Chapter 5

IDEOLOGY AND SOVIET UNION'S EAST EUROPEAN POLICY

Perestroika and the 'new political thinking' have had the profound impact not only on East Europe, but on Europe as a whole and the East-West relations as well. The international significance of change in East Europe lies in a massive thrust towards restructuring of the European structures and the overcoming of post-war divisions. This Chapter is devoted to the study of deideologisation of USSR's East European policy under the impact of 'new political thinking'. This is the first case study of 'new political thinking' in action. The emphasis is on the ideological and theoretical aspects of the political and socio-economic changes taking place in USSR's relations with the East Europe. This Chapter, picking up the strands from the Chapter 3 and 4, seeks to describe the Soviet theory of East Europe as part of the world socialist system with focus on continuity and change since 1945 to the present day.

I

The Evolution of the Concept of People's Democracy: 1945-1956

The liberation of a number of countries in the East Europe with the help of the Red Army during the second world war presented the Soviet theoreticians the task of explaining the developments in these countries within the framework of Marxism-Leninism and in the light of the Soviet revolutionary experience. It is needed
significant that Stalin avoided any public pronouncement on the nature of the liberated East European countries, widely described otherwise as people's democracies. The 19th Party Congress (1952), also mentioned little about people's democracies besides giving some data regarding their economic development. In fact, defining the Party's tasks in the sphere of foreign policy, Malenkov, in his report to the 19th Party Congress, mentioned China before the 19th Party Congress, mentioned China before the "European People's Democracy" stressing the need to develop "inviolable friendly relations with the Chinese People's Republic, with the European People's Democracies ...". However, the relative neglect shown to the people's democracies in the official documents did not at all mean a similar neglect by the Party ideologues. Since the beginning, the party had been trying to evolve a suitable theory for the post-war revolutions in Europe and Asia. As is customary in the Soviet Union, the task was not merely to evolve a theory, but also to justify and guide practice. Stalin's failure to even mention people's democracies in his post-war works, particularly in his treatise on socialism and its fundamental laws, delivered in 1952 before the 19th Party Congress, only signified the confusion and cogitation that was going on within the Party on the theory of People's Democracies.

In the earlier views of the nature of revolution in the East European countries, developed by such eminent Soviet theoretician

as Varga and Trainin and such East European leaders as Dimitrov and Gottwald, the people's democracies were treated as new types of states which were neither bourgeois nor Soviet in character and which were following their own 'national paths' to socialism. Gomulka (Poland, November 1946), Beirut (Poland, June 1946), Dimitrov (Bulgaria, September 1946) had all said clearly that the Soviet model of socialist revolution and socialist development could not apply to the new states. Similarly, Varga wrote that the democracies of a 'new type' were neither socialist nor capitalist: they were transitional states with a mixed economy in which socialist economic changes had yet to be reflected in the superstructure. Trainin, another Soviet theoritician, preferring the term 'democracies of a special type,' saw as their urgent task the struggle against fascism and imperialism rather than moving further towards socialism.

This model could explain the existing reality in East European countries, i.e., the presence of bourgeois parties in coalitions, the continuation of capitalist mode of production in the countries and great diversity in political and constitutional structures. These


states, neither capitalist nor socialist, were nevertheless considered to be on the way to socialism as they had nationalised the main means of production. The transition to socialism involved adjustment between the socialist and the capitalist sectors though the capitalist sector was to eventually disappear.

Varga's theoretical model of the 'democracies of new type' was soon changed, particularly after the split between Yugoslavia and USSR in 1948. It was after this split that the term people's democracies came into vogue. Greater emphasis was placed on the leading role of the communist parties and on break with the past. The idea that national specifics could imply different roads to socialism was discredited. Soviet theoretician Burdzhalov wrote, 'Of course, one must take the unique into account in the transition of a country to socialism ... But this does not cancel the general laws of development. The assertion that every country goes towards socialism in its own original way ... cannot be accepted as correct'. By 1948, the communist parties had come to rule throughout the Eastern Europe. In 1949, the people's democracies came to be described as true socialist states where dictatorship of proletariat prevailed. Dimitrov, changing his earlier views, now declared that the Soviet Union and the people's democracies were 'two forms of one and the same rule - the rule of the working class ... They are two forms of the dictatorship of

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4. Ibi., p.160.
proletariat". Soviet theoreticians Mankovski and Farberov, in contrast to Varga's views, developed a two-stage theory of the revolution in the people's democracies: during the first stage (1944-45) there occurred a socialist revolution from which the dictatorship of proletariat emerged, and during the second stage (1947-48), the dictatorship of the proletariat was consolidated and construction of socialism accelerated.

Thus, by 1949, two views, one to the 'left' (Mankovsky's) and the other 'rightist' (Varga's) were developed. The stage was now set for criticising both these views as 'errors'. Attempt was now made to avoid identifying the USSR with the people's democracies either too closely or distinguishing it from them too sharply. This was to impart flexibility to the Soviet policy and theory. The decisive turning point came in 1951 when in an article by A.I. Sobolev, entitled "People's Democracies as a Form of Political Organisation of Society", published in Bolshavik, a flexible, plastic formulation was advanced:

"In the course of the struggle against the right opportunists and bourgeois nationalists it was demonstrated that patterns (Zakonomernosti) of the transition from capitalism to socialism revealed by the classics of Marxism-Leninism and verified by experience of construction of socialism in the USSR, are also valid for the people's democracies. The peculiarity of the development of these lands can arise, and actually does arise, only on the basis of general patterns, valid for all countries in the transition from capitalism to socialism". 7

Sobolev also talked of a two-stage revolution concept but, in contrast to earlier theory (Mankovsky's), described it as 'bourgeois-democratic' in nature and, invoked Lenin and Stalin to prove that this first stage had grown into the second stage - i.e. a proletarian revolution. The first stage was considered to be 'something like the democratic dictatorship of proletariat and peasantry', with the working class in the lead.

This line was given the official sanction when, on 19th April, 1952 Pravda, published a central committee statement criticising writings on people's democracies. Trainin, Mankovski and Farberov were severely criticised. The main point of criticism was whether the first stage of revolution in the people's democracies was socialist from the start or revolutionary democratic. The rejected viewpoint, suggesting the possibility of transition to socialism, was reminiscent of Trotsky's doctrine of 'permanent revolution' and once a 'left-wing deviation'. Instead, Lenin's idea of 'uninterrupted revolution' which introduced a democratic stage of proletarian-peasant dictatorship before it grew into a proletarian dictatorship was applied to the people's democracies. The main reason for this subtle shift in theory seemed to be to make the people's democracy model more attractive to other countries in Asia and Europe which might choose to embrace the path of socialist development. 8

Thus, even before Stalin's death, a change in line had been worked out. The communist leaders in East Europe countries quickly adopted the 'two stages revolution' thesis.

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In the years 1954-56, the Sobolev doctrine of two-stage revolution with the first stage akin to a bourgeois-democratic revolution was generally accepted in the people's democracies. However, it became evident that the universal application of this model to specific historical, economic and social conditions prevailing in an individual country was difficult. Thus, there grew a tendency in the people's democracies to modify the doctrines originating in the Soviet Union in accordance with national specifics.\(^9\)

These approaches, stressing the need to take into account the national specifics and even allow for different roads to socialism, were officially sanctioned by Khruchev in May 1955 (when Yugoslav-USSR rapprochement took place) and at the 20th Party Congress in 1956. However, the Soviet theoreticians continued to treat the subject of people's democracies with caution who continued to stress the "unity in the basic, fundamental, the essential" sense while allowing for diversity in the East European Experience.\(^{10}\)

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9. The Sobolev model was modified in Czechoslovakia which had the most developed capitalist relations amongst the East European Countries on the eve of the revolution. Thus, the Czech philosopher Huska and Kara etc. distinguish the Czech revolution from the 'direct' socialist revolution as in USSR, described it as 'indirect socialist revolution'. One consequence of this distinction was to allow for the existence of a political system, which was neither a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, nor of the proletariat, but 'an intermediate stage (mezhtupen) between the two having a 'transitional class essence'. They also hold that in some cases, "the democratic revolution does not always lead directly to the installation of a revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the people", but might often require "certain developmental revolutionary intermediary stages".

At the 20th Party Congress, the diversity of the countries on way to socialism was duly recognised and this became an unshakeable principle in the theory. However, greater stress came to be laid on the common features and general patterns and laws which would be applicable to all the countries on the path to socialism. Thus, at this Party Congress, Konstantinov, a party theoretician, laid down the general, common patterns of transition to socialism: (i) State-power in the hands of the workers' class, allied with the other patriotic elements, (ii) the party, guided by Marxism - Leninism, as the leading force in the state, (iii) Socialist ownership of the means of production and, (iv) Cooperation with other socialist and peace-loving states. 11 Within the framework of this commonality, the national differences could be given the due weightage. In fact, failure to do so was regarded as dangerous sectarianism.

Sobolev summarised the Soviet view of socialist revolutions in people's democracies, published after the 20th Party Congress as follows:

"There were 'three basic' paths of development of the revolution: the Soviet, the people's democracies path and the Chinese path; under the modern conditions it was possible to use the parliamentary path of transition from capitalism to socialism, the progress of liberation movements would reveal new paths and forms of socialist development; the Soviet revolutionary experience was an invaluable contribution to world liberation movements and that workers of all countries 'creatively' applied this wealth of Soviet experience in the resolution of their own tasks. 12

11. Ibid., p.423.

As regards the patterns in the revolutionary experience of the European people's democracies, Sobolev listed: existence of broad democratic front with leading role of the working class, possibility of a peaceful development of the revolution, possibility of a coalition government with working class exercising the major share of power, possibility of overcoming split between the working class and other socialist parties, active participation of the petty bourgeoisie, peasantry etc. in socialist revolution, eventual defeat of the bourgeoisie leading to establishment of socialist state and emergence of world socialist system, emergence of new forms of co-operation in production including the retention of 'private ownership of land' in people's democracy. Clearly, Sobolev was generalising the experience of socialist construction in the various countries of Europe and was also laying down guidelines for tactics. By 1956, it was becoming clear that a relative flexibility in internal matters of the various countries was envisaged provided certain common patterns were observed. The idea was to make the European model of socialist revolution attractive to the working class in other countries. Thus, the legitimacy accorded by the 20th Party Congress to the parliamentary form of struggle of the working classes in the capitalist countries was described as the 'great virtue' of the 20th Party Congress decisions.

These general trends plus some more were given the status of 'laws' in the 1957 declaration of the Conference of 12 communist parties held in the aftermath of the 1956 events in Hungary. Thus the Soviet line on precedence of commonality of socialistic development over the national differences was endorsed by the communist movement. The concept of 'national communism' was firmly rejected. Apart from what Sobolev had mentioned in his 1956 article, the 'declaration' identified as laws, inter-alia:

"...the planned development of the national economy ... the accomplishment of a socialist revolution in the sphere of ideology and culture and the creation of intelligentsia devoted to the cause of socialism ..., defence of the achievements of socialism against ... external and internal enemies, solidarity of the working class of a given country with the working class of other countries - proletarian internationalism." 15

The 'revisionists' were described in the 'declaration' as those who denied the principle of proletarian internationalism and demanded the abolition of "the Leninist principles of Party Organisation ..., democratic centralism". 16

Thus, by 1957 the CPSU line on socialist revolutions, also applicable to people's democracies, had become the official, orthodoxy of the communist movement as a whole.

The Soviet Union's Relations with People's Democracies: 1945-64

The Soviet relations with the East European countries during

15. For the text of the 1957 'Declaration' see the Current Digest of Soviet Press, vol.ix, no.47, 1 January 1958, pp.3-7. The above quote is from p.5.

16. Ibid., p.5.
the period up to 1948 when Yugoslavia was expelled from the were conditioned by the Soviet perception of the western hostility towards USSR as reflected in the Truman Doctrine, the US policy of containment, the US monopoly over the atomic weapons, the Marshall plan, the anti-communist sentiment in the Western societies and the difficulties of restructuring post-war Europe etc. The Soviet position in the East Europe was, in the first place, to be governed by Tehran, Yalta and Postdam agreements which, essentially provided for East European regimes "democratic and friendly" to Soviet Union. A number of East European countries, where Red Army had come to play an important role in their liberation from the fascist rule, were about to rise. The explanation for the western hostility was implicit in the 'capitalist encirclement' and 'deepening crisis of capitalism' concepts. With the emergence of a number of 'friendly' states, the concept of 'bloc' opposed to capitalist camp began to take shape. Thus, the Soviet relations with the East European countries, were justified in terms of the 'two-camp' theory put out by Zhdanov in 1946. At the twenty ninth anniversary of the October Revolution (November 1946), Zhdanov condemned the western attitude towards USSR and its East European policies and put forward the concept of "the Soviet Union leading the democratic countries". This signalled the intentions of the Soviet Union to meet the Western challenge together with certain East European countries. The only

17. Brzezinski, n.2, p.32.
18. Pravda, 7 November 1946.
problem that remained was of finding a suitable ideological basis for the new relationships.

The Yugoslav-USSR conflict in 1948 underlined what USSR regarded as impermissible on the ideological plane in relations between two socialist countries. This episode also affected the Marxist-Leninist theory and paved way for the acceptance of different roads to socialism in the later years. From the ideological, doctrinal point of view, the dispute concerned the following issues:

(a) The Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY) was pursuing an unfriendly policy towards CPSU(B). Their behaviour in this regard was "incompatible with Marxism-Leninism and only appropriate to nationalism". 19

(b) CPY was departing in its home policy from the well established principles of Marxist-Leninist theory of class and class-struggle. In this context CPY was following incorrect policies concerning peasantry in the countryside, the Marxist Leninist teachings about the Party, etc.

(c) Instead of honestly accepting the criticism by the CPSU(B), the leaders of CPY behaved arrogantly, belligerently and with hostility. This violated the Marxist-Leninist teaching about the attitude of a party towards its mistakes.

(d) The CPY by following hasty policies concerning the nationalisation of 'medium industry and trade' was actually trying to bring in a number of new leftist laws. The 'leftist decrees and declarations' of the CPY "compromised the socialist construction in Yugoslavia". 20

(e) Yugoslavia had broken with the 'international traditions' and taken a 'road of nationalism'. 21


20. Ibid., p.67.

21. Ibid., p.69.
This litany of charges gave ample hint of what USSR expected of communist parties: the solidarity with CPSU(B) and other communist parties was a must, there could be no question of any departure from Marxist-Leninist principles (as interpreted by the USSR), the truck with 'imperialists' was inadmissible and 'nationalism' had to be condemned. In contrast, CPY, while retaining its steadfast adherence to its own understanding of Marxism-Leninism and refusing to accept any underestimation of its own role in the Yugoslav revolution, nevertheless continued to maintain that the future would show whether or not the CPY remained "loyal to the Soviet Union; ... doctrine of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin".  

The Yugoslav-USSR dispute showed that the split was forced on Yugoslavia and that most of the issues involved were of minor nature and that Stalin, owing to his fear of Tito rising as a rival, used ideology to ostracise Yugoslavia from communist fraternity and by doing so served a notice on all others that the Soviet position in the movement would remain unchallenged. As a result of this dispute in the years immediately after 1948, the Soviet theory of people's democracies became more rigid.

At the 20th Party Congress the necessary shifts in the Soviet policy towards the East European countries were made. The concept of world socialism, the end of 'capitalist encirclement',

the principle of 'peaceful coexistence' between different social systems, the pronouncement that wars were not fatalistically inevitable, the clarification that revolutions could not be exported were some of the basic principles enunciated by the 20th Party Congress (See Chapter 3). These principles covered the socialist countries.

In the question of relations between the socialist states, the 20th Party Congress only lent authority to what had already been discussed earlier. For instance, the July 1955 plenum of the CC, CBU had adopted a resolution on "socialist internationism" which guided the relations between the socialist countries. Socialist internationalism was described as "full equality, respect for national sovereignty and consideration of the national features of each country". 23

The concept of world socialism was an important one as it had the seeds within it of later Soviet responses to situations such as in Hungary (1956) and in Czechoslovakia (1968). It also led to the enunciation and development of the later theory of political and economic coordination between the East European countries. It was a theoretical and practical advance over the Stalinist concept of the relations with East Europe. While Stalin's policy had been of strictest control and intolerance of strong parties and leaders

(e.g. Tito), under Khruschev and his destalinisation policy, relations with East European countries were premised on a policy of tight ideological and military control combined with a some flexibility on the manner of internal political and social development in these countries with due regard to national differences and peculiarities.

The concept of world socialist system, advanced after the second world war, laid stress on the 'unity' and 'cohesion' of the Socialist countries in their struggle against imperialism. Khruschev in an article in Kommunist (no.12, 1962) wrote, "This great community of political aims and interest, resting on the granite foundation of Marxist-Leninist doctrine and the principles of proletarian internationalism, is the dependable guarantee of the stability of the world socialist system ...". The world socialist system envisaged a 'new type of international ties' and in the economic sphere this meant "collective cooperation and mutual aid", the principles which underlined the CMEA, established in 1949. The idea was to form "a single economic organism of which ... Lenin had spoken with such inspired vision". What was required was to create an "International socialist division of labour" and follow the dictates of the 'law of planned and proportional development of socialist economy' to prepare "national economic planes on the scale

25. Ibid.
of world socialist system". It was clear that CMEA was to serve as one of the most important instrument of creating dependency relationships within the world socialist system. If the 'base' of the world socialist system could be restructured, the changes in the superstructure, i.e. policies, would follow.

Khruschev, by emphasising the concept of the 'world socialist system was not only giving a theoretical basis to the earlier policies of the Soviet Union towards the East European countries, but also underlining the concept of competition between the socialist and capitalist systems. It was in East Europe that the strength of the socialism would be demonstrated in the first place. Thus, the importance of East Europe which formed the major component of the world socialist system in the world politics could not be overestimated.

The practical test of the ideas of the 20th Party Congress in relation to Soviet policy towards East Europe came in October, 1956 in Hungary and Poland. The Soviets showed the limits of their tolerance on East Europe. It was clear that while the Soviet Union was prepared to give due regard to the national peculiarities in the course of socialist construction in the various countries, on the question of ideology and security, it assumed the right to assert its dominance. This was confirmed by the 1957 and 1960 declarations of the communist parties. It was also confirmed by the Soviet willingness to break with China, Albania and Yugoslavia (for the second time) when it came to the questions of ideology and strategy.

26. Ibid., p.6.
During the period of intense cold war with the West, the Soviet insistence on ideology invariably increased. However, the ideological parameters of the Soviet policy towards East Europe were flexible enough not only to absorb the Hungarian events of 1956, but also to permit a genuine search for socio-economic reforms within the East European countries. Thus, in the sixties and till Khrushchev was ousted, reforms in the system of economic planning and management, the investigation of social relations under full fledged socialism, the examination of political institutions were initiated in the East European countries. In the economic and management sphere, there was increasing questioning of the traditional centrally planned economy. The virtues of 'economic decentralisation' were highlighted by the Czech and the Hungarian economists. The Scientific Technological Revolution (STR) became a catch phrase in countries like Czechoslovakia. The Hungarians and the Czechs also began to focus on non-antagonistic contradictions in a socialist society and the danger of 'alienation' if the homogeneity in the socialist society was overstressed. This was a plea for the recognition of the legitimacy of diverse and competing interests in the socialist society. Thus, Czech theoretician-politician Mlynar argued in 1965 that within the new economics management system being adopted in Czechoslovakia, and, the STR, required that the leadership should tackle the problem of coordination between "the interests of society and the specific."
He specifically criticised the 'management by directives from above' as giving rise to "erroneous opinions" equating "individual, specific interests ... with anti social behaviour".

In fact Czechoslovakia, in 1964, did carry out a limited experiment with a new economic system with which Gorbachev's economic management reforms bear striking resemblance. The Czechoslovak mechanism, introduced in 1965, incorporated such principles as cost accounting, material incentives, commodity-money relations, plan and market etc.

The Czech, and to a lesser extent the Hungarian and the GDR reforms raised the question of Soviet primacy on the question of ideology. In fact that Czechs could go as far as rejecting the Soviet socialist model and putting forward the 'socialism with human face' alternative indicated the tolerance which Khruschev displayed during the course of his deStalinisation drive. Khruschev's support to Kadar's "alliance policy" and "goulash communism" led the latter to come up with the New Economic Mechanism (NEM) in Hungary. Similarly Khruschev supported GDR and Bulgaria in their economic


reform efforts. It was the fall of Khruschev and the reemergence of neo-Stalinism under Brezhnev that led to not only the end of reforms in these countries but also to the Czechoslovak events of 1968 and the emergence of 'Brezhnev Doctrine' which placed so much emphasis on the 'unity and cohesion' of the socialist countries that their 'limited sovereignty' was justified. The words proletarian and 'socialist internationalism' took a sinister meaning in the seventies under Brezhnev's rule.

The Brezhnev Years

On Khruschev's fall, the reform movement in East Europe did not stop immediately. In fact, the adoption of economic reforms in the Soviet Union itself in 1965 confirmed to other countries the Soviet nod to the continuation of the reformist course. Brezhnev at the 23rd Party Congress spoke of the continuity of policies since the 20th Party Congress. Czech theoretician, Mlynar, after his talks with the Soviet officials in 1967, came back convinced that there could be a positive movement towards democratisation of life in the Soviet Union and, therefore, Czechoslovakia could go ahead with the reform. Some prominent observers like Tatu in the West had begun to conclude in 1966 that the Soviet system would evolve towards 'parliamentarianism'.


conclusion was reached because of apparent ascendency of the 'reformists' in the Soviet hierarchy and relative power vacuum in which Brezhnev had not yet fully asserted himself.

A survey of Soviet writings on East Europe upto mid-1968 indicates: (a) a paucity of authoritative official commentaries on East Europe, and (b) a positive tone of commentaries in popular press about developments in East Europe. The literature of 1965-68 period was more open, candid and enthusiastic about the East European developments than the similar literature of 1970s. For instance, a Soviet writer spoke of the "objective necessity for all socialist countries to evolve ... a system of planned management based on economic methods," and declared, "... the reforms tend to ... enhance its Socialism positions in peaceful competition and co-existence with capitalism". Efficiency, profit, technological innovations, incentives - all these themes were extensively discussed by the Soviet press both in relation to the Soviet Union as well as developments in East European countries, especially, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. This would have sent encouraging signals to the East European countries. At same time, the Soviet writings of this period emphasized the "unity of the Socialist camp" and


"overcoming of the differences in the world communist movement".  
This showed that the traditional parameters of the Soviet-East European relations continued to operate as far as the foreign policy goals of the socialist countries were concerned. Thus, reforms were not permitted to reach the limits which could endanger the world socialist system. This was strikingly demonstrated in 1968 in the Czech Crisis which gave rise to the "Brezhnev Doctrine" and the theory of "limited sovereignty". (See Chapter 3).

A major theoretical innovation in the Brezhnev years, particularly after 1968, was that of 'developed socialism' and 'real socialism'. This concept, first aired by Brezhnev in 1967 in his speech at the 50th Anniversary of October revolution, was elaborated fully in the 1970s only. In the economic sphere, while STR was retained, the developed socialism laid greater stress on planned socialist economy. This meant a retreat from the 1965 reforms. The word 'reform' was replaced by the phrase 'perfection of economic mechanism'. Economic integration though the CMEA was given renewed stress. In the social spheres, the class differences were underplayed. There was no reference to legitimacy of interests of any particular group or class. Homogeneity was stressed. The concept of "all people's state" was retained but it was held that no change in political institutions was needed. The

super structure i.e., state was assigned a role in which it would guide the base. The primacy of Soviet model was upheld. This new orthodoxy, a retreat from Khruschevian period of reform and de-Stalinisation, had immediate dampening effect on the East European countries who soon fell in line. The East European-Soviet relations were increasingly conducted within the CMEA and the Warsaw Treaty Organisation (WTO), both of which incorporated the principle of "socialist integration".

The role of Moscow with regard to permitting systematic diversities in East European countries during the seventies is not clearly established. For instance, immediately after the 1968 events in Czechoslovakia, Kadar was allowed to proceed with NEM, which was based on the principles of market socialism. Similarly, in the first years under Geirik in Poland, there was active discussion of economic and limited political reforms. This would indicate that Soviet Union was prepared to allow reforms provided they did not jeopardise the orthodox role of the party and did not adversely effect to collective 'might' of the world socialist system.

During the Brezhnev years, considerable emphasis was placed on the CMEA, which emerged as the main instrument of socio-economic integration in East Europe. 'Socialist-Integration' has always been considered vital for the 'unity' and 'cohesion' of the Socialist world.

Economic Integration: Council for Mutual Economic Assistance

Ideology has been closely linked with politics in USSR, and politics has had deep impact on economics. The CMEA was created in 1949 apparently in response to Western trade embargoes and boycotts against "USSR and peoples' democracies" on account of their refusal to participate in Marshall Plan. (It is known that Poland and Czechoslovakia were keen to participate in Marshall plan but had to forego the idea under Stalin's pressure) The original announcement of the creation of CMEA did not raise any question of socialist unity etc. The first impact of the CMEA on the East European Countries was that the Soviet economic model was adopted in these countries. Stalin also extracted heavy war reparations from GDR, Hungary and Romania. With the death of Stalin and new ideological innovations in the foreign policy field, serious efforts were made to bring about economic integration in the East Europe. Khruchev proposed to transform CMEA into a supranational organ in charge of taking key decisions on investments, planning for the individual countries etc. However, Romania was opposed to the creation of such supranational organs, as this, in their view, contradicted the sovereignty of individual countries. Khruschev's plan had to be dropped. However the idea of plan

coordinations lingered on. During 1964-70, when there was much discussion in the East-bloc on economic reforms, the Hungarian idea of economic integration on the basis of markets was discussed but rejected. The 1971 "Complex Programme" for socialist integration give a firm direction to the integration processes.

The socialist integration programme was stressed by the leaders of the participating countries (August 2, 1971) as "strengthening the political and economic unity and cohesion of the fraternal socialist countries", and as "playing an epoch-making role in ensuring new victories of socialism and communism and consolidating peace and international security". The political content of the CMEA programme was obvious. This continued to be so throughout the Brezhnev period and even under Chernenko. For instance, the statement on "Further deepening of the scientific and technological cooperation of the CMEA countries" issued after the summit meeting of the East European leaders in June, 1984 in Moscow, said that the CMEA experience had demonstrated socialism's "fundamental advantages over capitalism" and that CMEA's economic might had "become the material basis of ... policy of peace, relaxation of international tensions ...".


39. For text of the "Statement" and other documents see International Affairs, no. 7, 1984, pp.6-18.
Principle of socialist internationalism combined with respect for the sovereignty, independence etc. were explicitly as principles governing relations between the socialist states.

It may be concluded that during the 1956-1984 period there were no significant changes in the theoretical principles underlying the economic relations among the socialist states. There were however numerous changes, however, in the form and methods of CMEA.

Political-Military Integration: 
Warsaw Treaty Organisation (WTO)

The concept of 'socialist integration' included political and military integration too as reflected in the existence and development of WTO. The Soviet theoreticians maintained that socialist economic integration, defensive organisation WTO, and coordination of international activities of the socialist countries were the main manifestation of proletarian internationalism. Brezhnev, in the 25th Party Congress report, described the 'drawing together' (sblizhenie) of socialist countries as an 'objective law (akkomernost). (Sblizhenie) concept was the same as applied to the domestic process of drawing together of classes

in USSR itself). Brezhnev, in the context of relations of unity between the socialist countries, exhorted them "to safeguard unity, to combat isolation and national exclusiveness to honour the common international tasks, and to act jointly in performing them." It is in the context of 'unity' and "common international tasks" that WTO plays an important role in the 'socialist integration'.

The WTO and its organs were described by Brezhnev as "an important form of cooperation among leaders of our parties and countries". The WTO "dependably serves the interests of peace and socialism" (emphasis added). It also "co-ops in the coordination of foreign policy actions" and is entrusted with the defence of "the socialist gains of our peoples". This indicates that in the Soviet theory the WTO served a sacred goal i.e. the defence of world socialist system. Therefore, it had to be given the highest importance.

Cultural Integration

Cultural integration was yet another plank of the 'socialist integration'. There was an emphasis on "new culture" which was "socialist in content and national in form, where by..." the

42. Ibid., p.9.
43. Ibid., p.11.
cultures of the fraternal nations will lose neither their national colour nor their national tone. They will continue to draw even closer together in their aims." 

To sum-up, it can be said that during the cold war period, the Soviet relations with the East European countries were guided by the concepts of 'Socialist internationalism', 'proletarian internationalism', 'socialist integration'. The 'Brezhnev doctrine' was the off-shoot of these ideological concepts. For the USSR the diversity in the socialist countries was important but only within the limits set by the demands of the 'unity and cohesion' of the world socialism. At the practical line, these concepts were implemented through the institutions like the CMEA, the WTO and a highly complex system of contacts at various levels between the different countries. A monolithic of social, political, economic integration came into existence, but room was left for individual country manoeuvre but within limits. While Hungary (1956), Czechoslovakia (1968) crossed the limits, the situation vis-a-vis fierce Romanian independence in CMEA and WTO (again within 'limits') and Hungarian experimentation in economic reforms were tolerated. Albanian, Chinese and Yugoslavian break from the world-socialist system indicated limitations of uniformly in the Eastern bloc. Despite the efforts to bring about

the 'socialist integration', the nationalist sentiment remained alive in all the East European countries. Harmony between the 'national' and the 'international' could not be achieved in the inter socialist countries' relations.

II

New Political Thinking and Evolution of Gorbachev's East European Policy

The 'new political thinking' in the Soviet foreign policy when applied to the Soviet Union's relations with the Socialist Countries in the East Europe essentially implied: (a) encouragement to socio-economic reforms in these countries, (b) non-interference in each other's affairs leading up to the discarding of Brezhnev doctrine, (c) renewal of the basis of bilateral relations and a total transformation of the CMEA and WTO, (d) a drive towards building a 'Common European home' by abandoning the confrontationist and taking a more cooperative approach towards the Western European countries. The new thinking had within it the seeds of a total transformation of the post-war East-West relations. But what was not reckoned in the early years of 'new political thinking' was the pace of this transformation. Therefore, the 1989 revolution in East European countries where the long established communist regimes began to fall rapidly surprised every one.

The year 1989 was a watershed in the post war history of the world as the end of the cold-war began with the breaching of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 and as the process of German unification gained in momentum. The year also marked a watershed
Evolution of USSR's East Europe Policy During April 1985 - October 1989

During this period the Soviet policy towards East Europe showed both continuity as well as change. The continuity consisted in Soviet reliance on institutions like the CMEA and WTO and repeated emphasis on preserving the gains of socialism. The trends of change were manifest in the gradual dissipation of Brezhnev doctrine, imparting of defensive orientation to the WTO, promoting wide-ranging, cardinal socio-economic reforms both within the USSR as well as in the other East European countries and the emphasis on the need to reassess certain difficult periods in the history of the Soviet relations with countries and the removal of 'blank spots' like Hungary (1956) Czechoslovakia (1968) and Poland (Katyn forest massacres).

Elements of Continuity

Till about the 19th CPSU Conference (June 1988), the Soviet policy towards East Europe was that of a cautious support to reforms in the East European countries and a gradual overhaul of the Soviet-East Europe relations as well as renewal of socialism. Care was taken not to demolish the basis of these ties at one strike. The continuity with the earlier policies was reflected in the following manner:
a) Validity of Marxism-Leninism

During the period April 1985 - February 1986, a Pravda article, widely noted in the East European media, reinforced the orthodox line on USSR-East European relations calling for the East-bloc ideological solidarity, described the Socialist Commonwealth as a "very significant class-force ..." and upholding the principles of "Marxism-Leninism, Socialist-Internationalism, class solidarity, friendship and cooperation, mutual trust, comradely mutual-assistance, equality and sovereignty...".

Numerous joint statements and other documents retained the earlier ideological formulations that characterized the Soviet-East European relations. For instance, the "firm principles of Marxism-Leninism and Socialist-Internationalism, unity and cohesion" were referred to in the Joint-Soviet Bulgarian Communique (December 1985), the joint Soviet-Polish Communique (March 1986), the Soviet Polish Declaration on Cooperation in Ideology and Socialism (12 April 1987).


Communiques (April 1986; April 1987), in a statement by GDR's foreign minister during his visit to USSR (March 21, 1986), and during the Soviet-Hungarian talks (7-8 July 1985). The joint Soviet Rumanian Communiqué (2 May 1987) focussed on the "principles of Marxism-Leninism" dropping the reference to "Socialist-Internationalism". Some of these statements also referred to the need for an agreed foreign policy course of the Socialist countries (e.g. Soviet-Polish Communiqué of March 1986).

b) Extension of Warsaw Treaty Organisation (WTO)

The extension of WTO for twenty years, with a provision for further renewal for ten years, was the first act of Gorbachev on East European policy after the April 1985 plenum. Gorbachev, in his speech at the Summit meeting of the WTO countries, described the WTO as "A firm barrier ... on the path of the latter-day subverters of socialism, of the aspirants to world domination." The renewal of the WTO treaty was however not without difficulties as some member countries reportedly wanted the extension for a

lesser period. The USSR, Bulgaria and Poland were for a long-period extension of the WIO. 55

c) Stress on Socialist Unity

Gorbachev in his speeches in the early years of perestroika was careful to stress the need for strengthening socialist unity through the renewal of socialism and the socialist unity. Even while Gorbachev stressed the need for reforms in USSR and in other East European countries, his emphasis was on strengthening of socialism rather than its disintegration. Gorbachev continued to stress upon closer economic, political and military integration of the Socialist countries. This theme of 'Socialist integration' was very much visible in the numerous bilateral and multilateral meetings of the top East-European officials in 1985. (Four WIO meetings and two CMEA meetings were held in 1985 alone). At the 27th CPSU Congress, Gorbachev's referred to 'World Socialism' as a "powerful entity with a highly developed economy ..., with a reliable military and political potential..."56 Calling for a


56. M.S. Gorbachev, "Political Report of the CPSU Central Committee to the 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union", in Mikhail Gorbachev, Selected Speeches and Articles, (Moscow, 1987), p.347.
'close look' at the relations in "the socialist world as a whole", "Gorbachev stressed the need" ... to learn to prevent collisions of the interests of different socialist countries, harmonise them by mutual effort ..." and take "every step toward closer relations among all socialist states ..."\(^57\) In his famous book on Perestroika, Gorbachev wrote, "... no socialist country can successfully and in a healthy rhythm make progress without the understanding, solidarity and mutually beneficial cooperation with the other fraternal countries, and without their help."\(^58\)

The 27th CPSU Congress sent mixed signals of continuity as well as change as far as the Soviet-East Europe relations were concerned. While there was clear encouragement to reforms, a rapid change in the institutional basis of the Soviet-East Europe was not foreseen. And whatever changes were being envisaged, they were unmistakeably aimed at reforming socialism and strengthening world socialism rather than abandoning it.

d) Studied Ambivalence on Brezhnev Doctrine

At the 27th party Congress, and latter at the speech at the 70th anniversary of the October revolution as well as in his book on Perestroika, Gorbachev gave ample hints that the Soviet Union would not interfere in the affairs of socialist countries and that

\(^57\) Ibid., pp.429-39.

\(^58\) M.S. Gorbachev, Perestroika i Novoe Myshleniye Dlya Nashei Strany i Dlya Vsego Mira, (Moscow, 1987), p.166.
the ruling communist parties in these countries were truly independent unlike before. Despite this, Gorbachev did not clearly repudiate the Brezhnev doctrine. Thus, speaking in Prague in April 1987, Gorbachev stressed that each member of the socialist commonwealth, though sovereign and independent, was nevertheless required to show "obligatory consideration not only for its own interests but also for common interests". Similarly, defending the 1968 events in Czechoslovakia, Gorbachev said, "We (in Moscow & Prague) have bravely thought about what happened ... we came to the right conclusions. Look how far Czechoslovakia has advanced since 1968". At the 70th anniversary celebrations of October revolution, Gorbachev referred to "socialist internationalism" and a "concern for the general cause of socialism". He said: "We know what damage can be caused by weakening the international principle in the mutual relations of socialist states, by deviating from the principles of mutual benefit and mutual assistance, and by failing to heed the common interests of socialism in action on the world scene". Similarly, Gorbachev in his book on perestroika also spoke of the relationship between

2. Ibid., 12 April 1987.
domestic issues and the interests of world socialism. Gorbachev's assertions on East-Europe in his 1987 book were essentially aimed at revitalising socialism in the socialist countries. The Brezhnev doctrine was not abandoned explicitly and unequivocally.  

e) Emphasis on 'Socialist Integration'

Gorbachev's main prescription for revitalising the relations between the socialist countries was "to accelerate the course of integrational processes" in the socialist world. Apart from political and military cooperation, Gorbachev, like his predecessors laid great stress on the economic integration of the socialist countries through reforming the Council For Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA). However within this process of integration, Gorbachev advocated wide-ranging perestroika in the socialist countries but without in any way damaging the 'unity and cohesion' of the socialist world. Gorbachev was also alive to the negative impact on the Soviet-East European relations of the burden of past in the Soviet-East European relations. Thus, he showed willingness to sanction investigations into the Soviet-Polish

62. A Polish Central Committee member remarked to Mark Krammer (March 1988) that Gorbachev's perestroika sounded like 'new thinking' with a lot of 'old thinking thrown in'. See Mark Krammer, "Beyond the Brezhnev Doctrine", n.55, p.35.

63. M.S. Gorbachev, Perestroika ..., 1987, n.58, p.173.
history to remove "blank spots" so that the Soviet-Polish relations could be freed from negative influence of emotions in Poland. While promoting integration - even if on new basis which allowed greater independence and sovereignty to the individual social country - Gorbachev continued to adhere to the concept of 'world socialism' on the basis of Marxist-Leninist principle.

Trends of Change

It is within the above framework of continuity with the past policies that Gorbachev initiated several important changes in the Soviet-East European relations which grew in strength and unleashed uncontrollable forces which brought about the East-European revolution in 1989, an event which was totally unforeseen and not explicitly programmed into the 'new political thinking' and perestroika as conceived in the initial years.

a) Dilution of Ideological Formulations

During 1988, the Soviet-Polish and the Soviet Czechoslovak communiques used new formulations on the ideological issues. Thus the Czechoslovak - USSR, joint communique (April 1988) issued after Husak's visit to USSR dropped the reference to 'socialist-internationalism'. Also, there was no mention to 'world socialism' as a distinct entity in international relations.54

Similarly, the Soviet-Polish joint statement dropped the reference not to 'Socialist-Internationalism', but, the one to the 'unity and cohesion of the Warsaw Treaty Members' (emphasis added). It also regarded "exchange of experience of socialist construction and its joint summation as being central to all ideological cooperation". It also upheld the "unconditional acceptance of the objective nature of national specificities and the concrete historical conditions of socialist construction existing in each country" as a characteristic of the Soviet-Polish relations. As regards socialism and its meaning, the statement spoke of "implementing socialism in the Leninist understanding of its humanistic nature". Thus, certain new formulation on socialism began to appear in the official documents. The Soviet-Polish statement was very similar to the Soviet-Yugoslav Declaration of March 1988 issued during Gorbachev's visit to Belgrade which upheld the Belgrade (1955) and Moscow (1956) declarations embodying independence, respect for sovereignty, equality, non-interference and territorial integrity as the "universal principles" governing the bilateral relations between any two countries.

Alongside these new formulations on ideological issues, there continued to appear old style formulation in some cases. For instance, the Soviet-Romanian communique of October 1988 after Ceausescu's visit to Moscow mentioned as "firm basis" the "principles of


Marxism-Leninism, Scientific Socialism ..., common cause of socialism and peace" and spoke of "Romania's transition to the next stage - a medium developed socialist stage". Similarly, at the 71st anniversary of the October Revolution, alternate member of the CPSU, CC politbureau Slyunkov referred to the "growing might and influence of world socialism", praised indirectly the achievements of world socialism during the Brezhnev years and adding thereafter that "new elements are being introduced into cooperation with socialist countries".

b) Changes in the Council For Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA)

A great deal of attention was paid in these years towards overhauling the CMEA as it was in the economic integration of the socialist countries that Gorbachev saw the chance for socialist renewal. The bureaucracy and centralism of the CMEA structures was condemned and the main imperatives before the CMEA were identified as: the shift from inter-state barter to direct commercial links between enterprises, introduction of markets, price reforms, links with Western countries, identification of high technology areas as the areas of cooperation, overhaul of economic cooperation


68. For Slyunkov's speech at the 71st anniversary of the October Revolution, see, Moscow News Supplement, no.47, 1988.
mechanisms and restructuring of the trade and economic laws and regulations of the individual countries. Thus, the 1985 special session of the CMEA countries adopted a comprehensive programme: of Scientific Technical Progress of the CMEA Member Countries up to the year 2000 A.D. (The decision to adopt this programme was taken under Chernenko in January 1984). The 'programme' identified computerisation, automation, nuclear power, production of new materials and biotechnology as the new areas of cooperation. 69 At the 42nd Session of CMEA (Bucharest, November 1986), the Soviet Prime Minister Ryzhkov stressed on the need to solve the "organisational questions" of the CMEA. 70 The 43rd session (Moscow, October 1987) spoke of (a) a collective concept of the international socialist division of labour for 1991-2005, and (b) introduction of contract system between enterprises, (c) better inter-governmental and sectoral level cooperation, and (d) reform of the CMEA's work. 71 The 44th Session of the CMEA was devoted to the economic reforms—commodity-money relations, price-reforms etc. This session was held in the wake of the announcement that EEC had formally recognised the CMEA. 72


72. For a report on the 44th session of the CMEA, see Kessing's Record of World Events, vol.XXXIV, September 1988, p.36183.
c) Changes in the Warsaw Treaty Organisation:

Defensive Doctrine

Keeping the basic premise of the WTO intact - i.e. WTO was necessary as long as NATO remained important changes were introduced in the WTO too. In 1987, the WTO adopted a defensive military doctrine and the principle of reasonable sufficiency.

Analysis of the WTO Communiques during 1985-1989 period (Sofia, October 1985; Budapest, June 1980; Berlin, May 1987, Warsaw, July 1988; Bucharest, July 1989) shows that the WTO increasingly adopted the principles of the 'new political thinking'. In 1987, the WTO Communique spoke of "a new way of thinking, a new approach to the questions of war and peace ...". The main ideas of the new WTO thinking on security matters were that (a) it sought 'parity' with NATO at low levels, (b) it favoured strengthening the "all-European processes"; (c) it advocated "reasonable sufficiency" principle on a reciprocal basis, (d) it invited NATO to a dialogue on military doctrines. Significantly, the WTO document also omitted to mention 'Socialist integration', and 'unity and cohesion' or the 'world socialist system' which were routinely mentioned earlier.


1) **Reassessment of the Past**

In 1988 and 1989, slow but sure initiation of the re-examination of the past in the Soviet Union indicated a yet another sign of change in the Soviet-East European relations. The 1987 "Soviet Polish Declaration on Cooperation in the fields of Ideology, Science and Culture" was an official beginning this direction. 75 In July 1988, Oleg Bogomolov, the Director of the USSR's Academy of Science Institute on World Socialism (IEASS) wrote, "the Brezhnev Doctrine is completely unacceptable ..." Media also began to criticise the Soviet military intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968. 76 A.N. Yakovlev, the CC, CPSU Politbureau member in an interview to Pravda officially acknowledged for the first time the existence of secret protocols to the Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939. 77 The Soviet Union also underplayed the intense emotions generated in Hungary over the rehabilitation of Imre Nagy in June 1989 which put the Soviet Union in the negative light and legitimised the 1956 Hungarian uprising.

e) **Encouragement to Reforms in the Other East European Countries**

Gorbachev time and again implored the other East European


77. A.N. Yakovlev's interview to Pravda, 18 August 1989.
countries to undertake perestroika style of reforms. Thus, he positively assessed developments in Poland and Hungary which went the fastest along the reformist road. However, his strongest advocacy for reforms came in October 1989 when he went to GDR to attend the 40th anniversary of GDR. GDR and Romania had been the slowest to change and Honecker was critical of Gorbachev's perestroika. Gorbachev had refused to intervene when the first ever non-communist prime minister was installed in Poland or when an exodus of East Germans to FRG through Hungary began in mid-1989. This was the clearest indication to date that the USSR had abandoned the Brezhnev doctrine and was interested in socialist renewal in the socialist countries. Speaking at the 40th anniversary celebrations of GDR in October 1989, Gorbachev, referring to the problems of the GDR society and rejected the "attempts to unity and standardise social development, to copy or impose some 'mandatory' model ..." Gorbachev addressing the European Parliament in Strasbourg in July 1989, declared: "... The Social and Political orders of certain countries changed in the past, and may change again in the future." (emphasis added). Clearly, Gorbachev did not rule out the possibility of cardinal changes in the socio-political structures. Alongside this very perceptive statement, Gorbachev added: "... conviction that overcoming the division of Europe would mean overcoming socialism" could lead to "... Confrontation ...".

78. Address by Mikhail Gorbachev at the Meeting to Mark the 40th Anniversary of the German Democratic Republic, Berlin, October 6, 1989, (Moscow, 1989), p.7.

To sum up, an analysis of Gorbachev's East-European policy between 1985 - mid 1989 indicates that Gorbachev's entire effort was directed towards overhauling the system of socialist relations but he was still not prepared to see the end of world socialism as a separate entity. The reforms were aimed at making the socialist countries even stronger. There might have been an inkling that social, political order in the Socialist Countries might change. But, there was no recognition that the East-European revolution was so near and would be so thorough going. Evidence is not sufficient to show that the Soviet Union was working towards a deliberate collapse of 'world socialism'. The leading party journals, while taking note of changes in East Europe continued to stress the need to deepen 'Socialist integration' and to regard it as the material basis of the unity of the Socialist countries. 80

Change of Paradigm: November 1989 - July 1990

By the second half of 1989, it was becoming clear that the mounting problems in the East European countries could not be handled in traditional ways. There were riots in Romania (Brasov, November 1987); socio-economic and political unrest in Poland (1988), political turbulence in Hungary (replacement of Kadar in May 1988) and acute ethnic unrest in the USSR (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Uzbekistan). Further, Gorbachev, having consolidated his position at the 19th CPSU Conference (May-June, 1988), moved on rapidly to

separate the party from the state and institute a directly elected parliament (May 1989) in the USSR. This lessened his reliance on the party and led him to push for more radical reforms. This acceleration of reforms within the USSR coupled with Gorbachev's firm resolve about not interfering in the East Europe paved the way for the breaching of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 and subsequent developments, the most outstanding of which are the rapid process of German unification, the transformation of the NATO and WTO, strengthening of the pan-European processes and ending of the cold war in Europe with consequent warming up of East-West relations.

The Soviet concerns on East Europe in the 1990s are entirely different from those in the 1989 or before. No longer is the Soviet Union any more concerned about the defence of 'world socialism' or the 'socialist integration'. The Soviet Union does not see in excessive militarisation the guarantee of its own security. Instead, it is in the security of the whole of Europe that USSR sees the guarantee of its own security.

The entire paradigm of the East-West relations in the post-war years is beginning to change. The earlier Soviet doctrines about East-Europe are becoming irrelevant.

**New Trends in the Soviet Policy on East-Europe**

The trends in the Soviet-East European relations in 1990 can be summarised as follows:

(a) **German Unification**

The most visible and highly important development has been
the rapid pace of the German unification. The economic and monetary unity of the two Germanys has already taken place while the political unity is in the offing. The Soviet position on German unification has changed from negativism (November 1989) to agreement in principle (February 1990) and complete support (July 1990). The Soviet Union, amending its own security concerns has now accepted the Western idea of United Germany as part of NATO. The West, to assuage the Soviet concerns has decided to transform NATO, to downplay its military character and even to hold inducement of economic assistance to shore up the sinking Soviet economy. 81 The key issues of the German

81. The evolution of the Soviet attitude towards the German unification has been rapid. Talking to the visiting Canadian Prime Minister in November 1989, Gorbachev ruled out German Unification, Tass (Moscow), 21 November 1989. Talking to the GDR Prime Minister Hans Modrow in January 1990 Gorbachev expressed "understanding of the legitimate interests of the Germans in GDR and FRG "to deepen" personal contacts, cooperation and interaction", Pravda, 31 January 1990. On February 2, Gorbachev and Gysi expressed confidence that "within the framework of the European process, the construction of a common European home, the issue of the German national unity may find its resolution too", Tass, 2 February 1990. In March, the WTO foreign ministers discussed the German question. The Soviet Union plugged for the idea of German neutrality. This idea was rejected by the other WTO members (Shevardnadze's interview to APN, (Moscow) 20 March 1990. In April, talking to the new GDR president Lothar de Maizere, Gorbachev described the German unification as "... natural, although far from simple"process. He opposed the "annexation" of GDR by FRG, Tass, 29 April 1990. B. Shevardnadze, in his interview to Irish Times, 28 April 1990 opposed the idea of United Germany in NATO on the grounds that it would upset the European balance of forces. Instead, he proposed United Germany's double membership of NATO & WTO. On May 5, at the Bonn meeting of "2+4", Shevardnadze agreed to the delinking of the internal and external aspects of the German unification and highlighted the Soviet concerns, See Arvind Gupta, "German Unification Soviet Concerns", Times of India, 28 May 1990. At the May Summit, Bush and Gorbachev strongly differed on the question of United Germany in NATO. Bush proposed a number of concessions to sell the idea of Germany in NATO to Gorbachev (Bush-Gorbachev news conference), Wireless File(Washington), 4 June 1990. On 7 June, Gorbachev told that

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unification, as identified by the West German foreign minister
Genêcher and E. Shevardnadze in their talks on 19 June 1990 were:
the institutionalisation of the CSCE process, accelerating the
Vienna talks on CFE, the solution of the Polish border issue, and,
the military-political status of Germany. 82

(b) Growing Irrelevance of the Warsaw
Treaty Organisation

The Warsaw Pact is becoming increasingly irrelevant with the
Soviet troops withdrawal from Hungary and Czechoslovakia to be
completed by mid 1991 and Hungary contemplating withdrawal from
the organisation by the end of 1991. The Prague meeting of the NATO
foreign ministers in March 1990 was the first one after the major
changes in East Europe. According to Shevardnadze, the participants
concluded that "Warsaw Pact lives on and functions, and we need it
but it required updating. 83 In a landmark meeting, in June 1990, the

81 (contd.)

USSR was not interested in hindering the German unification
process. Pravda, 8 June 1990. On 6 July, NATO pledged not
to be "the first to use force" in Europe "in any circumstances"
and agreed to NATO strategy of making the nuclear weapons as
"weapons of last resort". The strategy of 'flexible
response' was not discarded. (Text of NATO's "London
Declaration" in USSR Official Text (New Delhi), 7 July 1990).

82. Tass, Münster, 19 June 1990. During FRG Chancellor Kohl's
Moscow visit, USSR agreed to FRG's membership of NATO.
Pravda, 16-19 July 1990.

83. E. Shevardnadze's interview to APN (Moscow), 20 March 1990.
NATO Political Consultative Committee (PCC) adopted a declaration seeking to revise by the year end the character and functions of the Treaty. It has also invited NATO to bring about changes in its own doctrines and character. NATO leadership hopes that a United Europe will be built without military blocs and on the basis of the institutionalisation of the CSCE structures.

(c) **Restructuring of the CMEA**

With all the members of the CMEA undergoing serious economic crisis, the CMEA has also lost its significance as an instrument of economic integration. The various plans and projects undertaken in the last few years have not taken off. The 45th CMEA Session (January 1990) was held amidst misgivings that CMEA had outlived its utility and ought to be dismantled. However, the dependence of East European countries on the USSR for fuel and other raw materials rules out any sudden collapse of the CMEA. It was decided in January 1990 to completely revamp the CMEA and adopt alternative draft documents to replace CMEA's existing statute and other fundamental documents. The new principles of CMEA will take into account the general process of European integration and the possibilities of bilateral and multilateral cooperation between individual countries. Gradually, the CMEA accounting will be in hard currency. Market will be introduced and pricing will reflect international levels.

(d) **Trends in Bilateral Relations**

The main plank of the USSR foreign policy in Europe is the 'Common European Home' to be built through the strengthening of the CSCE process. In this paradigm, the relations with the individual countries are now to be conducted in non-bloc scenario. The new premise of the Soviet relations with East European countries, as outlines by Shevardnadze, is not ideology but "mutual interests, mutual benefit and the principle of freedom of choice". What is interesting is that the new leaders of GDR, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Hungary and Bulgaria have all come out in favour of friendly, good-neighbourly relations with USSR based on mutual benefit and renewal of existing ties. Ideology is being replaced by pragmatism. These relations are also being subject to the urge to 'return to Europe'. There is also a serious concern at the possibility of resurgence of narrow nationalism and fascism in some parts of Europe. This factor alone will be of crucial importance for Europe in future. There is an universal desire to see perestroika in USSR succeed as its failure could jeopardise the positive aspects of changes in Europe.

**Conclusion**

Gorbachev's policy on East Europe constantly evolved overtime. Essentially, it has been directed at changing the

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85. Pravda, 26 June 1990.

ideological basis of the Soviet-East Europe relations as they developed during 1945-85. This has helped bring the cold war to an end. This required a new paradigm to replace the earlier one of world socialism. 'New political thinking' is trying to achieve this.

Before the 1989 East European developments, the Soviet policy evolved within the framework of the bloc paradigm but taking into account simultaneously the changes leading up to the thawing of the Cold War. In 1990, the Gorbachevian policy, distancing itself from the ideology-based political, economic and military division of Europe, has begun to vigorously pursue the aim of 'Common European home' on the basis of strengthened CSCE process.

Gorbachev's East European policy evolved cautiously and slowly during 1985-89 taking into account the perestroika related political, economic and social developments at home. The sudden loosening of East Europe right at the beginning of perestroika could have proved counter-productive for domestic reforms. Even today, Gorbachev has a hard time convincing his critics that the 'loss' of East Europe and collapse of 'socialism' - or Stalinism as he calls it - has been beneficial to the USSR in the long run. Therefore, it is no surprise that the Gorbachevian policy on East Europe has till recently been that of cautious reform. There is little evidence to show that the timing of East European events was foreseen by Gorbachev and his advisers. Therefore, when the East European changes took place, the Soviet policy was confronted with the task of adapting to the new paradigm of European relations. This process of adaptation has just begun.