CHAPTER – III
MIKHAIL GORBACHEV PERIOD

Soviet-Yugoslav relations in the late 1980s were marked by a new vigor. A radical change of ideology was no longer the core component of the relationship, as it was during the Brezhnev period. President Mikhail Gorbachev’s attempt to deideologise Soviet foreign policy worked as a catalyst in fostering friendly relation with Yugoslavia. During his tenure Soviet Union and Yugoslavia shared and agreed on a number of issues, that class struggle was not to be promoted from outside, independence, non-interference in internal affairs of a fraternal countries etc. However, due to President Mikhail Gorbachev’s preoccupation with rejuvenation of Soviet economy and society and his vision of a new world order, Soviet-Yugoslav relations were low profile. President Gorbachev visualized Europe as the major concern where Yugoslavia was seen as a part of it. Therefore, there was no special mention of Yugoslavia as a major partner or a threat to influence Soviet foreign policy.

In this chapter, Soviet-Yugoslav relation will be discussed in the regional and bilateral contexts. Unlike previous chapter, this chapter will not have a separate section on international policy implication because during President Gorbachev’s period, the role of Yugoslavia in the Soviet foreign relations particularly at the global level was insignificant. Yugoslavia was no more perceived as a threat to world communist movement.
New Political Thinking and Soviet Foreign Policy

In the realm of Soviet foreign relations, the 'new political thinking,' a direct offshoot of domestic 'Perestroika' influenced and guided the foreign policy decision making in the late 1980s. The new political thinking thoroughly evaluated the pressing needs of Soviet economy justifying prudence for structural reform. The key elements of the Soviet new thinking on foreign and security policy pronounced by the then General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev unequivocally attacked the use of nuclear weapon to settle many national and international problems. In his authoritative pronouncements and the series of explanatory articles that appeared in the leading party organs, he said "that nuclear war cannot under any circumstances be won; nuclear weapons, therefore, cannot be an instrument of policy." To put it other way, security cannot be obtained through military means alone. Security in the age of nuclear weapon as defined by the new political thinking, is taken to mean mutual in character and must rely strongly on political means.

Another key element of the 'new political thinking' was the revision of the concept of peaceful coexistence which was seen less in the form of class struggle facilitating the coexistence of states with different social and political systems. The new interpretation of class struggle diffused the element of antagonism to counter the fight against imperialism or capitalism. The new political thinking advanced the concept of democratisation of international relation which involved "renunciation of the principle of looking at it from the standpoint of class struggle, renunciation
of the confrontational ideology of attempts to impose anyone's values or way of thinking and life on the world."¹ It envisaged the settlement of existing conflicts through negotiations with strict respect for the rights, interests and sovereignty of all countries and for the right of every people to decide its future independently. This element of the 'new political thinking' demanded increasing recognition of the multipolar, and interdependent character of Soviet foreign relations during late eighties.

And lastly, perhaps the most important aspects of the 'new political thinking' was the deidologisation of the guiding principles governing Soviet security, political, economic, military and foreign relations. It objectively opposed the system of ideological dominance, and emphasised on respect for the right of every nation to make a sovereign choice of the ways and forms of its development.² During his address at the United Nations on 7 December 1988, Gorbachev recognised the principles of striving for independence and democracy among the nations. He admitted the fact that "the idea of democratising the entire world order has grown into a powerful social and political force."³ The then Soviet foreign Minister Eduard Sheverdnadze observed, "Truly historic, qualitative changes have taken place in these relations. We are basing them on sovereign equality, the inadmissibility of any interference and recognition of every country's right to absolute freedom of choice."⁴ Therefore, the only way to ensure national

² Elgiz Pozdnyakov, "National and International in the Foreign Policy" International Affairs, (Moscow), vol. 6 (June 1989), p. 13
³ Mikhail Gorbachev, Perestroika and the New World Order, (Moscow, 1991), p.32
⁴ Eduard Shevardenadze, Foreign Policy and Perestroika, (Moscow, 1989), P. 47
sovereignty was to recognise that all peoples and states have equal rights to pursue their legitimate interests in international affairs.

Therefore, the ‘new political thinking’ in the Soviet foreign policy when applied to the Soviet Union’s relations with the socialist countries of Eastern Europe, essentially implied: (a) encouragement to socio-economic reforms in these countries, (b) non-interference in each others affairs leading up to the discarding of Brezhnev Doctrine, (c) renewal of the basis of bilateral relations and a total transformation of World Treaty Organisation, (d) a drive towards building a 'Common European Home' by abandoning the confrontationist policy but taking a more cooperative approach towards the Western European country.

However, the emergence of such “new” ideas, as the rejection of nuclear war as a conceivable act of policy, the heightened significance attached to political factors in security policy, and increasing recognition of multipolar and interdependent character of international relations dates back to pre-Gorbachev era.

First, the invasion and then the stalemate in Afghanistan served to accelerate a re-evaluation by the top leadership of the role of ideological considerations and of military-technical criteria in the definition of security interests and the formulation of security policy and foreign policy more generally.
Second, the advent of Ronald Regan administration in America in 1980 surprised both leadership and specialist in their assumptions about the limits of hostility in US-Soviet relations. The major problem as the Soviet specialists mentioned was the strong hold of NATO while Warsaw Treaty Organisation was loosing its holds.

Third, the promulgation of the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) in March 1983 appeared to have encouraged a re-evaluation of the concept of military-nuclear parity (and by extension of defense sufficiency) by plausibly (to Soviet observers at that time) threatening the political significance of the Soviet Union accumulated investment in nuclear-charged ballistic missiles.

Fourth, and not to be underestimated, the Soviet leadership took full measure of the economic crisis facing the Soviet system. That is, for nearly a quarter century, the Soviet economy suffered from progressively decreasing growth rates and then, in the early eighties, plunged into a de facto depression.

This accumulation of trends and events, both internal and external, led to a serious discrediting of the traditional ideological school of "scientific communism" within the Soviet Union, of its ability and reputation to provide an adequate conceptual framework for understanding and anticipating developments. The immediate result was the launching of a fundamental revision in the way that the Soviet leadership claimed to see the basic
trends in world politics and their implications for the Soviet Union that is the "new political thinking."

During the period of President Gorbachev, Soviet foreign policy was no longer ideologised. The stress in Soviet policy was on realism and peaceful co-existence of states with different social system. As mentioned, class struggle lost all significance in Soviet goals. At the time of assumption of power by Gorbachev in March 1985 Soviet perception of security was marked by the fear of a 'new encirclement' by the USA, China, Japan and Western Europe. Therefore, security (not in terms of military intervention) in the region and the establishment of world peace was the major concern of Soviet foreign policy.

The New Cold War that had arisen in the wake of Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in December 1979 was a frightening prospect for the Soviet Union. A new and costly arms race was being initiated. Hence, It was "oriented towards a search for mutual understanding, towards dialogue and the establishment of peaceful co-existence as the universal norm in relations among states." Therefore, war was no longer a solution to many of the problems faced by the world community. President Gorbachev believed that finding political solution to every problem at the national and international levels would help in establishing world peace.

President Gorbachev in his 'Report to the Twenty Seventh Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) said that, the tasks underlying the country's economic and social development also determine the CPSU's strategy in the world arena. "Its main aim is crystal clear-to provide the Soviet people with the possibility of working under conditions of lasting peace and freedom. Such, in essence, is the party's primary programme requirement of our foreign policy."\(^6\) That is why for the future as well the "struggle against the nuclear threat, against the arm race, for preservation and strengthening of universal peace would remain the fundamental direction of the party's activities in the international arena".\(^7\)

In the mid eighties, soviet economy had reached a near crisis situation. In the society there was alienation of the people. It was necessary to rejuvenate the economy which required a peaceful external environment. This led President Gorbachev to initiate his Perestroika or reconstruction in his task of putting the economy on the rails again. In the process many of the earlier postulates had to be revised. One such question was war. Earlier, it was thought that some of the problems of the world could be resolved by means of war. Perestroika rejected war as a means of settling political and economic contradictions and ideological disputes among states. On the other hand, the CPSU Congress put emphasis on a world without weapons and violence, a world in which each people freely chooses its path of development, its way of life. This was an expression of what Gorbachev put it "the humanism of the communist ideology, of its

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\(^6\) Ibid, p. 70
\(^7\) Ibid, p. 70
moral values. This expression further promoted the cause of socialist internationalism. In this context, he introduced the concept of comprehensive security. In other words, one nation cannot be secure at the cost of other. There can be no peace unless all are secure. Correspondingly, the military doctrine was on “reasonable sufficiency”.

Against this backdrop, the task of ensuring security was increasingly seen as a political problem that could only be resolved by political means. Gorbachev held the view that in order to progress along the road of disarmament what was needed was, above all, the will. And hence, security cannot be built endlessly on fear of retaliation, in other words, on the doctrines of "containment" or 'deterrence". It is in our vital, 'national interest' that the USSR should always have good and peaceful relations with its neighbours. This is a vitally important objective of our foreign policy. In this regard the CPSU's solidarity with the forces of national liberation and social emancipation, the course towards close interaction with socialist-oriented countries, with revolutionary democratic parties, and with the Non-Aligned Movement was considered as one of the immutable factor.

As a master of radical transformation President Gorbachev saw the vision of an integrated and integral world. Another most important component of Soviet foreign policy was President Gorbachev's pronounced idea of

8 Ibid, p. 70
9 Ibid, p. 71
10 Ibid, p. 77
11 Ibid, p. 82
democratization and ‘socialism with human face.’ He repudiated the Brezhnev doctrine of ‘limited sovereignty’ and upheld the independence of each and every country as their sovereign right. He reduced over commitment to the outside world and withdrew forces from Mozambique, Angola and Afghanistan. Attempt was made to improve relation with China. These positive changes in Soviet foreign policy encouraged Yugoslavia to maintain friendly relation with the Soviet Union. From the perspective of Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union was no longer a source of tension as it had been in the past.

While ‘new political thinking’ championed the cause of international peace and coexistence, the domestic *Perestroika* set for a period of new realism in Soviet economic system. Gorbachev intended to carry out a thorough ‘restructuring’ of the Soviet system in an effort to make the Soviet economy capable of effectively assimilating the opportunities offered by contemporary science, technology, and management techniques. He repeatedly underscored the need of structural economic reform as well as called for sweeping social and even political reforms in order to sustain the economy over the long run. Social and political reforms were necessary to energize the people so as to make the task of rejuvenating the economy an easier one. The economic aspect enshrined in ‘Perestroika’ was defined by Gorbachev during his speech at the Nineteenth All Union Conference of the CPSU on 1 July, 1988 "he said .....through revolutionary Perestroika, our society will reach a qualitatively new state, and socialism will be given a
new humane and democratic image." This in essence is 'developed socialism' that General Secretary Brezhnev meant.

The economic reform process suggested in Perestroika emphasized the need for economic modernization to improve the living standard of Soviet people. To achieve such economic growth Gorbachev spoke about the gradual integration of the USSR into the world economy. To do so General Secretary poured heavily on the development of science and technology. What he intended by then was to reduce the economic and technological gap between the USSR and other developed countries. As a result, further reduction of the threat of the nuclear or conventional war and substantial reduction in the military budget was achieved by reducing military forces in the fraternal countries to the level of reasonable defense sufficiency. This was done through reconstruction of relationship with the Eastern European countries and the creation of normal and mutually beneficial relations with all neighboring States. Over the years, however, the concept of security had also undergone a change. Military as well as political means were necessary to ensure security.

A final aspect of Gorbachev's foreign policy, as it relates to Eastern Europe concerns, Yugoslavia and Albania. The Soviet leadership had never reconciled itself to the loss of these three countries and as such,

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Gorbachev was no exception to this pattern. However, unlike his predecessor, Gorbachev's attempt was not antagonistic by nature. He emphasized on forging qualitatively a new relationship with the socialist countries, the relationship based on mutual respect, cooperation, non-interference and interdependence. During his speech in Belgrade on 16 March 1988, he said; "world socialism is living through a period of reconstruction and reform. All of us also feel the need for updating the mechanism of interaction between socialist nations." The mechanism that he talked about is structural reform and adjustment within and outside the communist system. This also meant the acceptance of 'different road to socialism' that Yugoslavia had claimed to establish in the early fifties.

Policy Implication of Perestroika

Perestroika was primarily a "pragmatic domestic response to the crisis of the Soviet system. It established "a very high correlation between radical change in the Soviet Union and radical change in the international system....." However, the changes that followed by pursuance of the Perestroika policies proved this beyond any doubt.

Under the policy of Perestroika, Gorbachev committed himself to restructuring the Soviet Union and the international system. He aimed to integrate the Soviet Union into the global political system. On 12 June,

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15. Mikhail Gorbachev, n.1 p. 5
1990 during his speech at the third session of the USSR Supreme Soviet, Gorbachev highlighted the importance of Perestroika. ".... Perestroika in the Soviet Union is a central point of world politics today ..... is the culmination of the radical changes in Europe." On 19 November, 1990, in Paris, Gorbachev himself affirmed the revolutionary changes in the Soviet political system "....the historic turn around in the Soviet Union, from totalitarianism to freedom and democracy, from the command and bureaucratic system to a law governed state and political pluralism, from state monopoly in the economy to equality and diversity of ownership forms and market relations, and from unitarianism to a union of sovereign states." It may be added that when Gorbachev talked about democracy, it did not imply Western model of liberal multi-party system. Democracy must be understood in the domestic context.

Perestroika, later on, successfully manifested into the "principles of new thinking - freedom of choice, deideologisation of inter state relations, the equality of all countries without exception and non-interference in internal affairs. Gorbachev wrote: "I want to note here that it was not socialism that was to blame for the difficulties and complexities of the socialist country's development, but, chiefly, miscalculations by the ruling party. It was the Soviet system that had developed over the years that needed change. And, of course, the West can also be "credited" with helping, through its constant

17 Mikhail Gorbachev, n. 3 p. 85
18 Mikhail Gorbachev, Address at the Meeting of the Leaders of the States Participating in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, (Moscow, 1990), p. 3
and stubborn attempts to undermine the development of the socialist states, to trip them up".\textsuperscript{19}

Similarly, speaking in Prague in April 1987, the Soviet leader argued that there was nothing wrong with the socialist system as such: "Of course it is not the socialist system that is to blame, as our ideological opponents claim, but miscalculations among the leadership in the running of the country about which we have openly told the party and the people."\textsuperscript{20} In fact the system that had emerged was based on the use of force. Gorbachev wanted that the system should stand on a democratic base, albeit a base of soviets.

While emphasising on the importance of the international socialist system within the domestic situation to bring about change in the Soviet Union, Gorbachev was very much particular about the course of change in the East European Countries. In his view East European countries belonging to the socialist Bloc, should be truly independent. They should not look to the Soviet Union for guidance and help. The domestic changes within the Soviet Union required that soviet resources remained within the country. Consequently, it emphasised on the development of new forms of political and economic cooperation with the East European countries. In brief, the relationship with East European countries should be based on a democratic base, instead of coercion and force.

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid, p. 55
Though there was no particular mention of the relationship with the defected East European countries like Romania, Yugoslavia and Albania, the apparent change of the ideological paradigm pertaining to the strategy of reform with regard to the governance of the socialist relationship determined the Soviet behaviour towards the independent development of Yugoslavs. The underlying concepts of Perestroika allowed the existence of an independent Yugoslavia. In this way, Gorbachev represented a break with the past. He emphasized on the broad spectrum of international relations which by that time included the governance of the socialist relationship. He was very much skeptical of the uniformity of socialist development and the international socialist system. Therefore, he professed the idea of many roads to socialism which the Yugoslav had long been championing. The ‘new political thinking’ and domestic Perestroika taken together reduced the ideological gap between the two communist countries i.e. the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. The threat of military intervention in Yugoslavia by the Warsaw Pact countries was now non-existant. It was rather accepted the co-existence of different social system while pursuing the goal of socialism.

As a corollary of Perestroika, Glasnost facilitated the process of radical change in the Soviet system. Glasnost or openness was to make the people feel a part of the huge endeavour of reconstructing the economy and society. People were free to air their views freely and can thought in a constructive manner. Glasnost thoroughly "demilitarised the party and
exposed the Soviet Union as an empire." It allowed open enquiry into all kinds of repression and became a major "factor undermining communist legitimacy in the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe.\textsuperscript{21} Glasnost factor led to the resurfacing of old rivalries and problems. Ethnic issues came up in a very big way. In a way which perhaps even Gorbachev could not handle.

**Soviet-Yugoslav Relation in the Regional Context**

**Deideologisation of international relation**

The communist ideology was aimed at social reconstruction through class struggle. Projection of this ideological relationship among socialist nations justified interference in the internal affairs of the fraternal socialist countries and common responsibility was fixed on all the nations to defend 'socialist gains'. "The rightness of all policies, laws, tactics and so on was measured against the pervasive and unchallengeable official ideology...."\textsuperscript{22} This was the basis on which the Soviet Union governed its foreign national relations with both the bloc countries and countries outside the bloc. Right from Stalin to Brezhnev 'ideology' formed the core of socialist development. Though, there is no denying the fact that Khrushchev had made an attempt to break with the past, when he professed the act of desalinization. But his successor General Secretary Brezhnev, once again resorted to enforce ideology to the extent of military intervention and limited sovereignty.

In the overall changed milieu initiated by President Gorbachev, it was natural that relations with Yugoslavia would improve. Although in his 'peace offensive', Yugoslavia was not the objective, nevertheless, Soviet-Yugoslav relations got a push towards greater friendship. However, during the Brezhnev period, the relationship had normalized, now it was being taken forward. This was evident in the regional context. Gorbachev's 'peace offensive' on attaining office involved many concessions to the West while at the same time embraced a series of diplomatic summit conferences leading to arms reduction treaties, the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan and the withdrawal of some soviet troops and equipment from East European countries. His new political thinking acknowledged, that "when a civil society is forcefully deformed by a monopoly ideology, politics loses its inner substance." Dominance of ideology as Gorbachev rightly put, 'alienated sovereign power of the state away from the people.' It undermined the independence of the state itself, which was compelled to submit to ideology even in its own legal sphere. Therefore, new political thinking enabled "regulation of inter-governmental relations so as to avoid conflicts at the class or ideological level...." The new atmosphere, gave full leverage for the free exercise of national sovereignty and to express disagreements in inter-socialist relations. Concepts of national interests and independence gained prominence in the new political thinking. The terms "fundamental interest of the working class and peasantry" linking with

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a word 'socialist revolution' were replaced by 'national interests' in socialist diplomacy.  

In addition to this, the policy of Perestroika "affirmed the recognition of national peoples sovereignty, the right of each nation to independence of its socio-political choice. During his visit to Warsaw in July 1988, Gorbachev stressed the need to change Soviet East European relations and rightly said that "the traditional structure of our relations, which has served us fairly well in the past, needs to be changed and adapted to the requirements of our times."  

Mikhail Gorbachev therefore, clearly identified "two criteria for realistic foreign policy: consideration of one's own national interests and respect for other countries interests." As a result, bilateralism emerged as the main pattern of international relations among the communist nations overthrowing the erstwhile Soviet dominance in Eastern Europe.

The policy of deideologisation in essence, succeeded in overcoming the antagonism and mistrust among nations. In his Nobel Lecture on 5 June, 1991, Gorbachev acknowledged the success of his new thinking in international politics, and remarked that "de-ideologising relations among states, which we proclaimed as one of the principles of the new thinking,

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25 Ibid, p. 42  
26 Mikhail Gorbachev, Bringing out the Potential of Socialism More Fully, (Moscow, 1988), p. 8  
27 Mikhail Gorbachev, n.12, p. 221
has removed many prejudices, biased attitudes and suspicions and has cleared and improved the international atmosphere ..."\textsuperscript{28}

Gorbachev affirmed Soviet adherence to a policy of non-interference. During his speech to the European Parliament in June 1989, he emphasised that the politico-economic change "is the exclusive affair of the people of that country and is their choice. Any interference in domestic affairs and any attempt to restrict the sovereignty of the states inadmissible."\textsuperscript{29} It showed that the acknowledgement of the value of a competition in ideas was implicit in Gorbachev's phrase. Therefore, 'socialist pluralism' and the abandonment of Marxist-Leninist as the 'official' ideology became an almost universal feature of the East European revolution. The manifestation of such deidologisation was reflected in the reconceptualisation of the bloc politics, many roads to socialism and repudiation of Brezhnev doctrine.

**Reconceptualisation of Bloc politics and democratisation of Socialist Relation**

In his attempt to restructure Soviet foreign policy, relations with the Bloc occupied a prominent place. Gorbachev wanted that the relationship with the Bloc countries should be on a democratic basis and economic considerations playing a substantial role.

After coming to power in March 1985, Gorbachev, however, called several times for building intra-Bloc relations on a new basis. On the whole, he

\textsuperscript{28} Mikhail Gorbachev, n.3, p. 110
\textsuperscript{29} Bhagirath Prasad, n.24 p. 63
shied away from using the term "socialist internationalism" in his speeches and writings.³⁰ After acknowledging that "unity does not mean being identical or uniform," Gorbachev went on to say that

"we are also firmly convinced that the socialist community will be successful only if every party and states cares for both its own and common interests; if it respects its friends and allies; heeds their interests and pays attention to the experience of others. Awareness of this relationship between domestic issues and the interests of world socialism is typical of the countries of the socialist community. We are united; in unity resides our strength, and from unity we draw our confidence that we will cope with the issues set forth by our time."³¹

The above statement while discouraging uniformity, does recognize the need of unity on a certain agreed principles of socialist internationalism. These agreed principles, as the statement shows, is in the interest of mutual benefit and mutual aid.

On the other hand, Gorbachev used other important occasions to emphasise principles which were at odds with socialist internationalism, principles like the independence and sovereignty of every state, the "inalienable right" of all parties "to make decisions on the choice of paths of social development," and the "impermissibility of interference in internal affairs under any pretext whatsoever," all of these principles being affirmed in an important mutual declaration with the Yugoslavs in March 1988.³² Similar messages were contained in the Joint Soviet-Finish declaration in October 1989. The declaration stated that "there can be no justification for any use of force: whether by one military-political alliance against another,

³¹ Ibid, pp. 219-20
³² Ibid, p. 220
or within such alliances," and that "freedom of socio-political choice" should become a universal norm in inter-state relations. As such, it set the backdrop for the Soviet decision not to interfere to prevent the virtual collapse of communist party rule in Eastern Europe in the months that followed.

Gorbachev also emphasised discipline and better performance, but he appeared to be increasingly attracted to Eastern European reform experiments and sympathetic toward greater intra-Bloc autonomy. But as he declared in Perestroika, "it goes without saying that no socialist country can successfully move forward in a healthy rhythm without understanding, solidarity and mutually beneficial cooperation with other fraternal nations, or at times even without their help." This particular remark was aimed at experimenting the Soviet design of reforms in the bloc countries. So that the failure and success of such experiment would have minimal impact on Soviet policy. Moreover, the practice of socialist internationalism rested upon the conditions of unconditional and total equality.

While speaking before the Nineteenth Conference of the Party in June 1988, Gorbachev, admitted that "world socialism is living through a difficult and crucial period". In response to this, "not only were major political and economic reforms being announced and implemented inside the Soviet

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33 Ibid, p. 220
34 Mikhail Gorbachev, n.3, p. 161
Union, but fundamental changes were also being sought, both within other East European states and in the mechanisms binding Moscow to its Bloc allies. At the core of this effort was the realisation on the part of most within the Soviet leadership that the ability to reform socialism - rather than to set into motion changes which might produce its collapse - depended on establishing its prestige and legitimacy amongst populations in those countries ruled by communist parties".36

In order to succeed, Gorbachev and his supporters clearly felt it necessary to remove those "accretion of the past" which had slowed economic and social development, violated universal humanitarian principles and consequently blackened the reputation of socialism as a system capable of harnessing human intellectual and spiritual potential to the full. For this reason Gorbachev appeared to have decided that he needed change in Eastern Europe just as surely as he needed it in the Soviet Union. He needed it because within the Soviet bloc each country was uniquely tied to the other. There was the universal perception that Moscow had a leverage in Eastern Europe and could set in motion changes if it so chose; failure to reform therefore would have been interpreted either as a sign of lack of will by Soviet Union or as proof that some East European leaders did not believe that Gorbachev had the political clout to enact the necessary changes.

36 Karen Dawisha, n.30, pp. 20-21
Gorbachev's conception relied on greater economic, political and social interaction amongst the socialist and capitalist states of Europe, with the aim of reducing the rigid division of Europe. But for East European leaders Gorbachev's opening to the West was seen as their opening to the West, too, and a golden opportunity to fulfill fundamental aspirations in that direction. To the extent, therefore, that the Soviet conception envisaged a fundamental commitment to significant improvements in inter-societal relations across a divided Europe, East European leaders, virtually without exception, welcomed the Soviet change of heart.

**Many Roads to Socialism**

The concept was not new, but it had never been pronounced so explicitly as a principle governing relations with the socialist countries. Nikita Khrushchev was the first to accept the concept of many roads to socialism. However, it had limitations and it was pronounced when he went for rapprochement with Yugoslavia. The difference between the earlier version of this concept and the present was that, all roads lead to socialism was explicitly applicable to only non-socialist countries. It was definitely not applicable to the socialist Bloc. During the Gorbachev period this was adopted as an official agenda applicable to the socialist countries. In his report to the Twenty Seventh Party Congress, Gorbachev specifically emphasised 'unconditional respect' for the right of every peoples to choose their own paths of development. He was subsequently to outline in detail the source of many previous problems in Soviet - East European relations: "Drawing on the Soviet experience, some countries failed duly to consider
their own specifics. Even worse, a stereotyped approach was given an ideological tint by some of our...leaders who acted as almost the sole guardians of truth. Without taking into consideration...features of different socialist countries, sometimes displayed suspicion toward those countries approaches to certain problems.37

Towards this end, Gorbachev enunciated the need for intra-Bloc relations to proceed according to principles which had at their root the "absolute independence" of every socialist state. As Gorbachev made clear, "the independence of each party, its sovereign right to decide the issues facing its country and its responsibility to its nations are the unquestionable principles."38

The statement further elucidated that neither socialism, friendship, good-neighbourliness nor respect can be buttressed by bayonets, tanks, or bloodshed. Relations with any country should be built on the basis of mutual interest into account, mutual benefit and the principle of freedom of choice. It is necessary not only to transform the blocs into essentially political alliances, but to agree on certain principles of relations between the blocs and their member states. The best variant is to adopt a politically binding declaration of intentions with regard to each other. By emphasizing the democratic aspect, Gorbachev believed that over four decades of interaction with the Bloc countries, the relationship was definitely on sound and firm basis. Democracy in his view would strength the relationship.

37 Mikhail Gorbachev, n. 30, pp. 162-64
38 Ibid, p. 165
Gorbachev specifically emphasised "unconditional respect in international practice for the right of every people to choose the paths and forms of its development." He emphasised the need to "solve problems," to "avert crisis situations," and to "find mutually acceptable solutions to even the most difficult problems."

Gorbachev stated in his book *Perestroika*, "every nation is entitled to choose its own way of development, to dispose of its fate, its territory, and its human and natural resources." He went on to add that the East European "nations were free to follow their own paths of development, even to leave the socialist camp." Whether Gorbachev went to the extent of stating that the socialist Bloc countries were free to opt for a systemic change is not clear. However, as long as Eastern Europe was part of the Soviet Union's national security zone, it is unlikely that Moscow could allow true choice. Indeed, the statement made by Gorbachev at key anniversaries, such as the renewal of the Warsaw Pact (which also took place in 1985), suggested that until military doctrine was redefined, Eastern Europe would not in fact be entirely free to choose its own path of development.

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40. Ibid, p. 207
41. Angus Roxburgh, n.22, p. 155
42. Karen Dawisha, n.34 p. 210
Repudiation of Brezhnev Doctrine

The process of deideologisation drastically altered the erstwhile inviolable principles of socialist internationalism which manifested prominently into the "Brezhnev Doctrine." The principle of the state sovereignty of a socialist state was originally linked with the interests of the socialist system as a whole. Socialist internationalism "professed (Soviet) respect for (East European) sovereignty and (East European) respect for the bloc's (Soviet defined) common interests." The enunciation of the doctrine and its consequences have been discussed in the earlier chapter.

The policy of Perestroika and Glasnost virtually denounced the Brezhnev Doctrine and made sovereignty and independence, equal rights and non-interference as the recognised norms of international relations. Gorbachev unequivocally enunciated, "the entire framework of political relations between the socialist countries must be strictly based on absolute independence." He also confirmed that the "foreign policy based on the principles and attitudes of new thinking affirmed that 'nations' choices cannot and must not be overridden by force and that stability cannot be achieved by threatening the use of force or by intervention, blockade and other sanctions." Therefore, he refrained from supporting "proletarian internationalism" the foundation of the Brezhnev Doctrine that reserved the

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45. Ibid, p. 165
46. Eduard Shevardnadze, n.14, p. 16
right for the Soviet Union to invade socialist countries which deviated from the Soviet line.

If restructuring of Soviet relationship with the Bloc countries was on Gorbachev's agenda, then the repudiation of the Brezhnev doctrine was necessary. The Soviet Union renounced its right, as elaborated in the concept of 'socialist internationalism', to intervene in the internal affairs of its Warsaw Pact allies.\textsuperscript{47} Gorbachev said "we have become convinced that unity does not mean identity and uniformity....that there is no 'model' of socialism to be emulated by everyone, or nor can there be any."\textsuperscript{48} On 2 July, 1990 in the political Report of the CPSU Central Committee to the 28\textsuperscript{th} CPSU Congress, Gorbachev reiterated, "The recognition of every people's freedom of choice is a fundamental precondition for the building up a new type of world order."\textsuperscript{49} This is clear from the above statement that Gorbachev had resolutely opposed to any theories and doctrines that attempted to justify the export of revolution or counter-revolution and all forms of foreign interference in the affairs of sovereign states. This was one of the major policy changes which Yugoslavia had long been looking forward to since the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. Therefore the repudiation of Brezhnev Doctrine led to the apprehension of the Yugoslavs in particular and the East Europeans in general that the 'Brezhnev Doctrine' no longer exist and that the USSR poses no threat to their sovereignty."\textsuperscript{50} It

\textsuperscript{47} Karen Dawishan. n. 30, p. 46
\textsuperscript{48} Mikhail Gorbachev, \textit{October and Perestroika: The Revolution Continues}, (Moscow, 1987), p. 75
\textsuperscript{49} Mikhail Gorbachev, n.12, p. 102
\textsuperscript{50} Karen Dawisha, n 30, p. 221
is also clear that by the time the Brezhnev Doctrine had been repudiated, its demise was inevitable. Closely related with it was the concept of security. Technological advances had reduced the geo-political importance of neighbours. Security was no longer dependent on an effective buffer zone.

Gorbachev, thus moved from the Brezhnev doctrine, which asserted the right and duty of interference in a country where socialism was "endangered," to a policy of keeping hands off East European affairs, to prodding the East European leaders, but not dictating to them. Under the new policy of Perestroika, Gorbachev stressed on the autonomy of the East European communist parties. Soviet forces in the region and his subordinates repeatedly assured that the Brezhnev doctrine for restricted East European sovereignty was "dead". 51

**Gorbachev's Military Doctrine**

In this context, views on the Military Doctrine are also significant. In the changed thinking, the use of nuclear weapon to solve the political problems was practically redundant. Gorbachev wanted to establish world peace. He repeatedly called for limiting the military. In his military doctrine he called for "restricting military potential within the bounds of reasonable sufficiency." 52 It is worthwhile to note that Gorbachev was of the view that

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no nation can be secure at the cost of the other. All nations must feel secure and that is the only way to bring about peace.

In September 1986, the Stockholm Conference on Disarmament in Europe (CDE) was a landmark Conference in the field of nuclear disarmament. The Conference able to reach an agreement following the Soviet decision to allow intrusive verification. The agreement introduced a 35 nation regime allowing challenge inspections, as well as both advance notification and routine observations of all maneuvers above negotiated levels. It was not until after the January 1987 Central Committee plenum, however, that the real elaboration of the concepts connected with rethinking military doctrine began to emerge. It began with Gorbachev's announcement at the end of February that the Soviet Union would negotiate the withdrawal of all intermediate range nuclear missiles (1,000-3,000 miles) from Europe.

In order for such a shift to enhance stability in Europe, Soviet analyst proposed that "the defense capabilities of the Warsaw Pact must substantially exceed the offensive capabilities of NATO and the defensive capabilities of NATO must substantially exceed the offensive capabilities of the Warsaw Pact under lowered levels of military confrontation between the two alliances."
While several offers were put forward in 1985 and 1986 it was not until May 1987 that the Soviets recognised the need for asymmetrical cuts between the Warsaw Pact and NATO. This requirement was adopted at a Warsaw Pact meeting, as was the need to formulate a doctrine with a defensive orientation.\footnote{G. R. Griban, (ed.); Can the Soviet System Survive Reforms (London, 1989) p. 218} 

The announcement by Gorbachev (made in his speech before the United Nations General Assembly in December 1988) that the USSR would withdraw 50,000 Soviet troops and 5,000 tanks from Eastern Europe was made after conservatives within the Warsaw Pact (notably East Germany and Czechoslovakia) had failed to endorse deeper cuts proposed at a Pact meeting held in Warsaw in July 1988.\footnote{Ibid, p. 239} The thorough revision of core ideological and military doctrines took place at the time that new bases for Soviet relations with the Eastern Europe were being elaborated. Innovations in all these areas were interlinked and mutually reinforced.

It is only through extensive international cooperation that the Soviet Union be able to solve most acute domestic problems.\footnote{Ibid, p. 127} With this in mind, Gorbachev also moved to revise key aspects of Soviet relations with Eastern Europe. In particular, these relations were affected by the redefinition of socialism, by the conceptualisation of Europe as "common home", and by the rejection of the use of force to protect socialism.\footnote{Ibid, p. 136}
is no doubt that the steps initiated by Gorbachev to reduce tensions must have gone down well with Yugoslavia. Besides, reducing tensions, it also reduced Yugoslavia's concern about a possible soviet invasion.

With the loosening of inter-party connections, therefore, Moscow hoped to replace it with increased reliance on a newly politicised Warsaw Pact structure to maintain stability and cohesion in the Bloc. There appeared universal willingness amongst even the most radical East European leaders to attend more meetings of bloc foreign and defense Ministers. Even the political consultative meeting in Bucharest in July 1989 produced more declarations on a wider range of foreign and domestic policy issues than had previously been the case. However, initial elite and popular reactions within Eastern Europe to the formation of a permanent political headquarters were negative, indicating that the Soviet Union would have great difficulties in gaining acceptance for any qualitatively new structures.

Clearly, the emergence of a new doctrine in the Soviet Union emphasising defense as opposed to offence and sufficiency as opposed to continuous arms buildup had implications for the importance of Eastern Europe as a zone for forward and offensive Soviet operations in the event of a war. As the redefinition of the role of Eastern Europe in protecting Soviet territory began, the way was opened for extensive agreements on conventional arms reductions to produce a pull back of Soviet forces and reduce their ability to serve as instruments of control in Eastern Europe. Gorbachev

60 Ibid, pp. 240-41
announced before the United Nations General Assembly in December 1988 that the USSR would cut 5,000,000 troops from its armed forces and withdraw units from Eastern Europe was followed a year later by further Soviet proposals to cut military expenditures and negotiate a total ban on all foreign bases by the year 2000.\(^{62}\)

These proposals in Moscow fuelled cuts in defense expenditure in Eastern Europe, as bloc leaders took the opportunity to free of scarce resources by making cuts averaging 10 percent in military budgets for 1989-1990.\(^{63}\) Moreover, the changes which took place in the region in 1989 further decreased the likelihood that the Soviet military presence could survive the upheavals on unscathed. Indeed, the first act of the new Czechoslovak foreign minister, Ziri Dienstbier, was to announce that the 1968 agreement allowing Soviet troops to be stationed in Czechoslovakia was "invalid" because it was made under pressure.\(^{64}\) He called for talks with Moscow that could lead to their withdrawal. That action followed on the heels of calls in both Poland and Hungary for revisions in the formal arrangements governing those countries membership in the Warsaw Pact, with Hungarian socialist party leader Reszo Nyers stating that "sovereignty, the right of self defense, and securing independence" would have to be emphasised more strongly "also in the Warsaw Pact".\(^{65}\)

\(^{62}\) Mikhail Gorbachev, Selected Speeches and Articles, (Moscow, 1987), p. 79
\(^{63}\) Ibid, p. 80
\(^{64}\) Ibid, p. 107
\(^{65}\) Ibid, p. 108
Under these circumstances the Soviet Union offered to convene more multilateral meetings of the Warsaw Pact groups, such as the Political Consultative Committee, the Committee of Foreign Ministers, and the Committee of Defense Ministers. This appeared to be in line with proposals that Moscow began to float suggestions that the Warsaw Pacts functions should be expanded and revised to de-emphasise its military function and upgrade its political coordination role. While the Warsaw Pact remained as the military establishment, its role and functions became political in nature. This was because Gorbachev had already envisaged in the 'new political thinking' that problems arousing out of conflict could find political solution. Therefore, the Warsaw Pact Organisation became more a kind of political consultation forum to deal with problems through political means. But then it is imperative to understand to what extent the role of WTO was defined and suited into the political situation. These changes were welcomed by Yugoslavia. As a member of the Non Aligned Movement (NAM) disarmament and elimination and Cold War was one of the objectives that was pursued for long. Hence, any lowering of tension and Cold War was welcomed by Yugoslavia.

Redefining the Role of Warsaw Treaty Organisation

Meanwhile momentous changes were occurring in Europe due to Soviet Initiative. Gorbachev sought to re-define the entire gamut of relations with Europe in order to bring about peace. Old structures were demolished. Since the changes were of monumental significance especially for Europe

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66 Kagarlitsky, n.61, p. 45
including Yugoslavia, they will be discussed in detail. Mainly a military organisation, Warsaw Treaty Organisation (WTO) emerged as a reaction to the Western military alliance of North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and was sustained by the arms race for parity or for the quest for superiority with the West. The vital source of strength of the organisation was derived from the principles of socialist internationalism prevailing in the world socialist system of Eastern Europe. It became more or less, a supra-national authority by invoking Brezhnev Doctrine of limited sovereignty. But the growing independence from the Soviet Union and assertion of sovereignty by East European states in post 1989 change proved to be unmanageable and the existence of the organisation became undesirable in the new situation.

During the initial period of Gorbachev's ascendency, he stated, "For the peoples of our country the Warsaw Treaty is a reliable defense of their revolutionary achievements. It has guaranteed the possibility of constructive work. The inviolability of our borders is surely protected."\(^7\)

This alliance "threatens no one and is wholly committed to the defense of peace. We are developing relations with countries with a different social system on the principles of peaceful coexistence, which is the sole reasonable basis, particularly in the nuclear age. In the case of the Warsaw Treaty and in the case of the "revolutionary changes which have transformed the face of Eastern Europe", we must learn one lesson: only

\(^7\) Mikhail Gorbachev, *Speeches and Writings, Speech in Warsaw*, (Oxford, 1986), p. 155
what is based on the free will of peoples and states can be stable and viable.\textsuperscript{68}

Therefore, the Warsaw Treaty Political Consultative Committee, at its meeting in 1986 in Moscow, adopted a declaration outlining agreed guidelines for a transformation of the alliances, its doctrine, strategy, goals, and the way all its activities are organised. A Commission was set up, in this regard to elaborate on the relevant recommendations. The recommendation of the committee emphasised on the policy of demilitarisation that increased the margin for independent initiatives and actions by the East European states. Emphasis on economic, instead military relations with the West relaxed the inter-socialist relations enhancing the independence and sovereignty of these countries.

The entire process ultimately rendered the Warsaw Treaty Organisation redundant as an integrating force amongst East European nations.\textsuperscript{69} A joint Polish-Czechoslovak statement in 1988 demanded a revision of the Warsaw Pact, so that the right to sovereignty of individual states would be fully respected. The members of Warsaw Treaty Organisation asserted their stand in Bucharest on 7-8 July 1989, "The principled position of the Warsaw Treaty member states to rid Europe of military blocs, to simultaneously disband both alliances and as a first step, to liquidate their military organisations remain in force."\textsuperscript{70}

\textsuperscript{68} "Eduard Shevardnadze On Foreign Policy", \textit{New Times}, no. 27, 1990, p. 13
\textsuperscript{69} Bhagirath Prasad, n.24, p. 89
\textsuperscript{70} \textit{Documents of the Political Consultative Committee Meeting of the Warsaw Treaty Member State}, Bucharest, July 7-8 1989, (Moscow, 1989), p. 12
During his press conference along with George Bush in Malta, 2-3 December 1989, Gorbachev spoke about the transformation of NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organisation. "They should not remain purely military alliances, but rather become military-political alliances and later on, simply political bodies. So that their nature would change in accordance with the changes on the continent." 

During his speech at the Special Third Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR on 15 March 1990, Gorbachev said, "The time has come to think about replacing military blocs with a system of collective security and cooperation bodies, taking into account the emergence of a united Germany in the center of Europe." In the process Soviet foreign policy was slowly getting de-ideologised. In other words, to end the Cold War.

Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze similarly emphasised on the adoption of democratic norms of international relations within such alliances and in inter-alliance relations. "It is necessary not only to transform the blocs into essentially political alliances but to agree on certain principles of relations between blocs and their member states." The communiqué issued at the end of the WTO meeting on 7 June 1990, planned to review the pact on the basis that it represented "sovereign and equal states....built upon democratic principles."
On 14-15 June 1990, Defense Ministers of Warsaw Treaty members agreed in a communiqué to press for radical restructuring "with a view to the withdrawal of the Soviet forces from the territory of the allied state".\textsuperscript{75} Hungarian Prime Minister Jozsef Antall announced on 9 June 1990 that Hungary would withdraw from the Pact even if the alliance planned to dissolve; eventually Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland agreed on 2 January 1991 to withdraw all cooperation to the Warsaw Treaty Organisation, with effect from 1 July 1991. Almost all members favoured dissolution of the organisation.\textsuperscript{76}

This was the end, formally too, of all military and political ties and proof of that national sovereignty had won. But simultaneously with this physical withdrawal, the search was on for new guarantees to national sovereignty. The democratisation process of the Warsaw Treaty ultimately resulted in the disorganisation of the institution. Gorbachev's reform led to the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact as a cohesive, Soviet-dominated military alliance and inevitably led to the removal of all soviet forces from Eastern Europe. The dissolution of Warsaw Treaty Organisation led to the recognition of growing independent domestic socio-political systems and assertion of sovereign rights by East European states. As mentioned earlier, the concept of security in the eighties had undergone change. Military means were not the only way to ensure security. Political means had also become equally essential.

\textsuperscript{75} Ibid, p. 91
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid, p. 91
Concept of Common European Home

Gorbachev's new formulations for Europe was "Europe Our Common Home." The idea was a political means to bring peace to Europe. The WTO had been dismantled and in its place was this initiative. In Gorbachev's view nuclear-free and non-violent situation in Europe was considered an ideal foundation for a 'common European home'. Gorbachev visualised an opportunity to overcome economic and political crisis in the communist world and sought to integrate it with the western systems by advancing the idea of a common European home. He elaborated, "The concept of a 'common European home' suggests above all a degree of integrity, even if its states belong to different social systems and opposing military-political alliances. It combines necessity with opportunity." It was, in fact, "an effort to base peace in Europe on the integration of Western and Soviet values." Secondly, the relaxation of Soviet control over Eastern Europe was to follow an all-European phenomenon. The de-Sovietisation of Eastern Europe was essential for the Europeanisation of the Soviet Union.

The philosophy of common European home was propagated to end East-West antagonism and to facilitate the politico-economic transformation of the communist Europe. Because during the post-world war period, the division of Europe in the bloc alliance with enemy images and legacy of
cold war with mutual mistrust between East-West constituted the prominent feature of international relations. As a result a crisis situation in any East European country was globalised and aggravated, and seriously destabilised East-West relations. Gorbachev clearly sought early from his rule to bring the Soviet Union closer to Europe. And from mid-1988 onward, this objective coincided with the realisation that Eastern Europe would have to be reintegrated with Europe if "Europe as a common home" were to be built.

Vladimir Lukin, then in the Foreign Ministry's planning and Assessment wrote,

"we should understand not only the geopolitical phenomenon, but also a definite method as to how to live, think, communicate with other people....... The common European home is the home of a civilisation of which we have been on the periphery for long time. The process that are going on today in our country and in a number of socialist countries in Eastern Europe have besides everything else a similar historical dimension - the dimension of movement towards a return to Europe in the civilised meaning of the word."

To add on to this, Gorbachev depicted the Russian history as "an organic part of the great European history." During his address to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg on 6 July 1989, Gorbachev said, "The philosophy of a 'Common European Home' rules out the possibilities of an armed clash and use of force or the threat of force, primarily military force - between the alliances, inside the alliances,

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80 Charles Gati, n.43, p. 219
81 Karen Dawisha, n.30, p. 21
82 Ibid, pp. 22-23
83 Mikhail Gorbachev, n.12, p. 191
During Nobel Lecture on 5 June 1991, Gorbachev denounced the divisive forces in Europe and paved the way for fuller sovereignty for the East European states, ...."erstwhile 'curtains' and 'walls' will be forever relegated to the past and borders between states will continue to lose their 'divisive' purpose, self-determination of sovereign nations will be realised in a completely different way."85

"Europe as a common home" was one Soviet policy universally welcomed in Eastern Europe.86 It envisaged a legal framework for all European states including the Soviet Union. Gorbachev said, "we are convinced that a reliable legal foundation should be furnished for the all-European process. We visualise a common European home as law governed community."87

For Yugoslavia, this idea was seen as a positive outcome in the direction of peaceful coexistence and independence of socialist countries within and outside the fold of socialist system. Yugoslav perception was that the concept being universal and aims at world peace would in no way threaten the very basis of the Yugoslav system of self management or its independence. Also the idea coincided with Yugoslavia's stand on non-alignment. For the Soviet Union the underlying motive force behind the concept was to strengthen the hold of Soviet Union in the continent of Europe and to weaken the Western alliance if possible. The Soviet Union wanted to avoid a disastrous war which could lead to the use of nuclear weapons.

84 Ibid, pp. 70-71
85 Ibid, p. 111
86 Karen Dawisha, n.30, p. 217
87 Mikhail Gorbachev, n.12, p. 78
Gorbachev's Approach to the Crisis of Communism in Eastern Europe

The collapse of the communist regimes of Eastern Europe in 1989 or, in the cases of Yugoslavia and Albania, 1990 and 1991, should not be attributed to the severity of the economic, social and environmental crises over which they presided during the 1980s. The social and political upheavals of 1989-91, which ended communist rule in Eastern Europe, were in large measure a 'revolution from above' stage-managed by the white-collar intelligentsia, reform communists and 'closest reformers' within the Soviet KGB.  

During 1990 it gradually came to light that 'closest reformers' in the Soviet KGB (state security police) had also played a significant role in the subversion of the hard-line communist regimes in East Germany and Czechoslovakia in November 1989 and possibly in Romania the following month. The aim was not to end but to prolong communist rule by replacing embarrassingly hard-line rulers with more palatable and pragmatic 'reform communists' in the Gorbachev mould, who could be relied upon to initiate a managed transition to more market-oriented and pluralistic regimes in keeping with the liberal image projected by Soviet Perestroika and Glasnost and the 'reform communism' of neighbouring Hungary.

89 Ibid, p. 587
90 Ibid, p. 587
Nevertheless, Eastern European revolutions probably would not have succeeded if Gorbachev had not unilaterally renounced old habits of Soviet military-political interventions in Eastern Europe's internal affairs. The emergence of the Gorbachev regime was therefore a necessary (though not a sufficient) condition for the democratisation of Eastern Europe.\textsuperscript{91}

Gorbachev realised that the Europeanisation of the Soviet Union could not proceed without the de-Sovietisation of Eastern Europe'. Conversely, Gorbachev's concept of a 'common European home' dovetailed with the East European intelligentsia's undying belief in the oneness of Europe and it reinforced their efforts to deepen or renew their emotional and cultural ties with the West, implicitly turning away from the Soviet Union. At the same time, paradoxically, Gorbachev's programme of Perestroika profoundly influenced Eastern Europe by providing a potent model and symbol of reform from above and of liberalisation, by licensing or igniting a ferment of ideas, debate and demands for reform in other communist states and by encouraging East European leaders to ape.

Thus the imperatives of Perestroika destabilised Eastern Europe in the late 1980s, much as Khrushchev's 'de-stalinisation' programme had done in 1956. Furthermore, by abandoning the customary requirement of the Soviet approval of successors to East European communist party leaders after 1985, Gorbachev ended a direct channel of Soviet supervision of its East European 'allies', although the KGB continued to operate behind the

\textsuperscript{91} Ibid, p. 588
scenes from Soviet embassies in Eastern Europe at least until the end of 1989. Gorbachev's announcement in 1988 that Soviet troops would be withdrawn from Afghanistan was widely seen not just as a blow to the aura of Soviet invincibility and to Soviet military morale, but also as tangible confirmation of his renunciation of Soviet military interference in the affairs of 'fraternal socialist states'.\textsuperscript{92} This helped to lift the veil of fear which had hitherto kept Eastern European hostility to communist rule in check.

Nevertheless, Gorbachev was mainly 'reacting to events rather than initiating them'.\textsuperscript{93} There is no suggestion that he was acting out a master plan for the dismantling of communist rule in Eastern Europe. Rather, he hoped to ensure its survival by encouraging the deposition of hard-liners in favour of reformers in his own image. But the undermining of hard-liners unleashed forces which dethroned the reform communists. In some ways, curiously, he was quite out of tune with the darker forces that were unleashed by the democratisation of the Soviet bloc and the long retreat from communist 'proletariat internationalism.'

Gorbachev thus contributed to the remarkably low levels of violence employed by either side (other than in Romania and Yugoslavia) during the collapse of communist rule in Eastern Europe. Moreover, by adopting a new foreign policy and continuing it even though it cost the Soviet Union its external spheres of influence, Gorbachev 'created the conditions in which

\textsuperscript{92} Robert Bideleux n. 88, p. 588
\textsuperscript{93} Margot Light, \textit{The USSR/CIS and Democratisation in Eastern Europe}, (London, 1994), p. 154
democratic forces within Eastern Europe came to the fore, and western
democratic and market forces penetrated the region.

Soviet-Yugoslav Relation: The Bilateral Context

The Soviet-Yugoslav relation during the Gorbachev period was much more
friendly than the previous regimes. As was seen in the previous chapter the
major area of disagreement was despite friendlier relationship, ideology.
This was further aggravated by the Brezhnev's Doctrine of Limited
Sovereignty. Though, there was no apparent threat of a Soviet military
intervention in Yugoslavia, there were doubts, The earlier mistrust between
the two regimes did not help the relationship. Yet, while Yugoslavia
perceived the Soviet design as a threat to its independence, the Soviet
Union also felt that Yugoslavia's independence could destabilize its interest
in the region. Therefore, during the Brezhnev period the leaders of the two
countries found opportunities on many occasion to maintain cordial
relationship but the interaction of the two countries being at best minimum
did not remove the existing doubts.

Gorbachev's coming to power and his reform process helped in building
confidence in the Yugoslav leadership. It convinced the new leadership that
its independent stand was not likely to be questioned. The basic difference
between Brezhnev and Gorbachev was that in the final analysis their
approach and the ground reality mattered. While Brezhnev put more
emphasis on East European regions and hence perceived Yugoslavia as a
potential destabilizing factor, Gorbachev went a step ahead to consider
Europe as the major Soviet concern. In this regard Yugoslavia was seen as a part of Europe. And finally, Gorbachev’s peace offensive through a number of national and international initiatives that deidologised the Soviet foreign relations removed the fear of enemy image of any socialist country. These positive changes reduced the ideological gap between the two countries and asserted the confidence of friendship and cooperation. But there was very little scope to develop close and long term relationship between these two countries due to Gorbachev’s preoccupation with the domestic reforms. Moreover, as it has been discussed in the previous section, that the role of Yugoslavia in either stabilizing or destabilizing the Soviet interest was very minimal or insignificant. Therefore, there was no special interaction between the two countries except that in 1988 when the leaders of the two countries met together and signed a declaration promising for long term cooperation and friendly relation.

At the invitation of the Presidency of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) and the Presidency of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY), the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev paid an official and friendly visit to Yugoslavia from March 14-18, 1988. A Yugoslav-Soviet Declaration was adopted during the visit on March 15.

The Declaration disclosed the fact that the “Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, as well as the
League of Communists of Yugoslavia and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, proceeding from the long-term interests of the Yugoslav and the Soviet people in steadily promoting cooperation, enriching its substance and giving impulse to the further development of friendly relations between the two socialist countries and by that very fact effectively contributing to creation of a more secure and just world, have decided to confirm in their declaration the principles and goals of mutual relations, and to set out their views on the basic issues of contemporary international relations and ways of creating a world without violence, without nuclear weapons, precluding the use of force or the treat of force and in which all disputes will be settled exclusively by political means in a spirit of equality and with the aim of strengthening international peace, security and progress. 94

This Declaration called for the historic importance of the fraternal relationship of these two countries. Both sides convinced that the threat of the use of force is no more on the agenda of the Soviet Union to force the Yugoslavs to follow the Soviet model of socialism. It also strengthened the Yugoslav stand on the issue of non-alignment pertaining to the Soviet proposal on the question of disarmament. The long drawn ideological disputes for the construction of socialist movement, socialist fraternal relationship to protect the interest of socialism and the international communist movement considered as a political issue and thus can be settled at the political level.

Therefore, the SFRY and the Soviet Union laid stress on the historic role and lasting value of the universal principles of inscribed in the Belgrade (1955) and Moscow (1956) declarations, with special reference to: mutual respect for independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, equality and non-interference in the internal affairs of others in any form whatsoever.

The two sides pressed for further confidence-building and cooperation in all spheres, in raising the volume of mutually beneficial cooperation. Exchange of views experiences would benefit each other in economic, social and cultural development, for the purpose of elevating bilateral relations to higher levels. The Declaration also underlined the need of giving special attention to political dialogue at all levels, to stimulating direct and effective cooperation between political and social organisations, Yugoslav and Soviet republics, provinces, cities, collective groups of workers, and mutual contacts at citizen level.

The SFRY and the USSR agreed to pursue joint efforts in promoting trade, assuring stable and balanced trade and all other economic relations as the material basis for cooperation. To realise this goal both sides entered into Long-Term Programme of Economic Cooperation up to the year 2000, and the participation of organisations of the two countries in implementing projects under the complex programme of scientific and technical advancement within the frameworks of the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance.\footnote{Ibid, p. 148}
They reaffirmed their readiness to develop their relations further and enrich them in substance, proceeding from the principles of independence, equality and noninterference, the responsibility of each party to the working class and people of its own county, mutual respect for different roads in the building of socialism and the international position of each.\textsuperscript{96} This mutual understanding confirmed the universal significance of democratic principles in relations between communists, workers, socialists, social-democratic, national-liberation and other progressive parties and movements, based on their inalienable right to make independent choices as to roads of development.

The two sides attached special significance to consistent application of universal and binding principles inscribed in the Charter of the United Nations, in the final act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and other fundamental documents of international law prohibiting aggression, violation of boundaries, the taking of territory belonging to others, every threat to use force or the use of force, interference in the internal affairs of other states under any pretext whatsoever.\textsuperscript{97} These concepts reasserted their conviction of the possibility of achieving a world without arms, without threats of force; where fear and violence would surrender to confidence, stable security and tranquility for all the world's peoples and individuals.

\textsuperscript{96} Ibid, p. 149
\textsuperscript{97} Ibid, p. 151
All these above principles strengthened the Soviet-Yugoslav relations. The earlier concept of the dominance of ideology or Soviet hegemony in building socialism and the international communist movement as well were considered as old and obsolete. Therefore, their cooperation at the bilateral level encouraged further involvement of Soviet Union in the conflict resolution during the Yugoslav crisis. Through out the period of the crisis and until the dissolution of the Yugoslav Union, the Soviet Union pressed for and insisted in keeping the Yugoslavs United. Perhaps the Slavic affinity could have had an impact on Soviet approach to Yugoslav unity.

Seen in this perspective, the Yugoslav-Soviet declaration was also important because, in the first place, it specifically reinforced the validity of Belgrade declaration of 1955 and Moscow Declaration of 1956. The 1988 Declaration clearly ruled out interference in internal affairs "in any form whatsoever;" it also represented Gorbachev's further endorsement of the concept of "specific paths and forms" of socialist development.

Perhaps most importantly, in a section devoted to inter-party relations the Declaration stated that the League of Communists of Yugoslavia and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union re-affirmed the universal significance of democratic principles in relations among communists, workers, socialists, social democrats, national liberation and other progressive parties and movements, based on their own roads to social development. This was a clear statement of the intent to re-orient Soviet foreign policy
around commonly recognized principles of international conduct than toward a Soviet defined internationalism.

**Gorbachev and the Crisis in Yugoslavia**

The crisis in Yugoslavia was not a sudden outcome of democratisation of the political system. It had its roots in the formation of the State binding together different ethnic groups. But the ethnic affinity when clashed with the territorial identity led to unrest in the early eighties. This was the situation when Marshall Tito was going out and the collective leadership took over the reign of political affairs. The weakness of the collective leadership in the absence of a more radical administrative capability as Marshall Tito had discerned during the period of self-management gave vent to ethnic violence taking place in the country.

The Soviet Union played a vital role in conflict resolution in a crisis of ethnic violence spreading over in Yugoslavia in the late eighties. In the first instance the attempt to reform the Soviet Union determined Gorbachev's approach to the Yugoslavia crisis. The domestic situation in the Soviet Union led it to lend decisive support for the Yugoslav forces trying to keep Yugoslavia united by any means. The reason was very simple that like Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union was also a multi-ethnic state. And in essence the ethnic affinity had always been in the limelight since the First World War. But then the Soviet Union under the astute leadership of Gorbachev who time and again promoted the cause of democracy and individual freedom apprehended the possibility of ethnic conflict taking place
elsewhere in the region would have a disastrous impact on the Soviet Union where ethnic conflicts had already resurfaced.

On 6 July 1991 Gorbachev sent a special Presidential envoy, Yulii Kvitsinsky, to Belgrade, Zagreb, and Ljubljana where he tried to convince the leadership in the various republics to keep Yugoslavia united. But after Gorbachev's envoy returned and shared his views on the future of Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) Gorbachev believed that disintegration was inevitable because the European Commission (EU), especially Germany, supported it.\(^9^8\) It is plausible that knowing the weakness of Yugoslav unity which was held in tact by Marshal Tito was now threatened, Gorbachev could have put forward the idea of "Europe Our Common Home."

The Soviet Union decided to act together with the West to try to preserve Yugoslav unity, having in mind the dangerous exposure of the Soviet Union along national lines. Gorbachev succeeded to receive support of US administration worried about the possibility of ethnic explosion in the Soviet Union and the growing influence of a reunited Germany in post-Communist Eastern Europe. By 31 July 1991, on the occasion of President George Bush's visit to the Soviet Union, the leaders of the two superpowers issued a joint declaration condemning the violence in Yugoslavia and also calling for respect for the principles of Helsinki Accords.\(^9^9\)

\(^9^9\) Ibid, pp. 30-31
Moscow were both alarmed the precedent that the break-up of Yugoslavia might set fire the Soviet Union, the preservation of which was central not only to Gorbachev's policies but to those of the Bush administration as well. The cooperation with America made possible a tougher approach to the war in Yugoslavia. The statement issued by Premier Pavlov's government on the eve of the August plot demonstrated how far Moscow might go. It warned international factions against interference in Yugoslav internal affairs, emphasising the 'unstable boundary between goodwill services and interference in internal affairs'. The Soviet Union rejected appeals to recognise secession of Slovenia and Croatia. It supported 'plans for reforming the federative state'.

The policy of aiming to preserve federal unity continued after the failed August plot. Moscow tried to act in coordination with the international community. It announced the 'practical stop' of arms sale ('special deliveries') to Yugoslavia. It supported the participation of the CSCE in conflict regulation with the missions of goodwill. These were mere appeals without any clear vision. Cooperation with Washington went into shadow. In autumn 1991 Gorbachev was still pretending to be a powerful world leader. To raise his domestic prestige he invited Milosevic and Tudjman to Moscow. The success of the meeting considered as a pretext of the domestic policy on 'renewed inter-republican union' as the alternative to a repetition in the Soviet Union of the 'Yugoslav finale'. But the 'Slavic deal'

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100 Ibid, p. 31
101 Ibid, p. 31
ended with the acceptance of a joint communiqué without any practical results.\footnote{102}

Throughout the period of crisis resolution until the fag end of all possible efforts to keep the Yugoslavs united Moscow opposed to any military intervention. Apart from the UN, the Security Council was invited to search for a mechanism to find a peaceful solution. The Soviet Union by doing so tried to avoid the unilateral decision taken by the UN which would have otherwise encouraged a sort of military intervention. Therefore, the Soviet Union insisted on equal responsibility of all the participants in the conflict. The involvement of NATO was allowed under the control of the Security Council. All these efforts finally failed to materialize, the Soviet Union in view of its apparent disintegration and its impact on Gorbachev’s leadership ultimately accepted the disintegration and division of Yugoslavia on grounds of ethnic identity.

Soviet-Yugoslav relations during the Gorbachev era were friendlier than the earlier period. Part of the explanation lies in the fact that the ground to build friendly relations had already been built. During this period Gorbachev Yugoslavia was perceived as a part of Europe. However, there was less interaction between the two countries. One of the most important reasons was Gorbachev’s preoccupation with the domestic reforms. Another factor was the changing perception of the Soviet Union at the international level under the regime of Gorbachev.

\footnote{102} Ibid, p. 31
The deideologisation of Soviet foreign policy and the change in the military doctrine from offensive to defensive factors reduced the gap between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. During this period the leaders of the two countries met many times and shared as well as agreed in principle at many occasion both at regional and international level to further promote the relationship. Gorbachev upheld the independence of Yugoslavia and never considered it a threat to stability in Soviet-East European relations. But the Soviet Union lost its hold over the East European countries because of the domestic *Perestroika* and Gorbachev's 'New Political Thinking.'