shaken to its foundations and then left stranded between two stools, producing not greater efficiency and higher quality products, but, instead, simply chaos and greater deprivation.

Ultimately, for Gorbachev, the necessary step of reintroducing private property could not be taken because to have done so would have been to jettison the single most important axiom upon which the Marxist project depended - the collective ownership of the means of production. Such a step would have necessitated not only a rejection of Brezhnev and Stalin, but of the legitimizing icons of Marx and Lenin as well. While bureaucratic resistance undoubtedly also played a role, the disaster that was Perestroika in practice came from Gorbachev and his own ideological blinders.

This same loyalty to the "choice made in 1917" afflicted other elements of Gorbachev's program. Because real change, the kind that would have rejected Marxist-Leninist assumptions, was ruled out from the start, Gorbachev was always limited to purely instrumental tinkering within the Leninist framework. His insistence upon market mechanisms but only within the context of continued central planning was, for example, mirrored in his view of democracy only with continuing CPSU guidance; in freedom of speech and press

only as long as they did not tarnish the reputations of Marx and Lenin; and in greater republic autonomy only within the confines of a still Moscow-dominated union. For Gorbachev, market mechanisms, "bourgeois" democracy, and greater individual freedom were merely instrumental values; means toward the end of a reinvigorated Soviet system, not ends in themselves as in the liberal West.¹¹ Just as it is unlikely that Gorbachev would have ever embarked down the reform path were he to have received an advance preview of the consequences, it is also probable that, if his limited tinkering in 1985 or 1986 would have produced any signs of reviving the Soviet system, we would never have seen, under his leadership anyway, a Solidarity government in Poland, the repeal of Article VI of the Soviet Constitution, or even partly-competitive elections to a new Supreme Soviet.

Conclusion

In many respects, then, it was Mikhail Gorbachev, not Nikita Khrushchev or Mikhail Suslov, who was the "last Leninist;" the last "true believer." As befitting a man whose entire adult life was committed to the Soviet Communist Party and its works, Gorbachev was ultimately incapable of turning his back on it or upon the ideology it represented. At no point was this made more clear than in his post-coup press conference in Moscow, when he was, amidst the jubilation following the coup's collapse, given a glimmer of an opportunity to refurbish his damaged reputation for the democratic era about to commence. Rather than issue a moral condemnation of the forces (ie. the "power ministries" of the CPSU) that had tried to overthrow him, Gorbachev, to the contrary, emphatically restated his commitment to communism and to his vision of the Party as the only reliable vehicle for reform.

The moment was revealing in that it highlighted a little appreciated reality in Soviet politics - that by his last year in power Gorbachev was no longer even a reformer but, instead, a reactionary desperately trying to hold back the flood that he himself had unleashed. Indeed, by the Spring of 1991, Gorbachev had allowed himself to be thoroughly outflanked by more radical reformers with more genuine (ie. non-instrumental) commitments to liberal democracy; a circumstance which helps to explain why Boris Yeltsin, warts and all, was re-elected President of Russia in 1996, and Gorbachev (who received less than 1 percent of the vote in that election) now writes his memoirs for an infatuated Western press.

The collapse of Gorbachev's rickety program of reform has now, of course, left Russia to struggle through the process of "exiting from communism;" a task of transformation which, even eight years along, remains in its first phase. It is also more than likely that the current wave of pessimism regarding the Russian future, as with the undue optimism of 1992, will in the long run represent but one trough in a long series of oscillations between progress and relapse. Just as communism could arrive through "two steps forward and one step back," so too can democracy. Within this epoch struggle, Mikhail Gorbachev will probably be seen as something of a tragic transitional figure, one whose reforms worked to inadvertently undermine the old order but, by definition and conception, could go no further. The last ruler of a repressive regime that had lost the will to use force to maintain itself in power, Gorbachev in his own way both responded to and ultimately resisted the logic of the global democratic and market revolutions: he was both perceptive enough to sense the incongruity of Soviet state socialism in the emerging post-industrial age, but also too ideologically constrained to act effectively on that knowledge.

Thus, when final judgements are rendered, Gorbachev may ironically come to share a place remarkably close to that of the conspirators who tried to overthrow him in the 1991 "vodka putsch." In their own ways, both he and the August cabal tried to save a system that was beyond salvation and, in attempting to do so, unwittingly hastened its demise. The only difference between them appears to be that Gorbachev might have genuinely believed in what he was trying to save.

NOTES

1. Perhaps the most scathing indictment of the various branches of Sovietology for failing to grasp the essence of the Soviet system has come from Martin Mali, "From Under the Rubble, What?" *Problems of Communism* (January-April, 1992), pp. 89-106.

2. The one scholar who had all along accurately estimated the death toll from dekulakization and the great purges was, of course, Robert Conquest. It is a telling comment upon the sins of Sovietology (and of Western intellectuals in general) that Conquest was often villified during the Cold War for "anti-Soviet" views; attacks which seem downright bizarre in the present context.

3. Among Western analyses of the impact of the "Scientific-Technological Revolution" on Soviet politics are the various works of Erik P. Hoffmann and Robin F. Laird, including *The Scientific-Technological Revolution and Soviet Foreign Policy* (Elmsford NY: Pergamon Press, 1982); and *Technocratic Socialism: The Soviet Union in the Advanced Industrial Era* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1985).

4. This distinction between "intensive" and "extensive" forms of economic growth in the Soviet context was nicely captured early on by Seweryn Bialer, "Gorbachev's Program of Change: Sources, Significance, Prospects," *Political Science Quarterly* 103 (1988), pp. 404-407.

5. The notion of the USSR as a purely "one-dimensional superpower" was first articulated by Brzezinski in "The Soviet Union: Her Aims, Problems, and Challenges to the West," *Adelphi Papers*, 189 (Spring 1984), pp. 3-12.

6. Early Soviet assessments of the impact of the STR on military capabilities can be found in N.A. Lomov (ed.), *Scientific-Technical Progress and the Revolution in Military Affairs* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1974). The views of Ogarkov are expressed in, among other writings on the subject, "Military Science and the Defense of the Socialist Fatherland," *Kommunist* 7 (1978), pp. 112-119; and *Always Ready to Defend the Fatherland* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1982). For a broader assessment of Ogarkov's views and influence in this area see Dale R. Herspring, "Nicolay Ogarkov and the Scientific-Technological Revolution in Soviet Military Affairs," *Comparative Strategy* 6 (1987), pp. 29-59.

7. Cited in Fukuyama's *The End of the History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992), pp. 75-76. See also: Jeremy Azrael, *The Soviet Civilian Leadership and the Military High Command, 1976-1986* (Santa Monica,

CA: The Rand Corporation, 1987), pp. 15-21.

8. A typically skeptical, and, in the view of this author, spectacularly misguided, assessment of the impact of the Reagan build-up on Soviet behavior is G. John Ikenberry and Daniel Deudney, "Who Won the Cold War?" *Foreign Policy* 87 (Summer 1992), pp. 123-138.

9. It has now, of course, become common to note that Paul Kennedy's notion of "imperial overstretch," conceived in the late-1980s with the American predicament in mind, actually far more accurately characterized the position of the USSR. This depiction of the Soviet Union as a military behemoth with a rotting internal foundation pervaded Seweryn Bialer's *The Soviet Paradox: External Expansion, Internal Decline* (New York: Knopf, 1986).

10. *Programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union: New Edition* (1986), *Novosti*, pp. 47-48.

11. Although he tactfully moderated some of his views on the subject when courting Western audiences, Gorbachev's long-standing hostility to "bourgeois democracy" was still clear. This hostility was particularly visible during his ultimately losing battle to preserve Article VI of the Soviet Constitution. At several points during that debate he contemptuously dismissed multiparty democracy as "rubbish." See his comments in *Pravda*, 11 January 1989; and in *The Guardian*, 17 February 1989.