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**Soviet decision-making: A comparative analysis of the  
interventions in Hungary (1956), Czechoslovakia (1968), and  
Afghanistan (1979)**

**Granville, Johanna Cushing, Ph.D.**

**Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy (Tufts University), 1992**

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SOVIET DECISION MAKING:  
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVENTIONS  
IN HUNGARY (1956), CZECHOSLOVAKIA (1968), AND AFGHANISTAN (1979)

A Thesis  
Presented to the Faculty  
of  
The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy  
Tufts University

by

JOHANNA C. GRANVILLE

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Curriculum Vitae

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of the dissertation is to answer two questions: 1) Which factors influence the Soviet leadership to decide to intervene militarily in a country in its sphere of influence? 2) What accounts for the "failure" in Afghanistan as opposed to the "successes" in Hungary and Afghanistan? To address these questions, a theoretical framework is constructed, involving two types of decision making (analytic and cybernetic) and two types of learning (discontinuous and reiterative). Analytic decision making occurs only when information relevant to the immediate situation influences the actor's decision--specifically information about his present goals, policies, and commitments, and benefits, costs, and risks of various options, and those of his opponent.

Cybernetic decision making takes place when past circumstances, solutions, and decisions prestructure future decisions. While the analytic decision maker allows no constraint higher than the reality of the immediate situation to guide his decision, the cybernetic decision maker allows an ideology such as Marxism-Leninism to determine his view of the fundamental nature of politics and political conflict. These philosophical beliefs in turn mold the decision maker's instrumental beliefs, such as the best approach for selecting political goals, and for calculating benefits, costs, and risks.

The following conclusions are reached. First, there are ten factors that motivated the leaders to intervene. They are:

geographical realities (the target country borders with the USSR or West Germany); the Soviet perception that the local Communist Party was losing its leading role; pride in past Soviet acquisitions; anticipated assistance from Eastern European countries; an available quisling to "normalize" the target country; auspicious timing due to another crisis that deflected world attention; a favorable cost-benefit-risk analysis; the goal of strengthening the Warsaw Pact; memories of having defeated the target country in the past; and anticipation of US noninvolvement. Second, the intervention in Afghanistan failed, largely due to three causal factors: Islamic fundamentalism, increased US assertiveness in foreign affairs, and the collapse of the Soviet economy. Third, the Khrushchev leadership in 1956 and the Brezhnev leadership in 1979 behaved according to the cybernetic model, while the Brezhnev leadership in 1968 acted in an analytic manner.

CHAPTER 1  
INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to answer the question: what factors influence the Soviet leaders to decide to intervene in a country located in its sphere of influence or near its border? And, more specifically, if the interventions in Hungary and Czechoslovakia can be characterized as "successful," and the intervention in Afghanistan as a "failure," what accounts for the Soviet failure in the latter case? A comparison of the these three Soviet interventions may reveal whether and to what extent the purposes for Soviet interventions change, and whether the Soviet leaders choose readily to intervene (as a reflex), or do so only as a last resort (after extensive analysis). These are the most debated questions in recent literature on the subject as analysts ponder the origins and authenticity of Gorbachev's "new thinking." By comparing the three interventions, it may be possible to detect patterns in Soviet motives and methods in the 1956-1979 period that will answer these questions. In order to understand Soviet "new thinking," one must reassess the "old thinking."

The analysis will be confined to the 1956-1979 period. The present chapter is composed of several sections. The first section discusses ideal rationality and decision making, and then two real-life variations: the analytic and cybernetic decision making models. The second section considers the definition and nature of

crises. The third outlines two types of learning (discontinuous and reiterative), which derive from the analytic and cybernetic models, and examines their links to Marxist-Leninist ideology. The fourth section discusses contending theories of Soviet interventionism and two types of intervention (direct and indirect) that stem from the analytic and cybernetic decision making models. The fifth section is a review of literature about three cases of Soviet intervention (Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Afghanistan). The final section explains the methodology of "controlled comparison" and outlines the general research questions by which the three cases will be examined. (See the schematic diagram on the following page.)

#### Ideal Rationality and Decision Making

Soviet decision making is a controversial subject. Some scholars, after conducting extensive research, pronounce the subject unfathomable. Perennial data constraints leave three questions hovering in the researcher's mind. Are there intentions behind the Soviet Union's behavior? If so, what are they, and are they rational? Soviet decision making, or any field attempting to explain human behavior, seems dubious simply because man's use of reason is volitional. Man is the only living organism that has the power to choose his own destruction. No plant or animal ever destroyed itself volitionally. Hence man's greatest tool, his mind, can also be his most lethal weapon. While great theoretical advances continue to be made by assuming rationality, responsible analysts must also consider forms of nonrational and irrational

DECISION MAKING

IDEAL RATIONAL ACTOR

ANALYTIC  
DECISION MAKER

DISCONTINUOUS  
LEARNING (Type A)  
key factors: calculations of  
benefits, costs, risks; goal  
orientation

ANALYTIC TRAITS  
OF  
MARXISM-LENINISM

CYBERNETIC  
DECISION MAKER

REITERATIVE  
LEARNING (Type B)  
key factors: memories,  
images of opponent

CYBERNETIC TRAITS  
OF  
MARXISM-LENINISM

INTERVENTION  
AS A  
LEARNING EXPERIENCE

CONTENDING THEORIES OF  
SOVIET INTERVENTIONISM

INDIRECT INTERVENTION  
AS APPLICATION OF  
ANALYTIC DECISION MAKING

DIRECT INTERVENTION  
AS APPLICATION OF  
CYBERNETIC DECISION  
MAKING

THREE SOVIET INTERVENTIONS

HUNGARY, 1956

CZECHOSLOVAKIA, 1968

AFGHANISTAN, 1979

behavior, and take the necessary precautions. In any field of study where information about human beings' motives is lacking, and especially about people who possess a sizeable nuclear arsenal, the responsibility is even greater to try to understand their behavior.

It would be overly simplistic to assert that countries are either rational or nonrational. Certainly there are degrees of rationality, and all behavior can be described as belonging on a spectrum. Let us assume, for analytical purposes, that "pure" or "ideal" rationality is located at the extreme left end of the spectrum.

Pure rationality entails omniscience. The ideal rational actor obtains all relevant information regarding the validity of ends; availability of means to achieve those ends; alternative courses of action, the possible benefits and costs associated with each alternative, the risks of each option, and the exact amount of one object or possession he is willing to sacrifice in order to receive more of another. The ideal rational actor neither seeks nor avoids risk, but takes risks on the basis of cautious calculations. Finally, the ideal rational actor possesses initiative or agency, i.e. the perfect capacity to implement his choices. As theorist Nicholas Rescher wrote, "Rationality is not purely intellectual, but also involves the will, the capacity of choice among alternatives."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Nicholas Rescher, Rationality: A Philosophical Inquiry into the Nature and the Rationale of Reason (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p. 10.

In short, the ideal rational agent possesses three kinds of rationality: rationality of belief, action, and evaluation. The first type ("epistemic rationality") consists in the agent's recognition of the correctness of the belief, given the available evidence for it.<sup>2</sup> We would not say, for example, that an individual who believes that walking under a ladder brings bad luck, and who therefore walks around the ladder is entirely rational, even though there is perfect coherence between his beliefs and his action. The ideal rational agent can define his belief explicitly, and prove that it is based on evidence and logical inference, or subject to rational appraisal. He can articulate the belief which motivates his action before taking the action. In the imperfect world, however, many--if not most--human beings are guided by unconscious or semi-conscious beliefs that are patently untenable. The Italian economist and sociologist Vilfredo Pareto maintained throughout his writings that the reasons men give for what they do are seldom to be taken at their face value and do not usually explain their conduct.<sup>3</sup>

The second type, rationality of action, consists in the recognition of the correctness of the action, given one's belief and one's goal. Theorist Geoffrey Mortimore, who calls this type "formal practical rationality," argues that it is not enough that

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<sup>2</sup> Quentin Gibson, "Arguing from Rationality," in Rationality and the Social Sciences, eds. S. I. Benn and G. W. Mortimore (Oxford: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976), p. 117.

<sup>3</sup> Vilfredo Pareto, The Mind and Society, ed. A. Livingston (New York: Dover Publications, 1935), p. 52.

the action results from the belief; it must result from a grasping of the point that given the end, the belief justifies the action.

The third type, rationality of evaluation, entails taking action because one's real interests and needs--and not simple desires or impulses--dictate it. Thus the ideal rational agent always evaluates his ends by objective criteria, before he determines the means by which to achieve those ends.

In the real world, however, nations (governed by human beings) do not behave according to this kind of comprehensive rationality. They cannot be absolutely rational, in part because they are not omniscient. They can only make decisions that are rationally appropriate with everything relevant taken into account that they can effectively manage to take account of in the prevailing circumstances.

In addition to the lack of information, there are other factors that detract from purely rational behavior, ranging from substance abuse (drugs and alcohol) to cognitive malfunctions ("selective inattention," "cognitive dissonance," and temporary distortions) to simple fatigue or illness.<sup>4</sup> Bureaucracies can also detract from rationality in the sense that they involve institutional rivalries and time-consuming standard operating procedures. To be sure, such bureaucracies might also tend to discourage impulsive and irrational behavior by moving slowly. In any case, bureaucratic politics and organizational processes have

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<sup>4</sup> Hannes Adomeit, Soviet Risk-Taking and Crisis Behavior: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis (London: George, Allen & Unwin, 1982), pp. 12-13.

some, but not exclusive, impact on the decision making process.

The term "irrational" is often used as an antonym for the term "rational." This is not wholly accurate, however, since human behavior is rarely determined exclusively by psychic factors such as the ones mentioned above.<sup>5</sup> Usually if behavior is less than fully rational, it is only distorted by such factors; the term "nonrational," then, is more appropriate.

The weight of the evidence indicates that decision makers usually do as a rule act rationally during foreign policy crises. Although many models (e.g. factional, cognitive map, individual stress) are helpful reminders of the limits of rationality, they do not explain crisis decision making quite as well as the rational actor model does, although no model is entirely accurate. Several scholars have reached this conclusion, including Thomas Schelling, Glenn Snyder, Sidney Verba, Peter Bachrach, and Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, to name but a few.<sup>6</sup>

Most countries' foreign policy behavior can be recorded in

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas C. Schelling, Arms and Influence (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966); Graham Allison, The Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971); Glenn H. Snyder, Deterrence and Defense: Toward a Theory of National Security (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1961); Sidney Verba, "Assumptions of rationality and non-rationality in models of the international system," in James N. Rosenau, ed., International Politics and Foreign Policy, rev. ed. (New York: The Free Press, 1969); Peter Bachrach and Morton S. Baratz, "Decisions and Nondecisions: An Analytic Framework," American Political Science Review 57 (September, 1963): 633; Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, "Reason and War," American Political Science Review vol. 80, no. 4 (December, 1986): 1113-1126.

the center section of the rationality spectrum. Such behavior can be said to differ only in its general tendency toward either the left or right end point of the spectrum. To clarify the concept of degrees of rationality, the next section will discuss two real-life variations of ideal rationality: the analytic (more rational) and cybernetic (less rational) decision making paradigms.

#### The Analytic and Cybernetic Paradigms of Decision Making

Ever since the pioneering study of Richard Snyder, H. W. Bruck, and Burton Sapin in 1962, theorists have tried to build and refine decision making models as a way to increase knowledge about international politics.<sup>7</sup> Decisions are, according to David Easton, the "outputs" of the political system. In one sense, the process of arriving at decisions is a basic cognitive function of a human being; thus, the study of how any decision is made is useful, and theories borrowed from the behavioral sciences can elucidate how foreign policy decisions are made. On the other hand, as Robert Pfaltzgraff and James Dougherty have pointed out, the decisions made in a family or corporation differ vastly from those made in a government department or in an ad-hoc group during an international crisis.<sup>8</sup> For that reason, the student of foreign policy decision making must always be aware of the specific

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<sup>7</sup> See Richard C. Snyder, H. W. Bruck, and Burton Sapin, Foreign Policy Decision Making: an Approach to the Study of International Politics (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1962).

<sup>8</sup> James E. Dougherty and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Contending Theories of International Relations, 3d ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1990), p. 474.

contexts in which decisions are made, as well as of theories of cognition. As Thomas Milburn and Robert Billings wrote:

The aspects of decision making such as uncertainty and risk now appear to be multidimensional phenomena, more dependent on context than earlier experimenters assumed. How people actually make decisions under conditions of uncertainty appears to be far more complex than once seemed to be the case...Psychologists have less to tell political scientists about political decision making because the model of decision making used by most psychologists is so simple.<sup>9</sup>

There are two broad paradigms of decision making upon which political analysts since the 1950s have continued to build: the analytic and the cybernetic. The analytic paradigm emerged from economic theory and is predicated on the optimality principle. The classical economic theory, the "maximization of expected utility" states that the rational decision maker always seeks consciously to maximize his well-being, or "utility," in a condition of scarcity. He knows exactly what he most values, and what precise amount of good X he is willing to give up in order to gain Y. He has all available information at the beginning, middle, and end of the decision making process. There is a single homogeneous good (utility) that is present in all other goods.<sup>10</sup>

A variant of the "maximization of expected utility" theory is

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<sup>9</sup> Thomas Milburn and Robert Billings, "Decision-Making Perspectives from Psychology: Dealing with Risk and Uncertainty," American Behavioral Scientist 20 (September/October, 1976): 111.

<sup>10</sup> Glenn Snyder and Paul Diesing, Conflict Among Nations: Bargaining, Decision Making and System Structure in International Crises (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977), p. 6. See Chapter 5, pp. 340-407, for a discussion of decision making types. Also Ward Edwards, "The Theory of Decision Making," Psychological Bulletin 51 (1954): 380-412.

economist Herbert Simon's "bounded rationality" theory. It states simply that in reality there is rarely one homogeneous good. In cases where two or more goods are heterogeneous or even mutually exclusive (e.g. peace and war), the very concept of a "best possible alternative" has no operational meaning.<sup>11</sup> It cannot be assumed, therefore, that every decision maker generates and weighs all alternatives and chooses the best one. Instead, Simon posits, a decision maker more often than not simply considers some alternatives sequentially and chooses the one which meets minimum criteria. The typical decision maker does not laboriously construct a matrix of all possible alternatives and does not calculate the probabilities of expected consequences. Rather, he decides by a process of elimination, or what Simon termed "satisficing behavior."<sup>12</sup>

Nations as a whole can be construed as analytic decision making units. According to realist theorist Arnold Wolfers, nations--as rational actors--weigh costs and benefits to achieve two kinds of goals: 1) goals of self-preservation (e.g. physical survival, national independence, territorial integrity); and 2) goals of self-extension (e.g. goals designed to affect the environment beyond the nation's boundaries).<sup>13</sup> Nations, like unitary rational agents, generally seek to maximize utility, and

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, op. cit., p. 476.

<sup>13</sup> Arnold Wolfers, Discord and Collaboration: Essays on International Politics (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1962), p. 9.

therefore will choose a course of action in which the benefits to the nation as a whole outweigh the costs.

The analytic decision maker is careful always to relate ends and means; that is, he never (or seldom) acts without a larger purpose (an end). His actions are determined more often by his own scale of preferences and comparisons of various options to those preferences than by impulses, memories, or ingrained habits. Moreover, he does not set goals without considering the nature and availability of the means for achieving those goals. The rational actor, in short, clearly grasps the relation between thought and reality, between means and ends.

In contrast to the analytic paradigm, as represented by both the maximization of expected utility and bounded rationality theories, John Steinbruner's cybernetic paradigm suggests that human beings often do not consider a large number of alternatives. Cybernetics (or the study of automatic control systems) provides an analysis of "extremely simple decision-making mechanisms which are nevertheless highly successful in the proper environments."<sup>14</sup> The human mind can function as a "servomechanism," making highly complex decisions with little burden on the decision maker. To illustrate how the human servomechanism operates, Steinbruner

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<sup>14</sup> John Steinbruner, The Cybernetic Theory of Decision (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), p. 13. See also: Robert M. Cutler, "The Formation of Soviet Foreign Policy: Organizational and Cognitive Perspectives," World Politics 34 (April, 1982): 418-436; Alexander George, "The Causal Nexus between Cognitive Beliefs and Decision Making Behavior: the 'Operational Code' Belief System," in Lawrence S. Falkowski, ed. Psychological Models in International Politics (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1979), pp. 95-124.

gives examples of simpler servomechanisms, such as a thermostat, automatic pilot, tennis player, honey bees, and the Watt governor.<sup>15</sup> In response to the challenge that some servomechanisms such as the Watt governor were created by man, who is an analytic decision maker, Steinbruner states that no human being created the honey bee.

Steinbruner describes other qualities of the cybernetic decision maker. First, he places a high value on survival, in addition to goal achievement.

The essential purpose for the cybernetic decision maker is not to achieve some result in the external world, or even an acceptable as opposed to optimal result. The cybernetic decision criterion is therefore not that which represents maximum value or a convenient approximation. Rather the essential criterion is simply survival as directly reflected in the internal state of the decision-making mechanism, and whatever actions are performed are motivated by that basic value [emphasis added].<sup>16</sup>

Second, not only does the cybernetic decision maker not consciously generate and consider all possible alternatives, he seeks to remove all variety from decision making, a process which is for him mostly an internal one somewhat divorced from the environment.

The simplest cybernetic mechanisms do not confront the issue of variety at all, for they make no calculations of the environment. The mechanisms merely track a few feedback variables and beyond that are perfectly blind to the environment. Hence the degrees of complexity in the environment are of no concern within the decision making mechanism itself, and the burden of calculation which the analytic paradigm seems to impose is not a

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., pp. 51-2.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., pp. 64-5.

problem for cybernetic assumptions.<sup>17</sup>

Third, the cybernetic decision maker has a "recipe" or repertoire of responses to certain situations, which has been established by prior experience. This fixed repertory enables the decision maker to control uncertainty or at least minimize it to a significant extent. He has methods of shielding himself from new information that would force him to confront unprecedented, potentially risky situations:

Such a decision maker possesses procedures for processing information which in fact generate decisions and outcomes, but psychologically he is not engaged in the pursuit of an explicitly designed result. The psychological effects of uncertainty are therefore held to a minimum.<sup>18</sup>

Fourth and finally, the cybernetic decision maker is most comfortable in a relatively stable environment.<sup>19</sup>

If one were to judge the two models of decision making by Sidney Verba's six "assumptions of rationality," each could be described as rational decision making, but for different reasons. The analytic decision maker is rational because he has the greatest store of information and consciously generates options, comparing each option to his ultimate ends. The cybernetic decision maker is rational because, in adhering to a fixed repertory of responses, he avoids "personality variables" which

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., pp. 66-7.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 61.

often lead to nonrational behavior.<sup>20</sup> By relying on established methods for forming decisions, the cybernetic decision maker reduces fact-gathering and decision time considerably. Both the analytic and cybernetic decision makers base their behavior on the optimality principle, but the analytic agent does so by gathering as much information as possible, generating options, and testing those options against his chosen goals. The cybernetic agent views the "best possible alternative" as one which does not incur excessive costs in terms of decision time. He operates by the economic law of diminishing returns; that is, a less than perfect option which will nevertheless help him to achieve his goal is every bit as satisfactory as the best possible option which is chosen after a lengthy cost-benefit analysis. As Mortimore suggested,

Rationality can be exhibited in choices not preceded by ...[a complicated] decision-procedure. Indeed, such a decision-procedure may be practically irrational because of the costs involved. One is inclined to say that choices based on rules of thumb are rational if made because the agent believes that choosing on the basis of the rules rather than relating options to ends more than compensates, by reducing decision making costs for any reduced chance of choosing the option with the best outcome. In this case, he regards the fact that the choice satisfies the conditions laid down in the rule of thumb as a good and sufficient practical reason.<sup>21</sup>

The purely rational agent will choose the course of action

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<sup>20</sup> Sidney Verba, "Assumptions of Rationality and Non-rationality in Models of the International System," in James N. Rosenau, ed. International Politics and Foreign Policy, rev. ed. (New York: The Free Press, 1969): 93-115.

<sup>21</sup> Geoffrey W. Mortimore, "Rational Action," in S. I. Benn and G. W. Mortimore, Rationality and the Social Sciences (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976), p. 98.

which is based on the most information, but which was also reached without excessive costs in decision time. To reiterate, on the continuum of practicable rationality, the analytic decision maker tends toward the extremely rational end, while the cybernetic decision maker bears toward the nonrational end. The cybernetic decision maker, in adhering too closely to predetermined rules, tends to impair his own rationality. As Mortimore wrote, "There is no analogue in the normative realm to the comparative assessment of a number of alternative means to an end."<sup>22</sup> In other words, some rules are so absolute that they prevent the exercise of one's reason. If the choice is whether or not to keep a promise, no rationality is necessary to see what action is required according to the rule, "one ought to keep one's promises."<sup>23</sup> In short, rules can either enhance or impair rationality, depending on their nature. Generally, decision procedures (comparative assessments of options to ends) encourage rational behavior, while norms discourage such behavior.

### Crisis: Definition and Structure

Since this study will be comparing three cases of decision making during crises, a brief discussion of the definition and structure of crises is in order. In their definitions of a crisis, many scholars emphasize the likelihood of war. As Glenn Snyder and

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<sup>22</sup> Mortimore, op. cit., p. 108.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

Paul Diesing state, "An international crisis is a sequence of interactions between the governments of two or more sovereign states in severe conflict, short of actual war, but involving the perception of a dangerously high probability of war."<sup>24</sup> Hannes Adomeit stresses that the probability-of-war element must be present in any definition of a crisis in adversary relations.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, by this criterion tense episodes between allies, such as the Suez and Skybolt affairs in 1956 and 1962 respectively, should not be called "crises," since in each case there was no risk of war. According to Oran Young, "the onset of a crisis is generally accompanied by a pronounced rise in the perceived prospect that violence will break out or that previously unacceptable modes or levels of violence will be utilized."<sup>26</sup>

Charles Hermann's definition of crisis, on the other hand, excludes the risk of war as a necessary component. His definition seems to apply to conflicts both between adversaries, and between allies. A crisis, he asserts, is a situation which (1) threatens high priority goals of the decision making unit, (2) restricts the amount of time available for response before the situation is transformed, and (3) surprises the members of the decision making unit. Richard Ned Lebow's definition derives both from Hermann's definition and from those of Snyder and Diesing, Adomeit, Young et

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<sup>24</sup> Snyder and Diesing, op. cit., p. 6.

<sup>25</sup> Adomeit, op. cit. p. 42.

<sup>26</sup> Oran Young, The Politics of Force: Bargaining During International Crises (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968), p. 14.

al. An international crisis involves 1) the presence of a perceived threat to concrete national interests, the country's bargaining reputation, and the ability of its leaders to remain in power; 2) the perception on the part of policymakers that actions taken to counter the threat increase the possibility of war; and 3) the existence of perceived time constraints in responding to the crisis situation.<sup>27</sup>

Hermann's definition would appear to hold for many tense international conditions, especially the two of roughly one week's duration (Korea in June, 1950, and the Cuban Missile Crisis in October, 1962) that were the case studies from which he formed the definition.<sup>28</sup> The three components of the definition could be modified in at least two ways, however. First, a crisis not only threatens a nation's goals, but forces decision makers to modify or even jettison those goals and formulate new ones. A crisis, then, is a catalyst to change. Because it sometimes mobilizes and unites the most qualified leaders, resulting in focused, efficient thinking, a crisis can be as much an opportunity as a difficult emergency. On the other hand, the leaders can also be incompetent, in which case a crisis is merely a dangerous turning point, not an opportunity.

Second, a crisis need not be a surprise to decision makers,

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<sup>27</sup> Richard Ned Lebow, Between Peace and War: The Nature of International Crisis (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1981), pp. 9-12.

<sup>28</sup> Charles F. Hermann, Crises in Foreign Policy: A Simulation Analysis (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1969), p. 29.

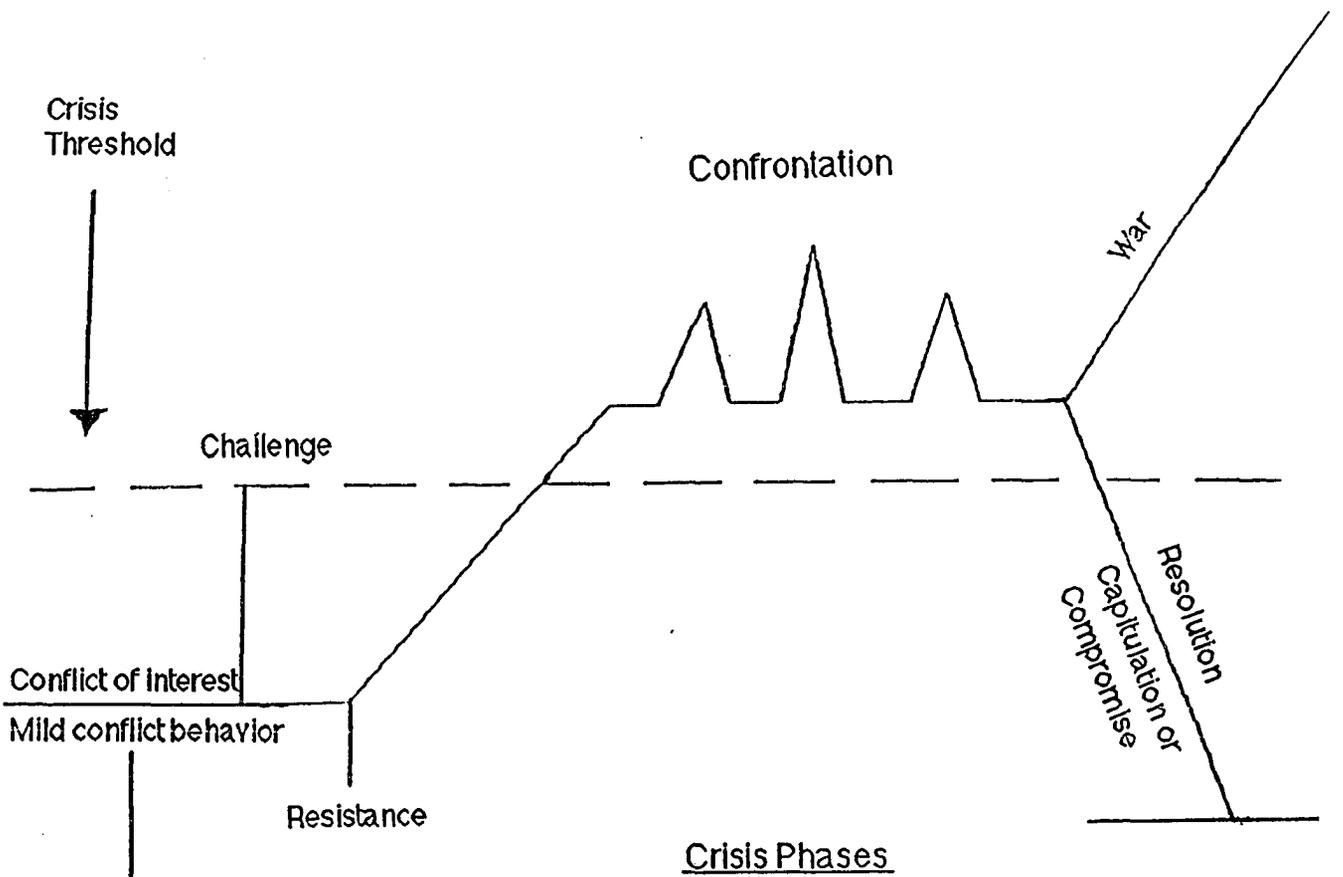
especially not to Soviet decision makers when the crisis occurs in a border state where the primary fear is that a non-Communist party hostile to Moscow will come to power. This was the Kremlin leaders' perennial fear (before Gorbachev took office), stemming from the origins of the Russians' former lengthy hold over East European nations, as well as over contiguous areas.

Two components of Richard Lebow's definition appear to hold for the three conflicts which are the subject of this study (Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Afghanistan), namely the presence of a perceived threat and time constraints. However, the perceived likelihood of war is more problematical. According to Hannes Adomeit, low-level conflicts, such as the conflicts in Eastern Europe and Afghanistan, can be distinguished as "risks of crisis," while conflicts that involve the probability of war between two or more actors can be more accurately termed "risks of war."<sup>29</sup> In the cases of Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Afghanistan, the Soviet leaders probably did not perceive that a war between the USSR and the United States was likely; in fact, the absence of such a probability may well have served as a motivating factor in the Soviet decision to intervene as a way to end the conflict. However, there might have been a slight risk of war between the Soviet Union and the target country, however brief. Thus, the word "crisis" will be used loosely throughout this study.

How does a crisis begin? According to the flow-chart drawn by Snyder and Diesing (see the following page), a crisis involves

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<sup>29</sup> Adomeit, op. cit., p. 43.



Crisis Phases

Reprinted from Glen Snyder and Diesing, Conflict Among Nations (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1977), p. 15

several key elements: the precipitant, challenge, resistance, confrontation, and resolution or war.<sup>30</sup> Thus, a crisis cannot begin between two parties who have a conflict of interest until one of them takes some provocative action (i.e. initiates some form of "conflict behavior") as a way to resolve the conflict of interest. In most cases this action is a threat of violence, which the authors term a "challenge." The challenge is usually preceded by some type of "precipitant." When the other party resists, a confrontation ensues, which can end either by resolution or by war. If the other party does not resist the other party's challenge, no crisis will result.

#### Learning Behavior in Foreign Policy Decision Making

The analytic and cybernetic decision making paradigms correlate with two distinct learning types, respectively: type A "discontinuous" learning and type B "reiterative" learning. As discussed above, the analytic decision maker seeks to maximize his well-being, which requires him constantly to adapt to circumstances, to be in close contact with reality. He generates and weighs a large number of alternatives in order to arrive at the best solution to a given problem. The cybernetic decision maker, on the other hand, prefers a stable environment, places a high value on survival, and relies on a limited set of techniques with which to solve problems.

A clear understanding of the two types of learning is

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<sup>30</sup> Snyder and Diesing, op. cit., p. 7.

fundamental for answering the central question of this study, namely: is there a learning pattern in Soviet foreign policy decision making? We shall determine in what manner the Soviet leaders learned from their decisions to intervene in the three cases by examining four factors, which correspond to attributes of the two learning types. These factors are: (a) images of the opponent; (b) calculations of benefits, costs, and risks; (c) considerations of goals, policies, and commitments; and (d) memories of past relations with the opponent.

Discontinuous learning, or learning by adaptation, then, best characterizes the analytic decision maker. This learning type has five main attributes: (1) high priority placed on the calculation of benefits, costs, and risks; (2) high priority placed on the conscious consideration of national goals, policies, and commitments; (3) the generation of, and weighing of numerous options to arrive at the best solution to a given problem; (4) willingness to reevaluate knowledge gleaned from past experiences in the light of new events; and (5) corrective actions when negative feedback is received.

Just as a rational actor to the best of his knowledge takes actions in which benefits outweigh costs, so a country's leader (who learns by adaptation) decides to change policy only when the country's well-being is increased by such a change, i.e. when the benefits of change outweigh the costs.

Reiterative learning, or learning by repetition (type B) relates to the cybernetic decision maker. This learning type is

characterized by: (1) primary reliance on memories of past events; (2) dependence on subjective images of opponents as a source of information; (3) the reluctance to reevaluate knowledge gleaned from past experiences in the light of new facts or events in the present, even when such a reevaluation will benefit the country as a whole; (4) high consistency in crisis management techniques over an extended period of time; (5) refusal to draw appropriate conclusions from negative feedback and to adjust policy; and (6) small increments of change, remaining constant in amplitude over time.

Cybernetic decision making most often corresponds with type B (reiterative learning) for another reason. The Marxist-Leninist ideology (as one form of cybernetic decision making) provides a distorted picture of reality. It filters out new variables and focuses on familiar ones. This cognitive myopia or "selective inattention" has three consequences: (1) the definition of the situation is perceived as similar to previous crises, (2) feedback after the chosen response to a crisis is perceived as positive (negative stimuli are screened out), and thus (3) the response is felt to have been correct, and reinforcement learning takes place. The type B learner changes his perception of the present to fit the past.

According to Leon Festinger's "cognitive dissonance" theory, inconsistency between two cognitive elements ("knowledges") is psychologically uncomfortable and will motivate one to try to achieve consonance between the two elements. Applied to foreign

policy decision making, an inconsistency between the decision makers' present policy and the policy necessary to achieve an important national objective will cause them to strive to eliminate such an inconsistency. Festinger asserts that there are three ways a decision making group can close the gap between contradictory cognitive elements. It can change the policy. It can change its cognition (i.e. deny the knowledge of the inconsistency). And, finally, it can avoid situations and information which would likely increase the dissonance.<sup>31</sup>

Festinger's theory is useful in elucidating and differentiating the two learning types, discontinuous and reiterative. The reiterative learner generally chooses to eliminate the cognitive dissonance by the latter two methods: denying the knowledge of the inconsistency and avoiding situations and information that would increase the dissonance. The denial is indicated by the reiterative learner's reluctance to reevaluate past knowledge in the light of new facts. The avoidance of information, on the other hand, is demonstrated by his refusal to draw appropriate conclusions from negative feedback and to adjust policy.

As Festinger states, "A fear of cognitive dissonance would lead to a reluctance to take action--a reluctance to commit oneself." The reiterative learner has a greater fear, i.e. lower tolerance, of cognitive dissonance than does the discontinuous

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<sup>31</sup> Leon Festinger, A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance (Evanston, IL: Row, Peterson and Co., 1957), pp. 3, 31.

learner for two main reasons. First, he dimly perceives that his habitual methods of eliminating that dissonance are not in accord with reality. Second, one of the cognitions is always at odds with those generated by risky actions, namely the leadership's infallibility. To risk is to act in the face of uncertainty, and the more frequent the risk-taking, the greater the probability that the actor will make errors. For the reiterative learner (in this case, the leadership) to acknowledge those errors would be to contradict the cognition of its own infallibility. As mentioned above, reiterative learning often corresponds to behavior guided by the Marxist-Leninist ideology. Because of the illegitimate nature of the Soviet regime (the Bolsheviks received only 25% of the vote in the November 1917 elections, losing to the Socialist Revolutionaries), the leadership cannot afford to acknowledge its fallibility. To do so would be to eliminate all justification for its existence. Thus, one way for the reiterative learner to close the gap between the two cognitions is to deny the need for policy changes and to screen out information that would make such changes imperative.

As an aside, it should be mentioned that some scholars such as Jerry Hough argue that the Brezhnev leadership did achieve some degree of legitimacy.<sup>32</sup> To support his thesis, Hough gives several reasons. Brezhnev's length of tenure (18 years) exceeded that of

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<sup>32</sup> Jerry Hough, How the Soviet Union is Governed (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1979). See also Jerry Hough, "The Brezhnev Era: the Man and the System," Problems of Communism (March-April, 1976), pp. 1-4.

Lenin and Khrushchev (although not that of Stalin). He increased his power slowly, not suddenly ousting his rivals, but dissolving their power bases (e.g. Shelepin from the Party-State Control Committee) or demoting them in intervals (e.g. Podgornii and Shelest), and certainly not arresting or killing them. A cult of personality developed over the years; he did not remain simply "chairman of the board" or "primus inter pares." Moreover, unlike Khrushchev he made no dramatic policy changes in the domestic sphere, and even those changes were achieved by delegating tasks to subordinates. Brezhnev also had a penchant for appointing old men; the average age of the Central Committee members was 60 in 1976 (as opposed to 52 in 1961), and the four dominant figures (Brezhnev, Kosygin, Podgornii, and Suslov) were at least 70 years old in 1976. Finally, the succession struggle after Khrushchev was milder than the ones after Lenin and Stalin. In other words, Brezhnev failed to imitate Stalin and Khrushchev by removing first his equals and then those who appointed him.<sup>33</sup>

However, none of these observations, although factually correct, support the argument that the Brezhnev regime had achieved legitimacy. In fact, they support the opposite argument: Brezhnev reinforced the regime built by Lenin which was illegitimate. By underscoring patriotic themes and ensuring the "stability of cadres" all Brezhnev did was strengthen the role of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which was not really a party because there were no rival parties allowed. The Communist

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<sup>33</sup> Hough, "The Brezhnev Era," op. cit., p. 4.

Party lacked the consent of the governed. The Brezhnev leadership will be discussed in further detail in Chapters Three and Five.

We will now return to the discussion of cybernetic decision making. There are two other rationales underpinning the tendency of the cybernetic decision maker to deny the knowledge of an inconsistency between two contradictory cognitive elements. They are: 1) the belief that Marxist-Leninist ideology itself is infallible; and 2) the reliance on Marxism-Leninism to provide a "scientifically-based" policy framework.

The discontinuous learner, by contrast, readily admits past errors and proceeds to change policy as the preferred method of eliminating cognitive dissonance. The decision makers of this learning type construe the need to change policy in an objective--not defensive--manner, as necessary for the country's well-being, not as jeopardizing their right to govern the country. To admit errors is not to admit illegitimacy or intrinsic incompetence.

Likewise, decision making based on the analytic paradigm corresponds with type A discontinuous learning. The analytical decision maker perceives the crisis at hand in its full dimensions. As much as is humanly possible, his mind does not filter out unpleasant or anomalous data. He actively integrates past relevant data with the present situation, and not vice versa, and therefore his thinking processes move forward. They are future-directed, because they are guided by a future goal set by him (not by his immediate predecessors or by some ideological construct higher than reality). An active ("in order to" motive),

rather than a passive ("because of") motive influences his thought and actions.

#### Analytic Traits in Marxism-Leninism

An interesting debate has taken place among Western scholars about the influence of ideology on Soviet decision making.<sup>34</sup> Samuel Sharp and Robert Daniels believe ideology serves merely to rationalize the Soviet leadership's decisions post facto. National interest, they claim, is what drives Soviet domestic and foreign policy. R. N. Carew Hunt, on the other hand, posits that both ideology and "power politics" affect Soviet decision makers. Others, such as David Forte, perceive ideology to be a major factor in decision making. In his study of the Soviet response to the establishment of the European Economic Community, Forte found that changes in ideological pronouncements always preceded policy changes.<sup>35</sup> (Of course, this sequence does not prove conclusively that ideology motivates Soviet decisions; the policy decisions might have been made in advance of the ideological pronouncements.) Finally, the majority of scholars conclude that the Marxist-Leninist ideology serves many purposes, and that different conceptual components of the ideology each serve

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<sup>34</sup> See Part III "Communist Ideology, Belief Systems, and Soviet Foreign Policy," in Erik P. Hoffman and Frederic J. Fleron, Jr., eds. The Conduct of Soviet Foreign Policy (New York: Aldine Publishing Co., 1980), pp. 91-211.

<sup>35</sup> David Forte, "The Response of Soviet Foreign Policy to the Common Market, 1957-1963," Soviet Studies, vol. 19, 3 (January, 1968): p. 373.

separate purposes. The operative parts, according to Richard Lowenthal, are those that "maintain and justify the predominant role of the Communist Party in the Soviet political system." Adam Ulam suggests three potential uses of ideology: as "(implied) prescriptions," as an "analytical discipline for viewing international and domestic politics," and as a symbolic, "quasi-religion giving its practitioners the sense that they are moving forward with the forces of history." Hannes Adomeit discerned as many as five functions of Marxism-Leninism: analytical, operational, utopian, legitimizing, and socializing functions.<sup>36</sup>

One difficulty in measuring the influence of Marxism-Leninism on Soviet foreign policy decision making stems from the fact that Marx and Engels devoted little attention to foreign policy.<sup>37</sup> But one can infer prescriptions, as Lenin did, from concepts such as dialectical materialism and the class struggle. To Lenin domestic and foreign policy are closely connected, since the Russian revolution was intended to be the beginning of an international proletarian revolution. He wrote, "No idea could be more erroneous

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<sup>36</sup> Adomeit, op. cit., p. 330. In his study of the 1948 and 1961 Berlin crises, Hannes Adomeit found that some "formalized ideological perceptions" such as the thesis of the "impending" economic crisis of capitalism, had a "cognitive and operational" influence on Soviet decision makers during the 1948 crisis. But he generally concludes that "ideological formulations sharply contrasted with actual Soviet crisis behavior" in both crises. See p. 114.

<sup>37</sup> Hoffman, op. cit., p. 94.

or harmful than to separate foreign from domestic policy."<sup>38</sup>

In many ways the Marxist-Leninist ideology can be interpreted as an extension of the analytic decision making model and discontinuous learning type. Like the rational actor model itself, and the theory of maximizing expected utility in particular, Marxism emerged in part from economic theory. Marx and Engels thought progress was inevitable (through class struggle) because of man's constant desire to maximize his well-being. They attempted to explain the economics of capitalism, how it had become irrational, because workers were exploited and alienated. The private enterprise system was portrayed as a free-for-all, in which individuals operated blindly and helplessly. Their productive capacity could not be used; surplus commodities could not be sold. Those who controlled the economic system (i.e. owned the means of production) would automatically control the political system. However, Marx assumed that men are inherently rational, and thus the inefficient capitalist system would eventually collapse, and a new "scientific" socialist system would be established on the basis of conscious, rational planning. With man's rationality and the optimality principle as Marxism-Leninism's starting point, it is not surprising that ideology should aid analytical decision making to some extent.

Marxism-Leninism also assigns an important role to

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<sup>38</sup> V.I. Lenin, "The Foreign Policy of the Russian Revolution," in The Lenin Anthology, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: W. W. Norton, 1975), p. 537. This article first appeared in Pravda in June, 1917.

consciousness, or rational understanding. Only when the proletariat had become fully conscious of its role in history would it rise up to overthrow the bourgeoisie and establish communism. In What is to Be Done Lenin exhorted the Social Democrats not to "bow to spontaneity," i. e., not to allow workers merely to fight for better working conditions within the system (a phenomenon that he scornfully dubbed "economism") but to raise their "socialist consciousness," which "can only arise on the basis of profound scientific knowledge."<sup>39</sup> Lenin diverged from Marx's teaching in insisting that such consciousness had to be brought to the workers "from without":

We have said that there could not have been Social-Democratic consciousness among the workers. It would have to be brought to them from without. The history of all countries shows that the working class, exclusively from its own effort, is able to develop only trade union consciousness, i.e. the conviction that it is necessary to combine in unions, fight the employers, and strive to compel the government to pass necessary labour legislation, etc. The theory of socialism, however, grew out of the philosophic, historical, and economic theories elaborated by educated representatives of the propertied classes, by intellectuals.<sup>40</sup>

Marxist-Leninist ideology encourages analytical decision making to the extent that it admonishes Soviet leaders to conduct "scientifically based" policies, and provides Soviet leaders with a system of values, two of which are consciousness and the unremitting application of the Marxist dialectic. This hierarchy

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<sup>39</sup> V. I. Lenin, "What is to Be Done," Robert C. Tucker, ed. The Lenin Anthology (New York: W. W. Norton, 1975), p. 28. This pamphlet was written at the end of 1901, and published in 1902 in Stuttgart.

<sup>40</sup> Tucker, op. cit., p. 24.

of values in turn guides them in setting goals,<sup>41</sup> determining the most appropriate means,<sup>42</sup> and making value trade-offs, i.e. knowing how much of one thing to give up in order to gain more of another. When conscious of its values the leadership is then able to articulate the beliefs and reasons which motivate its decisions and policy choices. In this way, ideology lends itself both to epistemic and evaluative rationality. Consciousness of values and reasons can also facilitate policy modifications when they are necessary. Soviet decision makers are helped to reevaluate knowledge gleaned from past experience when new events and information in the present dictate it.<sup>43</sup> Thus the ideology increases flexibility and the ability to contemplate numerous

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<sup>41</sup> As discussed in an earlier section, there are two forms of rationality in general; one involves the pursuit of goals (analytic), while the other entails the adherence to norms and rules (cybernetic). It can be said that the Marxist-Leninist ideology, for different reasons, enhances both types of rationality.

<sup>42</sup> Lenin wrote, "The Communists must exert every effort to direct the working class movement and social development in general along the straightest and shortest road to the victory of Soviet power and the dictatorship of the proletariat on a world-wide scale." See "'Left-Wing' Communism--An Infantile Disorder," in Tucker, op. cit., p. 617.

<sup>43</sup> Lenin wrote: "That which happened to such leaders of the Second International, such highly erudite Marxists devoted to socialism as Kautsky, Otto Bauer, and others, could (and should) provide a valuable lesson. They fully appreciated the need for flexible tactics; they themselves learned Marxist dialectic and taught it to others...however, in the application [italics in original] of this dialectic they committed such an error, or proved to be so undialectic in practice, so incapable of taking into account the the rapid change of forms and the rapid acquisition of new content by the old forms, that their fate is not much more enviable than that of Hyndman, Guesde [Jules, French socialist, 1845-1922] and Plekhanov." "Left-Wing Communism--An Infantile Disorder," in Tucker, op. cit., p. 616.

options to reach a given objective.

Marxist-Leninist ideology not only can increase the Soviet leadership's knowledge of its own values and goals, but can also expand its knowledge of the international political environment. As Alfred Meyer pointed out, Marxism-Leninism provides Soviet leaders not only with a set of values and goals, but with a "method of analysis" or "gridwork" through which they view and explain reality. With definite criteria and categories, Soviet leaders know which kinds of information they need to gather from the environment, thus information processing is accelerated.<sup>44</sup> In Left-Wing Communism--An Infantile Disorder, written in April, 1920, Lenin urged members of the thinking "vanguard of the proletariat" to "seek out" information that is "nationally specific":

...the unity of the International tactics of the communist working-class movement in all countries demands, not the elimination of variety or the suppression of national distinctions (which is a pipe dream at present), but the application of the fundamental principles of communism (Soviet power and the dictatorship of the proletariat), which will correctly modify these principles in certain particulars, correctly adapt and apply them to national and national-state distinctions. To seek out, investigate, predict, and grasp that which is nationally specific and nationally distinctive, in the concrete manner in which each country should tackle a single international task...such is the basic task in the historical period that all the advanced countries...are going through.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Alfred Meyer, Communism, 3rd ed. (New York: Random House, 1967), p. 5.

<sup>45</sup> V.I. Lenin, "Left-Wing Communism--An Infantile Disorder," in Tucker, op. cit., p. 608. Lenin's Left-Wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder perhaps has served as the most useful handbook

Lenin admonished his disciples always to consider "objective conditions" when contemplating international policies, and never to embark on a risky adventure when the "correlation of forces" was not in the Bolsheviks' favor. International politics, like domestic politics, he believed, is a form of warfare and must be conducted dispassionately. After saving the fledgling Bolshevik regime from advancing German armies and signing the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in March 1918, Lenin wrote:

We have great revolutionary experience, and from that experience we have learned that it is necessary to follow the tactics of relentless advance whenever objective conditions allow it....But we have to adopt the tactic of procrastination, the slow gathering of forces when the objective conditions do not offer the possibility of making an appeal to the general relentless advance.<sup>46</sup>

#### Cybernetic Traits in Marxism-Leninism

While there are indeed ways in which Marxism-Leninism has assisted the analytic decision maker, there are also ways in which it can be seen to assist the cybernetic decision maker. As stated above, Lenin became convinced that the masses would never achieve

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of revolutionary tactics. In it Lenin also advises his fellow Bolsheviks to exploit conflicts between and in capitalist countries ("interimperialist" and "intraimperialist contradictions"). This injunction, like that of starting a "revolution from below" in trade unions and socialist parties, and supporting a Third World country's "national bourgeoisie" until its "proletariat" is stronger, probably helped succeeding Soviet leaders' choice of strategy and tactics vis a vis specific conflicts the details of which Lenin could not have foreseen.

<sup>46</sup> V.I. Lenin, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii, 5th ed. (Moscow: Gosudarstvennyi Izdatel'stvo Politicheskogo Literatury, 1959), vol. 36, p. 340.

more than "trade union consciousness" if left to themselves, and thus a "vanguard of the proletariat" was needed to raise their "socialist consciousness." But just as this vanguard became skilled in methods of thinking, learning, and decision making associated with the analytic decision maker, the masses that they led grew adept in the uncritical, collectivist, and repetitive modes of thinking and learning related to the cybernetic decision maker. In a chapter comparing Marxism and Leninism, Alfred Meyer suggested that "the masses (in particular the proletariat) which in Marxist theory was the main agent of change, now [under Lenin] turned into the main tools of such change."<sup>47</sup> Lenin manipulated the masses in at least two ways: through propaganda and agitation and through organization.

Propaganda and agitation, which initially was intended merely to inform workers, now employed irrational and deceptive means of persuasion.<sup>48</sup> Organizations sprang up everywhere, for every conceivable purpose. Such group activities involved various rituals amounting to a kind of quasi-religious liturgy, to which Adam Ulam alluded as one of the purposes of ideology for the Soviet people. Lenin advocated the establishment of workers' trade unions, workers' self-education circles, youth leagues, women's emancipation groups, circles for reading illegal literature, and "circles among all [Lenin's italics] other sections of the

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<sup>47</sup> Meyer, op. cit., p. 42-3.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

population."<sup>49</sup> He wrote:

We must have such circles, trade unions, and organisations everywhere in as large a number as possible and with the widest variety of functions; but it would be absurd and harmful to confound them with the organisation of revolutionaries, to efface the borderline between them, to make still more hazy the all too faint recognition of the fact that in order to "serve" the mass movement we must have people who will devote themselves exclusively to Social-Democratic activities....The active and widespread participation of the masses will not suffer; on the contrary, it will benefit by the fact that a "dozen" experienced revolutionaries, trained no less than the police, will centralise all the secret aspects of the work--the drawing up of leaflets, the working out of approximate plans; and the appointing of bodies of leaders for each urban district, for each factory district, and for each educational institution, etc.

In this way Lenin laid the foundations for the construction of obedient cadres. Slogans were repeated in study circles and parades to induce fear (e.g. "capitalist encirclement") and guilt (e.g. for having a "bourgeois," "Trotskyist," or "Menshevik" mentality); and to invoke images of opponents and memories of past foreign interventions and wars (e.g. the Allied intervention in 1918, the German invasions in World War I and World War II). These cadres were trained to accept unquestioningly the pronouncements from the leadership, and hence could not, or hesitated to, reevaluate independently the material they were encouraged to accept as "knowledge."

This closed-mindedness did not remain merely among the masses, however. Even Lenin's closest associates were discouraged from forming independent opinions; all factions were "banned" at

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<sup>49</sup> V. I. Lenin, "What is to Be Done?" in Tucker, op. cit., p. 78.

the Tenth Party Congress in 1921. The policy of "democratic centralism" was established, allowing for open debate on issues before a decision on policy was reached, but steely discipline after the policy was executed. (Lenin and his successors then found ways of curtailing discussion, e.g. through walk-outs, etc.).

It would be difficult not to see how these early practices of indoctrination had some long-term impact on future Soviet leaders, who emerged from the ranks of these cadres. Stalin became a much more ruthless dictator than Lenin; more Russians died in his purges (chistki) than by fighting the Germans in World War II. Yet Stalin was one of Lenin's most obedient servants, sensitive to the slightest ideological nuance, and willing to perform "expropriations" (bank robberies) without a single moral whimper. Khrushchev and Brezhnev, in turn, reached the number one position in the Kremlin by posing as the most nondescript, unopinionated of the group of possible successors. They each had learned, in all likelihood, that one's surest way to power is to pretend that one has no capacity for independent, analytical thinking.

Moreover, one way to legitimize one's leadership, as well as to maintain one's position as leader of the Soviet Communist party, has often been to prove to the Russian population that the Soviet Union is a powerful state in international politics, and that socialist forces are prevailing over capitalist forces. Hence all memories, images, and familiar slogans that perpetuate the related themes of the "two camps," the "impending crisis of

capitalism, or the "inevitability of war between socialist and capitalist powers"--the same slogans the leaders themselves grew up hearing--now tended to work in the incumbent Soviet leadership's favor, encouraging it to keep the slogans (lozungi) in vogue. In short, one persistent influence of the Marxist-Leninist ideology on Soviet foreign policy decision making consisted in the tendency repeatedly to perceive the capitalist countries as a source of conflict rather than cooperation, because such a practice had benefited Soviet leaders in the past. One can easily argue that this is less than fully rational behavior, since, as mentioned above, this constricting method of perception (which can be viewed as an instance of type B "reiterative learning") provides a distorted picture of reality. The Soviet leader as cybernetic decision maker filters out new variables (pertaining to cooperation) and focuses on old ones (pertaining to conflict), and thus the definition of the situation is perceived as similar to previous situations or crises; feedback after the chosen response to the crisis is felt to be positive (negative stimuli are screened out); and reinforcement learning takes place. In some cases, new variables are not even filtered out because the data simply did not reach the decision makers at all. The lack of accurate information has been a chronic Soviet problem; it has often been incomplete, late, and biased in favor of what the sender knew the receiver wanted to hear.

Lenin's theory of imperialism, which some have considered

"the principal communist theory of international relations,"<sup>50</sup> in a large sense contributes to cybernetic decision processes. Borrowing from Rudolf Hilferding (1877-1941), a German Social Democrat, and British economist John Hobson (1858-1940), Lenin argued that imperialism, or "the highest stage of capitalism," developed from four conditions: 1) the "tyranny of the cartels," i.e. the concentration of production in "monopolist capitalist associations," such as cartels, trusts, and syndicates; 2) the struggle for sources of raw materials; 3) a financial oligarchy, in which "three to five of the biggest banks in each of the foremost capitalist countries" have formed links between "industrial and bank capital;" 4) the intensified struggle for "spheres of influence" among the capitalist countries, as available land in Africa and elsewhere diminished.<sup>51</sup>

The theory of imperialism of Hobson and Lenin contributes to cybernetic decision making and type B reiterative learning for at least two reasons. First, the theory is highly reductionist, focusing exclusively on economic factors to explain all international conflicts (ranging from global warming and hunger to revolutions, insurgencies, and arms races).<sup>52</sup> Lenin also used "the

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<sup>50</sup> Pfaltzgraff and Dougherty, op. cit., p. 220.

<sup>51</sup> V.I. Lenin, "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism," in Tucker, ed. The Lenin Anthology, p. 270-1.

<sup>52</sup> An intelligent critic might point out that contemporary Soviet academics (in the Soviet Union governed by President Gorbachev) lament the overemphasis on military factors (as opposed to economic factors) in Marxist-Leninist ideology. While there is certainly some truth to this observation, in a larger sense the military factors stem from the heavy emphasis the ideology places

theory to compare and analyze countries that would not otherwise be comparable:

A comparison of, say, the republican American bourgeoisie with the monarchist Japanese or German bourgeoisie shows that the most pronounced political distinction diminishes to an extreme degree in the epoch of imperialism--not because it is unimportant in general, but because in all these cases we are talking about a bourgeoisie which has definite features of parasitism.<sup>53</sup>

It will be recalled that only three years after he wrote this tract on imperialism (early in 1917) Lenin advised the vanguard in Left-Wing Communism (written in April 1920) to seek out "nationally-specific" data. The apparent contradiction can perhaps be accounted for by the fact that in 1917 Lenin was attempting to win the allegiance of a mass following, both within Soviet Russia and in the developing countries, whereas in 1920 he was composing a handbook of revolutionary tactics for his own chosen few (the "vanguard of the proletariat") to follow. In 1917 Lenin attempted to paint a world of "haves" (greedy capitalist nations) and "have-nots" (Soviet Russia, the developing nations, and proletarians within capitalist nations). By linking imperialism with capitalism, Lenin was able to contrast in sharper detail the "evil" forces of imperialism/capitalism with the "virtuous" forces of socialism. After a long description of imperialism in the tract, Lenin added, "We must not, however, lose sight of the

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on economic factors. It is the class struggle between the "exploiters and exploited," and between the grasping imperialist states and the backward (socialist) states that causes war, according to Marx and Lenin.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 272.

forces which counteract imperialism in general, and opportunism [within the workers' movement] in particular, and which, naturally, the social-liberal Hobson was unable to perceive."<sup>54</sup>

The reductionist arguments contained in Lenin's theory of imperialism lead to (cybernetic) decision processes, which are somewhat divorced from the environment. The theory, as we said, neglects other important contributing factors of international conflicts. It prevents rational problem solving for those who believe it, for they cannot solve a given problem in international politics by treating a single cause of the problem, while oblivious of all other causal elements. Moreover, in focusing their attention only on economic factors, the theory's adherents will most likely overlook new, unprecedented causes of international conflicts.

A second reason why the imperialism theory evinces cybernetic decision processes consists in the fact that it is sufficiently all-embracing to permit Soviet leaders to present the masses with a hazy, subjective image of the opponent, against which to rally a greater number of people and nations likely to be anti-capitalist in orientation. The theory has helped Soviet leaders to define the adversary and its strategy and tactics for the "division of the world into spheres of interest." In so doing, the Soviet leadership has created a rationale for constructing its own strategy and repertory of responses, by which to "defend" the

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 255.

first socialist state against the "bourgeois imperialists."

Stalin also exhibited cybernetic tendencies. His behavior during the 1948 Berlin crisis is a good example. After Germany had been defeated in World War II, the Allies were all of the same opinion: Germany should be made incapable of future aggression. In the conferences of 1944 and 1945 plans were drawn up for the demilitarization and "denazification" of Germany. Not only did the United States, France, and Great Britain cooperate fully with the Soviet Union, but they actually gave the latter power many advantages. Berlin, the capital of the defeated country was permitted to lie 100 miles within the Soviet zone. It was only because the Russians were being so uncooperative (i.e. obstructing German economic recovery) that the Americans and western European leaders began planning to include Germany in the European Recovery Program. To give just one example, the Russians refused to share crops grown in the eastern part of Germany with the inhabitants of the industrialized parts of Germany. Instead, they shipped the produce back to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Constricted in his method of perception, Stalin's driving thoughts must have been only that Germany must be punished for its aggression and that the Soviet Union was the most justified in meting out the punishment because it had suffered the most grievously from Hitler's invasion. He reasoned that, since the Western powers were intent on helping Germany to recover, they must be forced out of Berlin (by methods of harassment such as preventing travel and vital freight shipments), thereby facilitating the future

integration of that city into the Soviet zone. Filtered out of this reasoning process are at least two crucial facts or variables. One, the Soviet Union would not have suffered so deeply from Hitler's onslaught had Stalin adequately prepared his country (and refrained from purging the most able generals). Two, a major reason for Hitler's aggression is the Allies' harsh retribution embodied in the Versailles Treaty after the first world war. To prevent a third world war, Germany must be helped to become more integrated in the European community.

Like Lenin, Stalin also utilized organizations in cybernetic ways. The Communist Information Bureau (Cominform), for example, was formed in 1947 and used in general as a mechanism to control the new satrapies in Eastern Europe, and specifically as an instrument for the anti-Tito campaign following Yugoslavia's expulsion from that organization in June 1948.<sup>55</sup> The first meeting of the Cominform was used by Zhdanov and Malenkov in particular to portray the world as divided into "two camps." To give another example, Stalin's personal Secretariat (his private "vanguard of the proletariat"), with its heavy reliance on the secret police, had eventually replaced the party of "Old Bolsheviks," who were killed off during the Yezhovshchina (the period of mass purges directed by Nikolai Yezhov). As is well-known, Stalin ruled without the Politburo most of the time and ceased convening Party congresses, working instead with occasional subcommittees and

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<sup>55</sup> John S. Reshetar, A Concise History of the CPSU (New York: Praeger, 1960), p. 248.

within the small State Defense Committee (comprised of Stalin, Molotov, Malenkov, Beria, Voroshilov; and later, Mikoyan, Voznesensky, Kaganovich, and Bulganin).<sup>56</sup>

Although his policies and behavior differed from those of Lenin and Stalin in important ways, Khrushchev also displayed cybernetic characteristics. His new foreign policy theme of "peaceful existence" as opposed to the "inevitability of war between capitalism and communism" does indicate a shift toward cooperation rather than conflict. At the same time, it must be remembered that this had originally been Malenkov's idea, which Khrushchev simply appropriated as soon as he had rid himself of his political rival. Thus Khrushchev employed the ideological shift as a tactical device by which to increase his personal power, and had it been more advantageous to maintain the "inevitability of war" stance, he would have done so. One is reminded of Stalin's accusations of the Left Opposition (Trotsky, Zinoviev, Preobrazhensky) as desiring too rapid an industrialization, and--after expelling or exterminating it--accusing the Right Opposition of wanting industry to be developed at too slow a pace. As we will see in Chapter Two, Khrushchev's firm belief in Marxism-Leninism caused him to filter out objective facts, perceiving the Hungarian Revolution as a "counterrevolutionary putsch," begun by Western spies and Hungarian emigres, not by the Hungarian people themselves.

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<sup>56</sup> Reshetar, op. cit., p. 246.

### Intervention as a Learning Experience

The direct interventions in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Afghanistan can be seen as learning experiences, after which the Soviet leadership either repeated or modified its behavior.

There is a general dearth of knowledge about intervention, as well as a degree of confusion among scholars over the definition of intervention, and a corresponding lack of cumulative studies on the subject. James Rosenau wrote in 1969:

For all the vast literature on the subject...not much is known about intervention. There is an abundance of specific detail but no general knowledge; a profusion of elaborate impressions but no verified findings....The factors that foster, precipitate, sustain, channel, constrain and/or curb intervention simply have not been scientifically explored with the result that the literature is barren of any established generalizations.<sup>57</sup>

Although more is known now about intervention in general than in 1969, little is known about intervention as an instance of decision making and learning. In order to arrive at a definition of intervention, it is necessary to trace the concept to its antecedent concepts. Intervention, from the Latin *interventio* or *interposition*, implies the presence of boundaries, and thus separate entities (or, in the context of international politics, sovereignties). Sovereignty presupposes legal equality. Therefore, for a foreign intervention to be legitimate, it must take place by the permission of the sovereign or decision maker. The Russian

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<sup>57</sup> James N. Rosenau, Linkage Politics: Essays on the Convergence of National and International Systems (New York: The Free Press, 1969), p. 219.

word for intervention (vmeshatel'stvo) has a clearly negative connotation. It stems from the verb vmeshivat', to meddle in. It is no wonder then, that pre-Gorbachev Soviet leaders reserved this term for interventions by Western "imperialists," and referred to their own actions as ("fraternal") "assistance" or ([bratskaya] pomoshch').

The standard dictionary definition for intervention is "an interference usually by force or threat of force in another nation's internal affairs, especially to compel or prevent an action or to maintain or alter a condition."<sup>58</sup> Broadly speaking, there are two types of intervention: direct and indirect. Direct intervention entails the employment of armed forces either alone or with allied forces. Indirect intervention, on the other hand, refers to the use of means short of force to impose one country's political will on another country. Such means may include friendship treaties, trade agreements, construction projects, military exercises, arms sales, and proxy warfare.

#### Contending Theories of Soviet Interventionism

In order to elucidate the decision making/learning theory and set of propositions to be tested in this study, it would perhaps be useful to review seven explanations or theories in particular that have been promulgated in the past to explain Soviet military interventions.

The official Soviet view toward conflicts in Eastern Europe

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<sup>58</sup> Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, 2d ed. (1980) s.v. "Intervention."

until the Gorbachev era was that fraternal assistance must always be given to the "healthy forces" in the Soviet sphere of influence, who are struggling to put down "counterrevolutions," especially when Soviet citizens are being killed. It had to be demonstrated to other communist countries that the Soviet Union (the first communist country to be established in history) would do all in its power to fight for the victory of socialism in the world, and would not allow counterrevolutionary forces to reverse the gains of socialism.

Although the majority of Western analysts have advocated multicausality in attempting to explain past Soviet interventions, several of them emphasize some factors more than others. For the purpose of analysis, then, we will refer to these factors or partial explanations as "theories." Six theories in particular will be mentioned here: ideological deviationism, deterrence, power, history, grand strategy, and inherent weakness. Each of the theories is based on the rational actor model, since each implicitly draws an analogy between a country (Soviet Union) and a purposive individual. Each theory also employs the organizing concepts associated with the rational actor model, namely: national actor, a well-defined problem, action as rational choice, national goals and objectives, options, benefits, costs, and risks. Each of the six theories neglects the organizing concepts associated with two of the best known alternative models, the

organizational process and bureaucratic politics models.<sup>59</sup>

First, many believe fear of ideological deviationism (and ultimately, capitalist restoration) was the Russians' strongest motive for intervening. Many felt they had to preserve their ideological hold over all countries who had already become communist, and be ready to intervene by force in any situation where either the communist party was in danger of falling and a multiparty system established, or where there was simply a pluralism of ideas within the communist party that threatened to "spill over" into the Soviet Union.<sup>60</sup>

A second theory is derived from deterrence theory, and has three variations. The first views Soviet interventions strictly in the context of U.S.-Soviet relations. If the U.S. stipulates that the region in question lies in its sphere of interest (or does not lie in the Soviet sphere) and demonstrates its resolve to retaliate in some forceful way should the Russians intervene, the

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<sup>59</sup> The organizing concepts of the organizational process model include: organizational actors (the constellation of which is the government), factored problems and fractionated power, parochial priorities and perceptions, standard operating procedures, and action as organizational output. The organizing concepts of the bureaucratic politics model are: players in positions, stakes and stands, power, rules of the game, deadlines, bargaining, an action as political resultant. See Graham Allison, The Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971), pp. 256-258.

<sup>60</sup> Valenta, op. cit.; Bertil Duner, The Bear, the Cubs, and the Eagle: Soviet Bloc Interventionism in the Third World and the U.S. Response (Aldershot, Hants, England: Gower, 1987); Karen Dawisha and Philip Hanson, Soviet-East European Dilemmas: Coercion, Competition and Consent (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, Inc., 1981), pp. 1-8; Jeffrey Simon, Cohesion and Dissension in Eastern Europe: Six Crises (New York: Praeger, 1983).

Soviet Union will desist.<sup>61</sup> According to the second variation, it is the target country's demonstrated resolve to fight back that sufficiently deters the Soviet Army.<sup>62</sup> The third variation is a combination of the two: the U.S. estimate of the target country's ability and resolve to resist the Soviet Army prompts the U.S. to demonstrate its resolve, which in turn deters the Soviet Union. Analysts have claimed that this theory explains the interventions in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Afghanistan (countries the U.S. has not stipulated as lying in the American sphere of interest), as well as the Soviet failure to intervene in Yugoslavia (1948), China (1969), the Middle East (1973), and Poland (1980-1).<sup>63</sup>

A third theory maintains that it is erroneous to refer to "Soviet interventionism" as a unique phenomenon; rather, interventionism is a natural concomitant of a superpower. This viewpoint has its roots in power theory, based on the following premises: capabilities induce intentions; power is relational; and power if it is not exercised decreases. Hence, analysts emphasize the superiority of the Soviet Army, rather than the opponent's will to resist, as an explanation for the interventions in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Afghanistan. They argue that the military weapon is the most effective way of solving the crisis.

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<sup>61</sup> Marita Kaw, "Taking Sides and Taking Risks: Soviet Conflict Involvement Behavior, 1950-1983," Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1986, p. 199.

<sup>62</sup> Christopher D. Jones, "Soviet Hegemony in Eastern Europe," World Politics 29 (1976): 216.

<sup>63</sup> Jonathan R. Adelman, ed. Superpowers and Revolution (New York: Praeger, 1986).

For a superpower, the argument continues, intervention--at least in the Third World--is not only a solution, but an opportunity to gain an ally, i.e. to steal it from the rival superpower. It is also seen by the USSR, Western analysts claim, as a chance to give its armed forces "real" practice, so they do not become weak with disuse. But emphasizing interventionism as not directly connected to communism, one analyst found that Western nations engaged in twelve times as many interventions from 1945 to 1975 as communist countries did.<sup>64</sup>

Others disagree with this theory. As John Girling observed:

The form involvement (or intervention) takes in any specific case cannot with certainty be deduced from the structure of superpower, because of the operation of contingent factors--i.e. elements that are not determined by ...that structure. These contingent factors and their relative importance can only be established by empirical investigation; they are not deducible from the superpower model.<sup>65</sup>

Proponents of a fourth theory point to the history of Soviet relations with Eastern European nations as the crucial variable in explaining Soviet interventionism. After 1945, the Soviet Union found itself with a huge sphere of interest composed mostly of hostile nations. "To leave these countries essentially as they had been before 1939 seemed certain to create a permanent security threat ...but to attempt to transform these countries from above without an internal revolutionary base...also guaranteed that any

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<sup>64</sup> William Eckhardt, "Major World Conflicts and Interventions, 1945 to 1975," International Interactions 5 (1978): 90.

<sup>65</sup> John Girling, America and the Third World: Revolution and Intervention (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), p. 103.

indigenous revolutionary movement would be aimed against Moscow." Thus, according to these views, interventions necessitate future interventions.<sup>66</sup>

Such a theory, still others object, does not explain the increased Soviet interventionism in the Third World in the 1970s. The Soviet Union, proponents of a fifth theory say, is guided at all times by a grand strategy. There are two variations of this "grand strategy" theory: one which views Marxist-Leninist ideology and military strategy as intertwined,<sup>67</sup> and the other which views ideology as moribund and military strategy as the Soviet "empire's" sole guide.<sup>68</sup> This grand strategy integrates all elements of Soviet power, both military and non-military. Non-military methods include: psychological warfare, disinformation, agitation, anti-military subversion, negotiations, and intimidation. According to this view, the "correlation of forces" (sootnoshenie sil) dictates that the Soviet Union will retreat when faced with a stronger or plainly hostile nation, and advance when a nation is weak, distracted, or amenable. For example, after the "Brezhnev Doctrine" was promulgated in 1968, other nations on

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<sup>66</sup> Adelman, op. cit., p. 123.

<sup>67</sup> William R. Kintner, Soviet Global Strategy (Fairfax, Va.: Hero Books, 1987), p. 1-2; John Lenczowski, Soviet Perceptions of U.S. Foreign Policy: A Study of Ideology, Power, and Consensus (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1982), pp. 254-260; Uri Ra'anani, et. al. Third World Marxist-Leninist Regimes: Strengths, Vulnerabilities, and U.S. Policy (Cambridge, Mass.: Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, 1985), p. 17.

<sup>68</sup> Edward N. Luttwak, The Grand Strategy of the Soviet Union (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), pp. 111-116.

the Soviet periphery strengthened their armed forces (viz. Rumania, Yugoslavia, and China). The Russians had to advance elsewhere, so the argument goes. They perceived the Americans' traumatization and squeamishness toward Third World conflicts after their intervention in Vietnam. The four-year period following the 1975 fall of Saigon, then, marked the beginning of a Soviet interventionist phase, since the Russians (and/or their Cuban and East German proxies) moved into Angola (1975), Ethiopia (1978), and Afghanistan (1979). According to the proponents of this view, the Russians retreated again during the Reagan Administration, suffering defeats in Poland and Grenada.

A sixth theory, inherent weakness, is perhaps less tenable than the above five theories, but is outlined here as a useful rebuttal to the grand strategy theory. Seweryn Bialer, a critic of the grand strategy theory (although not an advocate of the weakness theory) writes, "If the present Soviet leaders were doctrinaire fanatics, then their foreign policies would be so far out of touch with the reality of the contemporary world that their defeat would be assured."<sup>69</sup> Instead, the Soviet viewpoint, William Zimmerman asserts, has become more similar to the Western view of international reality (i.e. more rational).<sup>70</sup> Moving to a more extreme position than that of Bialer, analysts such as

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<sup>69</sup> Seweryn Bialer, The Soviet Paradox: External Expansion, Internal Decline (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), p. 349.

<sup>70</sup> William Zimmerman, Soviet Perspectives on International Relations, 1956-1967 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969).

Gervasi suggest that it is not necessarily out of strength that the Soviet Union has intervened in neighboring countries, but out of psychological weaknesses such as fear, dependency (for various political and economic reasons), and hesitation to experiment with methods of exerting Soviet influence, short of force. The inherent weakness theory posits a less than fully rational Soviet leadership, since emotions such as fear and hesitation are not appropriate motives for action. Moreover, the reliance on force simply because it has proved effective in the past is not a fully rational motive. As theorist Nicholas Rescher wrote:

Rationality is not just a passive matter of making good use of the materials one has on hand...it is also a matter of actively seeking to enhance these materials: in the cognitive sense, by developing new evidential resources that enable one to amplify and to test one's conclusions. To rest content with unquestioned habit is a defect of intelligence that is not consonant with rationality.<sup>71</sup>

Hence to rely on the habit of using force, even when one's armed forces are unprepared and when one has not explored alternatives to force, is to act in a less than fully rational manner.

According to Tom Gervasi, the Soviet army might not be so resilient as it appears.<sup>72</sup> Here the simple fact of logistics obtains. The major Soviet military interventions took place in countries on the Soviet periphery. For interventions farther away,

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<sup>71</sup> Nicholas Rescher, Rationality: A Philosophical Inquiry into the Nature and the Rationale of Reason (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p. 5.

<sup>72</sup> Tom Gervasi, The Myth of Soviet Military Supremacy (New York: Harper and Row, 1986), pp. 75-84.

the Soviet Union needed to rely heavily on its Cuban allies. Moreover, in an age of nuclear deterrence, in which a great deal rests on perceptions of strength, periodic interventions (successful because quick and perpetrated against weaker nations) are forms of national image maintenance. According to Adam Ulam, an intervention even "once in a while serves as a useful reminder that the USSR is not to be trifled with."<sup>73</sup>

One neglected variable that supports the weakness theory is the increasing role of Soviet allies in military interventions in the Third World (Afghanistan excepted). Swedish scholar Bertil Duner wagers that the Russians would not have intervened indirectly in Angola, had the Cubans and East Germans not rendered assistance. The Russians had sought their allies' assistance before the invasion of Afghanistan and were refused. The argument runs: "if the Great Bear is dependent on the Cubs for success in the Hunt, and if the latter can turn awkward, then these circumstances in combination can involve a serious limitation of the activities of the Great Bear. He is not as strong as he appears"<sup>74</sup>

The writer's own explanation or set of propositions (to be tested in this study) is that direct military intervention has most often been the habitual response of the cybernetic, rather than analytic, decision making unit. Three reasons support this

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<sup>73</sup> Adam Ulam, "The Anatomy of Policymaking," Washington Quarterly 6 (Spring, 1983): 80.

<sup>74</sup> Duner, op. cit., p. 62.

assertion. First, the cybernetic decision maker, as described by John Steinbruner above, characteristically has a fundamental conservative purpose. He will in all likelihood choose the option that has proven successful in the past, i.e. one that belongs in his fixed repertory of responses. Moreover, he will tend to choose the option (viz. the traditional use of the military) that drastically curtails the number of options available to the opponent. The opponent cannot, for example, negotiate with the Soviet Union while he is simultaneously being attacked by the Soviet Union. Since this military option gives virtually no room for the opponent to maneuver, not much specific information about the opponent is needed; the option can be exercised in a quasi-mechanical manner, provided the Soviet leadership knows that its army is larger than the opponent's army. The decision making process remains relatively simple, since it is divorced from the political environment; the decision makers are shielded from unexpected, extraneous information; and thus the number of intervening variables in the decision process is kept low.

A second reason supporting the assertion that cybernetic decision makers tend to choose direct intervention lies in the theoretical distinction between force and power. Many academicians and strategists have concluded that "force is often resorted to when power fails," and that force is most effective when held in reserve. As one British expert of international relations, F.S. Northedge, wrote:

There is an important distinction...between 'force' and 'power', though the two words are often used

interchangeably. By 'power'--in the sense in which this term is used in political studies--we propose to mean the capability of a person or group to make his or its will felt in the decision-making process of another person or group....A state may be said to have power in the international system when another state recognizes that it cannot be ignored when issues have to be determined. Quite clearly, power in this sense may well reflect the capability of...states to apply force in the physical sense unless their will is complied with. But there are...many other attributes of the powerful state...besides the capability to apply physical force; there is the ability to confer or withhold economic benefits, the attractions of an ideology, prestige or reputation for great achievements in the past, and so on. So far is power not to be precisely equated with force--in the sense of the physical impact of one body upon another--that we might almost say that force is often resorted to when power fails.<sup>75</sup>

Put simply, if a state has more flexibility to exercise other options short of the traditional use of the military to make its will felt (although it has sufficient military capability), it is superior to the state that relies only on the traditional military option whether or not other, more peaceful, options would solve the conflict just as well, and whether or not the state can adequately finance military operations. This line of reasoning relates to the "inherent weakness" theory of Soviet interventionism posited by Gervasi and others. A rational actor (i.e. nation) strives always to choose the best option, given its present capabilities and its short and long-term national interests. If the traditional use of the military is not a realistic option for a weak state, but the state nevertheless proceeds to exercise that option regardless of the costs, then it

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<sup>75</sup> F.S. Northedge, The Use of Force in International Relations (London: Faber and Faber, Ltd., 1974), p. 12.

is less rational than a strong state that chose not to use force in the light of equally viable, nonviolent options.

The idea that the degree of force should exactly match one's real, long-term objectives was perhaps first articulated by the Chinese military commander and thinker Sun Tsu in the fourth century B.C.

Generally in war the best policy is to take a State intact; to ruin it is inferior to this. To capture an enemy's army is better than to destroy it, for to win a hundred victories is not the acme of skill. To subdue the enemy is the acme of skill [emphasis added].<sup>76</sup>

Thirdly, the exercise of the traditional military option probably comes naturally to the Soviet leadership due to the belief inherent in Lenin's theory of imperialism, namely that capitalist states by dint of their political and economic systems increase the likelihood of conflict in the international arena. If the Soviet leadership (before Gorbachev's rise to power in 1985) believed that "communists are being killed" and "capitalist forces are prevailing" in one of the (formerly called) "peoples' democracies" they were likely to perceive danger to the Soviet Union itself. Rendering the beleaguered neighboring state "fraternal assistance" became the Soviet Union's "raison d'etre," as it were, for the conflict would instantly be raised to the abstract ideological level of communism versus capitalism, a conflict that Lenin's theory of imperialism taught Soviet leaders was "inevitable."

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<sup>76</sup> Sun-Tzu (6th century, B.C.), The Art of War (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 41.

In contrast to the cybernetic decisionmaker, the analytic decision maker is prone to choose indirect intervention as an option. As the more rational of the two, he is careful to relate means to ends, that is if a source of conflict in the international system can be eliminated by means that sufficiently achieve the end, and which do not require the traditional use of the military, the analytic agent will implement those means. To exercise the military option and thus alienate the opponent unnecessarily would be less than fully rational. The analytic agent considers a large number of options and only settles upon the traditional military option when the "correlation of forces" is appropriate, and when such an option does not involve taking great risks. His use of physical force is never an ingrained habit.

#### The Direct Interventions in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Afghanistan

Let us now turn to the three specific cases of Soviet intervention which provide the material for the formulation of the decision making/learning theory to be tested in this study. All three of these cases can be examined with respect to the rational actor model for two main reasons. First, the analyst of Soviet foreign policy is faced with so many data constraints concerning the inner workings of the Soviet government, that he is compelled to apply the rational actor model, i.e. one which does not require as much information as other models, such as the "organizational process" and "bureaucratic politics" models. It is not known, for

example, which repertoires and standard operating procedures the Soviet organizations involved in foreign policy actually have for processing information, generating alternatives, and implementing alternative courses of action. Other data constraints include the roles of particular "players" in the decision making process, namely how job pressures, past positions, personalities, and deadlines affect the central players on specific foreign policy issues.<sup>77</sup> Second, by treating events as conscious choices of the Soviet leadership, an analyst can often deduce the leadership's strategic goals and its calculations of costs, benefits, and risks. Third, it has usually been the case that, during international crises, parochial issues become less urgent, and a "rallying around the flag" occurs. The ordinary circle of decision makers narrows considerably.<sup>78</sup>

On the subject of the Hungarian intervention, scholars are divided about key questions. Who made the actual decision? Was the decision making process prolonged? Had the Kremlin already decided to intervene before the October 23 visit to Budapest by Anastas I. Mikoyan and Mikhail A. Suslov, both Deputy Premiers of the Soviet Union?

Some have attempted to prove that no single person made the decision. They assert that there were personal, ideological, and policy divisions, indicated by the fact that the Soviet delegations to Budapest contained representatives of different

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<sup>77</sup> Allison, op. cit., p. 256-7.

<sup>78</sup> Adomeit, op. cit., p. 38.

groups. They quote in part from Khrushchev's memoirs to prove that the decision was a difficult one to make.<sup>79</sup> While they might be correct regarding these isolated details, these scholars simply do not have enough information about the personal and policy divisions to produce a full analysis.

Others claim that the Kremlin had decided early in the crisis that Soviet troops would intervene, and were merely waiting for an appropriate time. They acted slowly to "test the waters" by sending delegations to Hungary and by observing and talking with U.S. policymakers as the Suez Crisis unfolded. The fact that Imre Nagy threatened to withdraw Hungary from the Warsaw Pact only after he discovered that more Soviet tanks were rolling into Hungary on November 1, they say, substantiates this claim.<sup>80</sup> Ernest Nagy, on the other hand, attributes the timing of the decision solely to the Suez crisis.<sup>81</sup>

The decision to intervene in Hungary, it can be argued, was indeed a rational one. The Soviet leaders had a chance to prove to Poland and the other East European countries that they did in fact

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<sup>79</sup> See, for example, Michael G. Fry and Condoleeza Rice, "The Hungarian Crisis of 1956: the Soviet Decision," Studies in Comparative Communism 16 (Spring/Summer, 1983): 85-98; Ferenc Feher and Agnes Heller, Hungary 1956 Revisited: the Message of a Revolution (New York: Allen and Unwin, 1983); Charles Gati, Hungary and the Soviet Bloc (Durham: Duke University Press, 1986).

<sup>80</sup> Tibor Meray, That Day in Budapest (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1969), p. 44.

<sup>81</sup> Ernest A. Nagy, Crisis Decision Setting and Response: The Hungarian Revolution (Washington, DC: National Defense University Research Directorate, 1978), p. 22. The author bears no relation to the Hungarian leader.

have the will to intervene militarily, despite the fact that they had refrained from doing so in the Poznan uprising in Poland earlier that year. Moreover, it was easier to intervene in Hungary than it would have been in Poland, since Hungary was a smaller country with a weaker military and shorter history of "anti-Sovietism" than Poland. If a relative benefit is synonymous with lower cost, then the invasion of Hungary benefitted the Soviet Politburo more.

The rational actor model is useful for investigating the intervention in Czechoslovakia (on August 20, 1968) as well. Other studies based on the bureaucratic politics model may have placed too much emphasis on Soviet officials' institutional loyalties. Jiri Valenta, for example, employed the bureaucratic politics model in an attempt to illustrate the "pulling and hauling" among the various Soviet bureaucracies. He argued that Soviet officials' positions on the decision to intervene were shaped by their institutional interests. Brezhnev merely played the role of "primus inter pares."<sup>82</sup> Valenta also emphasized the importance of those who provided the Kremlin with information (such as the ambassador to Czechoslovakia, Chervonenko) and how they distorted the leadership's perception of the situation and thus of the decisions that need to be made (if, indeed, any).

There are several reasons why, in this writer's view, Valenta's "bureaucratic politics" approach is inadequate. First,

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<sup>82</sup> Jiri Valenta, Soviet Intervention in Czechoslovakia, 1968: Anatomy of a Decision (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), p. 15.

as explained earlier, while bureaucratic politics certainly influence policy formation, in crisis situations (e.g. Czechoslovakia in 1968) factions tend to act in concert, guided by common national security interests. As the situation developed into a crisis, the opposition that did exist within the Soviet government decreased dramatically. Second, as Dmitri Simes has pointed out, the coalitions that emerged reflected functional, rather than institutional, interests. Some officials who were "doves" on the Czechoslovak issue were "hawks" on other issues. According to Simes, "representatives of the party apparatus, government agencies, and the military establishment were to be found in both camps."<sup>83</sup> Third, the Soviet leadership had the final authority to launch the invasion, since Moscow controlled the Warsaw Pact military apparatus. It is true, as Thomas Wolfe pointed out, that during its first four years in power, the Brezhnev-Kosygin regime had learned to tolerate a certain degree of restiveness among the East European countries (e.g. Rumania).<sup>84</sup> But these disagreements among different East European leaders were generally insignificant in terms of Warsaw Pact reliability. Finally, according to Simes, no Soviet official (and certainly no Politburo member) was dismissed after the intervention. There was a four-year gap between the invasion and the dismissal of

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<sup>83</sup> Dmitri Simes, "The Soviet Invasion of Czechoslovakia and the Limits of Kremlinology," Studies in Comparative Communism, 8 (Spring/Summer, 1975): 176.

<sup>84</sup> Thomas W. Wolfe, Soviet Power and Europe: 1945-1970 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1970), p. 146.

Shelepin.<sup>85</sup> Thus, even if some Politburo members voted against the intervention, this division of opinion was not extreme enough to cause any structural changes in the apparatus itself.<sup>86</sup> In sum, the debate within the leadership and within the Warsaw Pact in all likelihood did not deviate substantively from Lenin's doctrine of "democratic centralism."

In terms of military strategy, the Czech situation provided the Soviet Union with an excuse for the forward deployment of Warsaw Pact forces in an area confronting American ground forces. On the other hand, the invasion stimulated NATO to increase expenditures and manpower, and to deploy early warning systems.<sup>87</sup>

The rationality of a particular decision depends on the values of the decision maker. Superficially, the situation in Czechoslovakia seems to have been less urgent than in Hungary from the Soviet leadership's viewpoint, since Dubcek did not threaten to withdraw from the Warsaw Pact. But the Soviet leadership's greatest fear might have been that the "infection of ideas" (resulting from Dubcek's decision to abolish censorship) would spread to the Ukraine, other Eastern European countries, and to prominent Soviet intellectuals other than the already "infected" Andrei Sakharov.

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p. 179.

<sup>86</sup> It is not known conclusively whether the vote was unanimous or whether some opponents of the invasion (e.g. Suslov and Kosygin) actually voted against this option. For an extensive list of sources supporting both views, see Dawisha, op. cit., p. 287-88n.

<sup>87</sup> William I. Zartman, Czechoslovakia: Intervention and Impact (New York: New York University Press, 1970), 96.

Again, in regard to the intervention in Afghanistan, the rational actor model is the most appropriate. Although a number of revealing statements have been made by participants in the decision as a result of glasnost in Gorbachev's Soviet Union, there is still a great deal of mystery surrounding Soviet decision making on security matters. Moreover, the familiar tendency was operative in 1979--as in 1956 and 1968--for the circle of top decision makers to narrow during a national crisis, and consequently, for parochial interests to fade into the background. This fact would seem to further justify the use of the rational actor model.

Many scholars have concluded that, because the situation there caught the Russians off guard, the Soviet Union did not have a "grand strategy." The decision to intervene, they claim, resulted from the failure of the Russians to control other factors, such as the emergence of Iranian influence, Daoud's anti-communist repression, and the PDPA takeover.<sup>88</sup>

Those scholars who argue against the "grand strategy" thesis cite other disadvantages of the intervention. The invasion threatened East-West relations, tarnished Soviet relations with the Third World, and crippled the already damaged Soviet economy. Other, more minor effects include the tying down of 100,000 of the

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<sup>88</sup> David Gibbs, "Does the USSR Have a Grand Strategy? Reinterpreting the Invasion of Afghanistan," Journal of Peace Research 24 (1987); Thomas Hammond, Red Flag Over Afghanistan (Boulder, Co.: Westview Press, 1984); J. Bruce Amstutz, Afghanistan: the First Five Years of Soviet Occupation (Washington, DC: National Defense University, 1986).

USSR's best troops and the United States' boycott of the Moscow Olympics. Adherents to the "grand strategy" thesis, on the other hand, enumerate the advantages of the invasion: proximity of Middle East oil, lessened Islamic influence in Soviet Central Asia, access to Afghanistan's mineral resources, and improved military capabilities in the Persian Gulf region.

Yet the fact that Soviet decision makers made mistakes, by underestimating certain factors and taking actions in which the costs ultimately outweighed the benefits, does not indicate that they are not rational actors or grand strategists per se. Rationality is not synonymous with infallibility. Rationality requires, instead, that an actor choose appropriate means to achieve appropriate ends, in the most intelligent way he can in the prevailing circumstances, given his necessarily limited information base. Of course, some decisions can be more rational than others if, for example, they are based on more information and a fuller cost-benefit analysis.

#### Focus and Approach

In order to determine which tendency (analytic or cybernetic) best describes the Soviet leaders in their decisions to intervene in Hungary (1956), Czechoslovakia (1968), and Afghanistan (1979), and to what degree each leader learned from the previous intervention, the writer will employ Alexander George's

methodology of "controlled comparison."<sup>89</sup> The objective of the study is to develop a deeper understanding of the trends and patterns in Soviet foreign policy decision making and learning. As Harry Eckstein has emphasized, comparative case studies are necessary for the "discovery of valid generalizations about political phenomena."<sup>90</sup> The method has three phases. Phase one is the design of the comparative study, which according to Alexander George involves five tasks: 1) the existing theory of Soviet interventions is to be discussed; 2) the aspects of the theory that need refinement are to be singled out; 3) the independent, dependent, and intervening variables are then identified; 4) the appropriate cases are selected; and 5) the general questions to be asked of each case formulated.

Phase two is the actual undertaking of the case studies. The three cases will be examined, using the methods of historical inquiry, but transforming the specific explanation into the concepts comprising the conditions, the independent and the intervening variables of the theoretical framework that was

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<sup>89</sup> Alexander George, "Case Studies and Theory Development: The Method of Structured, Focused Comparison," in Paul Gordon Lauren, ed., Diplomatic History: New Approaches (New York: The Free Press, 1979), pp. 43-68.

<sup>90</sup> Harry Eckstein, "Case Study and Theory in Political Science," in F. I. Greenstein and N. W. Polsby, eds. Handbook of Political Science (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1975), VII: 79-138. For more discussion of the comparative case method, see Arend Lijphart, "The Comparable-Cases Strategy in Comparative Research," Comparative Political Studies 8 (July, 1975): 158-174; Alexander George, Deterrence in American Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), chaps. 16-19; Paul Diesing, Patterns of Discovery in the Social Sciences (Chicago: Aldine-Atherton, 1971), pp. 182-196.

specified in phase one.

Finally, phase three involves drawing the implications of the case studies for the theory of Soviet decision making and intervention. As each case is used to generate a different causal pattern, a fuller typological theory can be developed.

The independent variables to be examined in this study are the four selected factors of the decision making process: (1) the decision makers' image of the opponent; (2) their goals, policies, and commitments vis a vis the opponent; (3) their perception of benefits, costs, and risks; and (4) their memories of past events. We will examine the role of these four factors in the Soviet decision to intervene in the three cases.

#### Research Questions

Indispensable for the collection of relevant data is the precise formulation of a set of standardized, general research questions which one can address uniformly across the case studies. This is the fifth task in "Phase One" of George's "method of structure, focused comparison," as described above. To be effective in guiding data collection and analysis, George specified that the questions must not be "couched in overly specific terms;" they must be applicable to all cases, reflecting adequately the research objectives and theoretical focus of the inquiry.<sup>91</sup> George added that the general questions should not prevent the researcher from posing more specific questions germane

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<sup>91</sup> George, "Case Studies and Theory Development," op. cit., p. 62.

to a particular case in order to draw out the idiographic elements that are "of interest in and of themselves, if not also for theory development."<sup>92</sup> The following general questions will be addressed in the examination of the Soviet interventions in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Afghanistan.

- 1). What is the domestic context of the Soviet leadership's decision to intervene in all three cases?
- 2). How influential is the Soviet leadership's image of the target country in the decision making process?
- 3). Did the Soviet leaders consciously consider all the benefits, costs, and risks associated with intervention, and their goals, policies, and commitments (short and long-term) vis-a-vis the target country before deciding to intervene?
- 4). What were the Soviet leaders' memories of past relations with the target country (i.e. historical background), and did these shape their decision to some extent?
- 5). What was the international context of the decision to intervene in each case?
- 6). What methods of deception did the Russians employ in each case?

By first answering the standardized questions, one can cautiously infer answers to the two larger questions stated at the beginning of the study: 1) Which factors influence the Soviet leaders to decide to intervene in a country located in its sphere of influence or near its border? 2) What accounts for the "failure" of the intervention in Afghanistan, as compared to the "success" of the interventions in Hungary and Czechoslovakia?

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

### Initial Propositions

It is necessary for a researcher to make his initial assumptions explicit so that after the study he can refer back to them to confirm their accuracy, correct them if they are completely mistaken, and/or add qualifiers to make them more accurate.

1) The more prevalent the role of subjective images of the opponent and memories of past relations with the opponent in the decision making process (as opposed to objective cost-benefit calculations), the more likely the decision maker will behave in a cybernetic manner and will choose military intervention as the best solution to a crisis in a neighboring country.

2). The more oligarchic (less "collective") the power structure in the Kremlin, the more cybernetic will be the decision making process, because the leaders will tend to think in similar ways. The easier it is to reach a consensus, the less likely it is that all possible options--and costs and benefits of each option--will be consciously considered. Conversely, the more collective the leadership, the more analytical will be the decision making process, whereby all possible options are weighed.

3) The more imaginative and innovative the number one Soviet leader is in the domestic sphere, the more innovative he will also be in solving crises in foreign policy.

4) The more distracted the United States is--or appears to be--by other international events or crises, the more likely it is that the Soviet leadership will decide to intervene militarily

in a nearby country, where another crisis is brewing that affects Soviet national interests.

5) The more oligarchic (as opposed to collective) the Soviet power structure and the smaller the degree of collaboration with East European leaders, the greater the speed with which the Soviet leaders decide to intervene.

6) Confidence in risk-taking increases with repetition.

7) The Soviet leaders will intervene, among other reasons, in order to prevent the target country from forging extensive economic ties with Western or pro-Western countries.

8) The memory of past victories over the opponent tends to reinforce beliefs that the Soviet Union can subdue the opponent again by military force in a timely fashion.

CHAPTER 2  
SOVIET INTERVENTION IN HUNGARY

Although the Soviet leaders deliberated to a certain extent before arriving at the decision to intervene in Hungary in 1956, one can conclude that the Soviet leaders were nevertheless predisposed to intervene. From their viewpoint, the intervention was successful because it quickly suppressed the Hungarian Revolution, paved the way for a pro-Soviet regime to be established, and occurred simultaneously with another crisis; international criticism was thus minimized. It will be argued in this chapter that the Russians chose rather quickly to intervene, i.e. without excessive "pulling and hauling." Given the relatively predominant role of images and memories of Hungary in the overall decision making process (as opposed to strictly objective calculations of benefits, costs, and risks in relation to long-term goals), the Soviet leadership can be characterized as a cybernetic, rather than an analytic, decision making unit.

This chapter is composed of several parts: 1) a chronological account of the crisis; 2) a discussion of the domestic context; 3) an analysis of the role of four factors of decision making; 4) a discussion of the international context; 5) an analysis of Soviet methods of deception; 6) a discussion of the Soviet leadership's

performance as a cybernetic decision making unit and reiterative learner; and finally 7) a brief discourse on the cybernetic uses of Marxism-Leninism in 1956.

### Chronology

The most intense phase of the revolution lasted twelve days. On October 23, 1956 in Budapest, more than two hundred Hungarian students held a demonstration in order to publicize their 16-point resolution and to show solidarity with Poland (where, in June, an industrial strike originating in Poznan turned into a national revolt). The Hungarian students marched to the radio building from the Bem statue, commemorating General Josef Bem, a hero of the War of Independence of 1848-9 who was of Polish origin and an idol of the Hungarian poet Sandor Petofi. The students demanded that Imre Nagy (former prime minister from July 4, 1953 to April 18, 1955) replace Erno Gero (prime minister at the time).<sup>93</sup> Gero gave a speech, denouncing the demonstrators as enemies of the people. Fighting broke out and continued throughout the night. The Hungarian government called in Soviet troops. At the outbreak of the uprising, two mechanized Soviet divisions, the second and seventeenth, were stationed in Hungary. The Soviet 32nd and 34th Mechanized Divisions stationed in Rumania entered Hungarian territory on October 24.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> George Mikes, The Hungarian Revolution (London: Deutsch, 1957), p. 73-4.

<sup>94</sup> Ernest Nagy, Crisis Decision Setting and Response: the Hungarian Revolution (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Research Directorate, 1978), p. 3.

Thus the first Soviet intervention in Hungary in 1956 began around 2 a.m. on October 24.<sup>95</sup> At 7 a.m. the radio announced that Imre Nagy had been recommended during an all-night sitting of the Central Committee to be Prime Minister, replacing the former Prime Minister Andrus Hegedus. Gero would continue as First Secretary of the Party. Other Stalinists stayed in top government posts.

The next day (October 25), a massacre took place at the Parliament building, where the Chairman of the Council of Ministers presided. In support of the AVH, Soviet tanks guarding the building suddenly opened fire on unarmed demonstrators. Soviet deputy premiers Anastas Mikoyan and Mikhail Suslov visited Budapest, scolded Gero for unnecessarily antagonizing the Hungarian population, and ordered him to relinquish his power completely. Thus, two hours after the massacre Gero's ouster was announced, Janos Kadar (a younger "home Communist" with a reputation as a centrist) replaced him as First Secretary. Had this been announced earlier, the massacre probably could have been avoided.

The first Soviet intervention officially ended with the announcement on October 28 of a ceasefire, which became effective on October 30.<sup>96</sup> From the 26th to 29th of October, the violence subsided. On October 30 some Soviet armed forces began to withdraw

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<sup>95</sup> United Nations Report of the Special Committee on the Problem of Hungary, General Assembly, 11th Session, no. 18 (New York, 1957), p. 6. Soviet tanks rolled into Hungary on two separate occasions, October 24 and November 4, 1956. The second intervention was the most significant.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

from Budapest.

On the same day Imre Nagy announced the abolition of the one-party system.<sup>97</sup> Prominent non-Communist figures were introduced into the government.<sup>98</sup> Soviet tanks headed toward the Hungarian borders, but then circled and returned by other roads, encompassing the military aerodromes. The Soviet government published a declaration on October 30 expressing its willingness to discuss with the satellites the question of Russian troops stationed on their territory. It propounded the basic concept of "national communism."

Meanwhile the Suez crisis began to unfold. Israel invaded Egypt on October 29, and three days later Britain and France began bombing Egyptian ports and communications centers in preparation for troop landings.<sup>99</sup>

On October 31 reports reached Nagy that new Soviet troops were entering Hungary from Miskolc, a city about 80 miles northeast of Budapest. Nagy met five times with Soviet Ambassador Andropov, but received unconvincing replies.

In all probability the Kremlin made the decision to deploy Soviet forces on Tuesday, October 30 or early on Wednesday,

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Ernest Nagy, Crisis Decision Setting and Response: the Hungarian Revolution (Washington: National Defense University Research Directorate, 1978), p. 10. Ernest Nagy bears no relation to the Hungarian leader.

<sup>99</sup> Seyom Brown, Faces of Power: Constancy and Change in United States Foreign Policy from Truman to Johnson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), p. 106.

October 31. It was during the night of October 31 and morning of November 1 that new Soviet troops entered the country.<sup>100</sup> Moreover, three of the most prominent Soviet leaders were already "consulting" with first secretary of the Polish party Wladyslaw Gomulka in Brest, Poland by November 1: First Secretary Nikita Khrushchev, Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov, and Georgi Malenkov (prime minister and unofficial head of the "collective leadership" until his demotion in February 1955). Meanwhile Nagy's relations with Moscow broke down early on November 1: he announced Hungary's withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact and appealed to the United Nations to defend Hungary's neutrality. Finally, the Soviet Praesidium (former name for the Politburo) supported Nagy's appointment of non-Communists to his cabinet and later announced the formation of a multiparty system on October 27. On October 28 he formed a six-member centrist presidium to replace the Central Committee and the following day disbanded the Hungarian state security police (AVH). It was not until October 30 or 31 that Soviet leaders expressed their disapproval of Nagy's actions.<sup>101</sup>

At 4 a.m. on November 4, fifteen Soviet divisions with 6,000 tanks launched an attack on Hungary. This attack came after three days of deception. The Russians negotiated with the Hungarians about the withdrawal of Soviet troops, but at the same time flew Kadar to the Soviet Union to establish a new pro-Soviet

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<sup>100</sup> Charles Gati, Hungary and the Soviet Bloc (Durham: Duke University Press, 1986), p.145-8.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., pp. 145-8.

government. Meanwhile, Khrushchev, Molotov, and Mikoyan were informing the other East European leaders of their decision (on November 1 and 2).

From the 5th to 11th of November, fighting continued in various regions throughout Hungary, with the Budapest industrial district of Csepel as one of the last centers to fall. Imre Nagy and his supporters Pal Maleter, Jozsef Szilagy, Miklos Gimes, and Geza Losonczy sought refuge in the Yugoslavian embassy, but were abducted on November 22 and later, on June 17, 1958, executed in Moscow. The total number of Hungarian deaths is estimated to have been from 2,700 to 2,900, and the number of wounded to about 13,000.<sup>102</sup> Close to 200,000 refugees fled across the Austrian border.<sup>103</sup>

#### Domestic Context

Despite the Soviet leaders' pretensions to "collective leadership," Nikita Khrushchev was clearly the most influential decision maker in the Presidium by 1956. For this reason, his motives for intervening will be discussed first. Khrushchev was motivated primarily by a desire to gain and keep political power, and he saw that liberalizing the East European countries would add to his power. When he then thought he had gone too far, he reversed his policies. The former disciple of Stalin assumed the Soviet Army would intervene if half-concessions did not safeguard

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<sup>102</sup> David J. Dallin, Soviet Foreign Policy After Stalin (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1961), p. 371.

<sup>103</sup> Adam Ulam, Expansion and Coexistence (New York: Praeger, 1968), p. 596.

Soviet control in Hungary.

Khrushchev had more qualities in common with Stalin than historians usually ascribe to him. He valued in Stalin what he valued in himself: strength of will.

I still mourned Stalin as an extraordinarily powerful leader. I knew that his power had been exerted arbitrarily and not always in the proper direction, but in the main Stalin's strength, I believed, had still been applied to the reinforcement of Socialism and to the consolidation of the gains of the October Revolution. Stalin may have used methods which were, from my standpoint, improper or even barbaric, but I haven't yet begun to challenge the very basis of Stalin's claim to a place of special honor in history. Even in death he commanded almost unassailable authority, and it still hadn't occurred to me that he had been capable of abusing his power.<sup>104</sup>

Khrushchev's early career as Stalin's appointee in the Ukraine reveals his own ruthless ambition. Stalin appointed him general secretary of the central committee of the Ukrainian Communist Party in December, 1937 to carry out an extensive purge there. His successor, Stanislas Kosior, was transferred to Moscow. In close cooperation with the henchmen of Nikolai Yezhov (chief of security police, the NKVD, from 1936 to 1938), Khrushchev purged almost all top Party and government officials in the Ukrainian provinces. An editorial in Bilshovik Ukrainy gave Khrushchev the credit he deserved:

The merciless uprooting of the enemies of the people--the Trotskyites, Bukharinites, bourgeois nationalists, and all other spying filth--began only after the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party sent the unswerving Bolshevik and Stalinist, Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev, to the Ukraine to lead the Central Committee

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<sup>104</sup> Nikita S. Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers (Boston: Little, Brown, 1970), p. 344.

of the Ukrainian Communist Party.<sup>105</sup>

On January 20, 1938 Nikita Khrushchev worked to get Postyshev expelled from the Politburo, and had himself nominated to the position. On April 17, 1938 he purged D. M. Yevtushenko, a member of the Ukrainian Central Committee. Finally he got his predecessor, Kosior, expelled from the Politburo and filled the resulting vacancy as a full-fledged member in the Politburo. In nine years Khrushchev--the peasant boy from Kalinovka--went from cell secretary to general secretary.

This rapid ascent to power would not have been possible, unless Khrushchev highly valued political power. He delivered the "Secret Speech" on February 25, 1956 in order to establish himself as the number one decision maker in the Kremlin. By initiating this exposition of Stalin's crimes, even though it indirectly also incriminated himself, Khrushchev made his own sins seem more forgivable, and those of Malenkov, Molotov, Kaganovich and others less so. Also, having grown accustomed to Stalin's dictatorial ways, Khrushchev could not but feel impatient with the "collective leadership" after March, 1953. None of Stalin's successors had any experience in reaching a consensus on policy matters.

Probably the only way to dispel the Stalinist cult of personality (still prevalent even after the Georgian dictator's death), was to replace it with a Khrushchevian personality cult. And the only way, in all likelihood, to differentiate his image

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<sup>105</sup> Bilshovik Ukrainy, no. 7, 1938, quoted in Lazar Pistrak, The Grand Tactician: Khrushchev's Rise to Power (New York: Praeger, 1961), p. 25.

from Stalin's was to soften it. Thus he exposed Stalin's crimes, posing as the true man of the people, who would provide more consumer goods and housing, free political prisoners, permit more creativity in the arts, and help Russia live in "peaceful coexistence" with the Western imperialist nations.

Good will visits and official statements at this time gave the world the impression that the Soviet Union was undergoing a qualitative change. At the 1955 Geneva summit conference, Bulganin said: "Should any nation desiring to pursue a policy of neutrality and non-participation in military groupings...raise the question of having their security and territorial integrity guaranteed, the great powers should accede to these wishes." <sup>106</sup>

But statements such as these gave rise to rebellions in Eastern Europe that Khrushchev had never intended. He was determined to use force if necessary. He told Yugoslav Ambassador Micunovic as early as July 15, 1956: "If the situation in Hungary still gets worse, we here have decided to use all means at our disposal to bring the crisis to an end." <sup>107</sup> Micunovic construed this as a veiled threat. In his diary he wrote: "Now they [the Russians] threaten us with the use of the Soviet Army in Hungary and invite Yugoslavia to understand them properly and remain

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<sup>106</sup> As quoted in Stephen S. Kaplan, Diplomacy of Power: Soviet Armed Forces as a Political Instrument (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1981), p. 223.

<sup>107</sup> Veljko Micunovic, Moscow Diary (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1980), p. 8.

silent."<sup>108</sup>

Some would claim that Khrushchev and his colleagues found it difficult to decide how to solve the Hungarian quandary, and attempted other methods to conciliate the Hungarians before finally deciding to intervene militarily. This is true, to some extent. Khrushchev did replace Matyas Rakosi with Erno Gero at the July meeting of the Hungarian Central Committee, presided over by Mikoyan. Also, he did arrange the meeting between Tito and Gero in the Crimea to gain the Yugoslavs' support, convene the Presidium meeting on October 30, and meet with East European leaders on November 1.

However, these measures were taken half-heartedly, probably to gain legitimacy. First, Khrushchev most likely replaced Rakosi because he was forced to, under the circumstances. Mikoyan had flown from Moscow to attend the session, because the Soviet Ambassador in Budapest, Yevgeni Kiselev (Andropov's predecessor before 1954) had reported that if Rakosi were not replaced, a revolution would ensue.<sup>109</sup>

Second, the arranged meeting between Tito and Gero did not succeed in changing Tito's lucid view of the latter as being no more popular and effective a leader than Rakosi. In his famous speech at Pula on November 11, 1956, he said:

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid., p. 88.

<sup>109</sup> David J. Dallin, Soviet Foreign Policy After Stalin (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1961), p. 369. "Yevgeni Kiselev...was an intelligent, courageous, and influential man; it was Kiselev who, after Stalin's death, submitted a gloomy but honest report on the situation in Hungary."

They [the Soviet leaders] made it a condition that Rakosi would go only if Gero remained. And this was a mistake, because Gero differed in no way from Rakosi. He pursued the same kind of policy and was to blame just as much as Rakosi was.<sup>110</sup>

Third, Khrushchev did not ask the other East European leaders' advice about the decision to intervene; he "informed" them. Khrushchev and Malenkov met with Gomulka in Brest on November 1, with Tito on the island of Brioni on November 2, and the others in Bucharest between these two visits.<sup>111</sup> However, Khrushchev and Malenkov merely wanted their verbal support. Khrushchev wrote:

All we had to do was explain the state of affairs. We didn't have to convince anyone of the need to take decisive action because these comrades had already been thoroughly informed by their ambassadors.<sup>112</sup>

If the Kremlin leaders had really feared the possible consequences of a military intervention, it stands to reason that they would have discussed the matter in greater detail with others. Yet, judging from Khrushchev's memoirs and Micunovic's diary, there is no mention of any consideration of possible costs of an intervention. There would only be wasted effort on the Russians' part, should "internal revolutionary forces in Hungary liberate themselves" (i.e. should Hungarian forces loyal to Moscow

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<sup>110</sup> Borba, November 11, 1956; address by the Secretary General of the Yugoslav League of Communists, Tito, before a meeting of League members in Pula; cited in Paul Zinner, ed. National Communism and Popular Revolt in Eastern Europe (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957): 516-541.

<sup>111</sup> Charles Gati, Hungary and the Soviet Bloc (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1986), p. 152.

<sup>112</sup> Khrushchev, op. cit., p. 420.

successfully suppress the popular uprising).

Moreover, despite Khrushchev's claim that he and his colleagues "changed their minds back and forth" on the issue, it must be remembered that he wrote his memoirs after 1964, when forcibly retired for being "hare-brained." Naturally his motive was to vindicate himself, portraying himself as a cautious decision maker.

When exactly was the decision to intervene reached? It is important to distinguish between a decision about the willingness to use force and a decision about the timing in the use of force. The decision to solve the crisis by military force if necessary was made possibly as early as July 15, as Khrushchev's conversation with Micunovic suggests. The exact date of the tactical decision to intervene is more difficult to establish. Clues to this puzzle can be found by examining the connection between the Suez Crisis and the Hungary intervention. Most scholars adhere to one of three main views: there is a tight link between the two crises; there is no link between them; and there is some link. The general consensus is that there is some link, i.e. the Suez Crisis was a convenient distraction for the Soviet leaders.

Ernest Nagy (who bears no relation to the Hungarian leader) and George Mikes believe the Russians would not have intervened had the Israelis, British, and French not attacked Egypt on October 29. Mikes speculates that, had the Suez crisis occurred

one month later, "Hungary would be another Poland today."<sup>113</sup>

J. M. Mackintosh asserts, on the contrary, that the alleged decision to withdraw tanks from Hungary (after the October 24th intervention) was not affected by the news of the Israeli mobilization for war, nor by the news of the Anglo-French ultimatum. The Soviet leaders knew as early as October 25 that the Israelis had mobilized their army, since the Soviet legation in Israel would have been informed at that time. Nevertheless, TASS announced the alleged Soviet intention to leave Hungary at 11 a.m. on October 31, after the Anglo-French ultimatum had been publicized at 4 a.m. that same morning.<sup>114</sup>

Michael Fry and Condoleeza Rice, and others disagree, arguing that the Suez affair influenced the Soviet decision about the timing of the invasion, but not about the decision to intervene itself.<sup>115</sup> The Soviet leaders' decision antedated the crucial point in the Suez Crisis, they claim.

Although there is disagreement about the exact moment at which the Soviet decision to invade was reached, scholars agree that it could not have been later than November 1, since Soviet troops were entering Hungary on that day. However, the rift between the United States and her allies did not become known until November 2, when a cease-fire resolution was introduced in

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<sup>113</sup> Mikes, op. cit., p. 141. See also E. Nagy, op. cit., p. 20.

<sup>114</sup> Mackintosh, op. cit., p. 177.

<sup>115</sup> Michael Fry and Condoleeza Rice, "The Hungarian Crisis of 1956: the Soviet Decision," Studies in Comparative Communism 16 (Spring, 1983): 97.

the United Nations.<sup>116</sup> The Russians had decided to intervene before they felt sure the Suez affair would distract world opinion (namely the United States) sufficiently. In other words, they would have intervened in Hungary anyway, but merely at greater cost to their reputation.<sup>117</sup>

Fry and Rice assumed that only the news of a rift between the United States and its European allies would have infused Soviet decision makers with sufficient confidence to launch their own intervention. However, just the news of the Israeli mobilization for war and the Anglo-French ultimatum might have given the Russians clues about what was about to happen, namely an international event important enough to distract the West from Soviet actions.

The writer's own conclusion is that the Soviet offer to withdraw troops per se reveals nothing about their intentions. Suspecting an impending crisis over the Suez Canal before the Anglo-French ultimatum, the Soviet leaders probably decided to feign a withdrawal, while actually regrouping for a more forceful intervention. In fact, the negotiations and partial withdrawal had a dual purpose: they would allow Soviet planners to stall for time while they gauged the likely outcome of the Middle East developments. Michel Tatu and the authors of the U.N. Special Committee Report agree that the offer to negotiate a withdrawal

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<sup>116</sup> Fry, op. cit., p. 97.

<sup>117</sup> Paul Zinner, ed. Revolution in Hungary (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), p. 323.

was merely a tactic of deception.<sup>118</sup> Thus there was some link between the two crises, but the Soviet Army would have intervened on November 4, with or without the Suez crisis.

Khrushchev himself, characteristically, was ambivalent on the issue. On the one hand, he implied that the Suez crisis occurred because of the Russians' problems in Hungary. He wrote: "the imperialists tried to take advantage of the troubles we were having in Poland and Hungary so they could send their troops into Egypt to reestablish colonial rule."<sup>119</sup> His statement suggests that the so-called imperialists were not directly involved in Hungary, but merely capitalizing on the auspicious timing by intervening in Egypt. Yet earlier he insisted that the "imperialists" directly supported and sustained the Hungarian "counterrevolutionaries." This was the official story as well. According to one Pravda article, the student demonstration on October 23 resulted from the persistent attempts of "underground reactionary organizations" to "stir up a counterrevolutionary mutiny" [myatezh].<sup>120</sup> Another Pravda article ran as follows:

The U.S. Congress allocated more than 100 million dollars for subversive activities against socialist countries. This same money was used to send spies and saboteurs to the Peoples' Democracies, launch balloons

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<sup>118</sup> United Nations Report, op. cit., p. 47. See also: Michel Tatu, "Soviet Intervention in Eastern Europe," in Stephen Kaplan, ed., Diplomacy of Power: Soviet Armed Forces as a Political Instrument (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1981), p. 216.

<sup>119</sup> Khrushchev, op. cit., p. 403.

<sup>120</sup> "The Downfall of the Anti-Popular Adventure in Budapest" [Proval Antinarodnoi Avantury v Budapeshte], Pravda, October 25, 1956, p. 4.

filled with provocative "literature," [and] print an enormous quantity of deceitful pamphlets...The imperialist intelligence agencies are planting their hostile agents into every chink [shchel'] they can find.<sup>121</sup>

#### Khrushchev as a Decision Maker: Analytic or Cybernetic?

In order to determine which tendency Khrushchev exhibited in the 1956 decision, it is helpful to measure in qualitative terms the role of four specific variables (outlined in the previous chapter): the image of the opponent; benefits, costs, and risks; goals, policies, and commitments; and memories of past relations with the opponent. The analytic decision maker and discontinuous learner will in theory place high priority on calculations of benefits, costs, and risks, and on goals, policies, and commitments. Continuously striving to be in close contact with reality, he will seek a large quantity of data with which to generate options and calculate trade-offs. Conversely, the cybernetic decisionmaker and reiterative learner will usually rely more heavily on the images of the opponent and memories of past relations with that opponent, which require a less assiduous search for information. The cybernetic agent's fundamentally conservative nature motivates him to remove variety and uncertainty in the decision making process, and thus with a meager store of information, he generates fewer options and seldom reevaluates past knowledge.

#### Image of the Opponent

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

An image can be defined as "a mental conception held in common by members of a group and symbolic of a basic attitude and orientation."<sup>122</sup> Such a mental conception results from the selective perception of stimuli. According to Robert Jervis, perception or seeing "involves conceptualization and learning which both renders the world intelligible by making us sensitive to common configurations of stimuli and reality and leads us to misperceive these stimuli when they are linked to rare or unexpected phenomena."<sup>123</sup> It will be concluded in this chapter that the Soviet image of the Hungarian opponent was flawed in the sense that Soviet leaders failed to grasp the spontaneity of the Hungarian movement,<sup>124</sup> but accurate in their perception of Nagy's political weakness. Signs of insubordination in a "fraternal country" (which were more or less common stimuli, given the upheavals in the 1953-56 period in East Germany and Poland) led Praesidium members to misperceive the rare phenomenon of a

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<sup>122</sup> Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, p. 566.

<sup>123</sup> Robert Jervis, Perception and Misperception in International Politics (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 148.

<sup>124</sup> Ferenc Vali points out that, in the English Revolution in 1642-1648, the French Revolution of 1789, and the Russian February Revolution of 1917, demonstrators, street fighters, and popular masses "served only as an accompaniment to an official revolutionary body." "The almost unique characteristic of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 may be considered its complete lack of a revolutionary body which, at the time of the outbreak, might have been the formal embodiment of the revolting masses. All the revolutionary institutions which assumed importance [e.g. DISZ (student) organizations] were formed only after the uprising was well under way." Ferenc Vali, Rift and Revolt in Hungary (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), p. 265.

national uprising against a Communist regime.

The image of Hungary was not entirely uniform among Soviet leaders, since there were at least three factions within the top political and military leadership: the old Stalinists, the advocates of de-Stalinization and "peaceful coexistence," and the military leaders. The old Stalinists, such as Molotov, Kaganovich, Voroshilov, Suslov, and Malenkov (after his demotion in February, 1955), believed in maintaining a strong dictatorship in Hungary. They preferred Rakosi over Nagy.

The advocates of de-Stalinization included Nikita Khrushchev, Dmitri Shepilov (editor of Pravda, and later Foreign Minister) Ekaterina Furtseva, Kirichenko, Anastas Mikoyan (third in rank to Khrushchev), and Bulganin (Premier).<sup>125</sup> Only two of Khrushchev's supporters were Praesidium members: Mikoyan and Bulganin. They favored Nagy's election as Prime Minister, but only when it became apparent that the Hungarians would not tolerate Erno Gero, Rakosi's disciple and successor. Finally, as for prominent figures in the military, such as Marshals Zhukov and Konev, it is reasonable to conclude (despite somewhat scanty evidence) that they favored the use of force in order to maintain the military potential of East Europe and the Soviet Army.<sup>126</sup> While speaking with Marshal Zhukov, Charles Bohlen, the U.S. Ambassador to the

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<sup>125</sup> For a detailed discussion of different shades of opinion in the Praesidium over the Hungarian Revolution and need to intervene, see Rice and Fry in Adelman, op. cit., p. 191, and George Mikes, The Hungarian Revolution (London: Deutsch, 1957), p. 106.

<sup>126</sup> Mikes, op. cit., p. 106.

Soviet Union in 1956, formed the impression that Zhukov favored an intervention. As Bohlen wrote later in his memoirs:

Actually, the Soviet delegation to Warsaw [in mid-October, 1956] came within an eyelash of ordering Soviet troops to act. On October 25--two days after the revolt began in Hungary--Marshal Zhukov cited Poland as proof of Soviet unwillingness to intervene militarily in the internal affairs of their countries. Talking with me at a party at the Turkish Embassy, he said that there had been more than enough Soviet troops in East Germany, White Russia, and Poland to force a settlement on Kremlin terms. His blue eyes flashing, he insisted, "They could have crushed them like flies." When I asked who "they" were, he made no direct reply, but he was obviously referring to Soviet troops, because he said that the Red Army had shown "great restraint" in Poland. He said that to make sure that troops in East Germany did not march into Poland, he had dispatched Marshal I. S. Konev, commander of Warsaw Pact forces, there. Reading between the lines, I believe he had urged military action in Poland, but was overruled. Zhukov's subsequent views on Hungary further confirmed my suspicion.<sup>127</sup>

Bohlen went on to describe Zhukov's evasiveness when questioned about the intervention in Hungary (on November 4).

Zhukov, usually honest, on that occasion, as a good Party member, told me several outright untruths. He said that no Soviet reinforcements had been sent to Hungary "recently," since there were sufficient troops there...He took a soldier's attitude in defense of Soviet troops, stating that he was not a politician and that the function of the army was to carry out orders....[H]e attempted along standard lines to present the Hungarian action as a counterrevolutionary putsch. When help was asked for by a government that was a member of the Warsaw pact, the Soviet Union could not refuse.<sup>128</sup>

While opinions differed among top Soviet personalities in the early stages of the crisis, the leadership as a whole was united

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<sup>127</sup> Charles E. Bohlen, Witness to History (New York: W.W. Norton, 1973), p. 411.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 414-413.

on the decision to intervene when the crisis intensified. Thus the above brief discussion of differing opinions must not be confused with the application of the "bureaucratic politics" or "organizational process" models.

The Soviet leaders initially perceived Hungary in general to be a model satrap. During Stalin's rule, Rakosi was the harshest dictator in Eastern Europe. Imprisoned for sixteen years under Admiral Horthy, Rakosi owed his release to Stalin.<sup>129</sup> As if to show his gratitude, Rakosi imitated Stalinist political and economic programs.<sup>130</sup> Tens of thousands of people--representatives of all creeds and strata of the population--were arbitrarily arrested. Economic plans were announced that ran counter to Hungary's genuine interests, and required the use of obsolete Soviet machinery and old-fashioned methods. Unrealizable targets were repeatedly set that resulted in a flagrant waste of money and resources, and the demoralization of workers. Coal, for example, was Hungary's main source of energy; in 1949 it produced 11.5 million metric tons.<sup>131</sup> The target set by the Five-Year Plan (1950-1954) was 27.5 million metric tons, and fell short by 5.5

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<sup>129</sup> Stalin made a deal with Admiral Horthy; he offered to return the old Hungarian flags that the tsarist armies had captured in 1849 when they assisted the Habsburgs to defeat Hungarians fighting for their independence--on the condition that they free Rakosi. See Marton, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

<sup>130</sup> Yugoslav Ambassador Micunovic writes: "Rakosi modeled himself on Stalin to such an extent that he had a steel door made for his office in Budapest as well as some bulletproof clothes to protect him from attempts on his life." (Micunovic, *op. cit.*, p. 140).

<sup>131</sup> Vali, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

million tons. As for the production of bread grain, it was smaller in the 1950-1954 period than it had been in the 1911-1915 period.<sup>132</sup>

While Stalin was alive, no one dared to criticize his economic policies, much less those of his "honest disciple" in Hungary, Matyas Rakosi. Hardly anyone in Hungary voiced their objections to the "bald murderer's" policies, since those who had dared to in the past had either been executed or incarcerated in prisons or prison camps.

But when the New Course was adopted by Khrushchev (after demoting his rival, Malenkov, who initiated it), Hungary under Rakosi's leadership lagged far behind the other East European countries. The country was so heavily indebted to the Soviet Union at the outset of the new policy, especially due to the importation of military equipment and other items of a nonproductive nature. The Stalinist policies were designed to keep the highest number of people subservient to the government. How could Rakosi now decrease production targets in heavy industry, and produce more consumer goods? How could he give these same people who detested him the freedom to criticize and depose him? He was afraid to release all the political prisoners, for fear that they would talk too much. Khrushchev is reputed to have said (according to Nagy):

Rakosi is responsible for the arrests. Therefore he does not want to release these people. He knows that he is guilty and will compromise himself.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid., p. 87.

<sup>133</sup> Nagy, op. cit., p. 136.

In short, it was ludicrous for a relic of the Stalinist era--Rakosi--to now rule Hungary under the New Course.<sup>134</sup> As the Hungarian villagers quipped at the time, "You don't let the goat watch over the cabbage."<sup>135</sup>

It is not surprising that Hungary under Rakosi's--and later Nagy's--leadership (1946-July 18, 1953) lagged behind other bloc countries in implementing the political and economic reforms suggested by the "New Course." The recalcitrant satellite practiced a kind of "Titoism" in reverse. This aspect of the Soviet image of Hungary as especially reactionary conceivably predisposed the Russians to intervene--well in advance of the crisis in 1956.

Khrushchev in particular may have had a vested interest in chastising Hungary and bringing it into line. His political survival depended on distancing himself from Stalin's memory, and since Hungary was slow in implementing the New Course (because of Rakosi's hold over the party), the country was a political nuisance. Perhaps because it was the satellite which had most obediently imitated the Soviet dictator, it was resisting post-Stalin reforms.<sup>136</sup> The release of political prisoners was a vital

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<sup>134</sup> It will be recalled that, although Nagy was Prime Minister, Rakosi retained control of the party (June, 1953--February, 1955).

<sup>135</sup> Marton, op. cit., p. 83.

<sup>136</sup> Malenkov is reputed to have said, "The faults we noted in June [1953] are being remedied very slowly. Rakosi has not taken the lead in remedying the faults." He and Khrushchev criticized Rakosi for blaming Hungary's economic

component of Khrushchev's program of de-Stalinization. To repeat, Rakosi had still not freed Hungary's 150,000 political prisoners by the summer of 1956, while in the other communist satellites the prisoners were freed more quickly from 1953 to the spring of 1956 (after Khrushchev exposition of Stalin's crimes at the Twentieth Party Congress).<sup>137</sup> At one time Khrushchev complained about this, saying:

The detainees are being released slowly. This is Rakosi's fault, because he hasn't taken the matter in hand. Rakosi alludes to the fact that his nerves are bad. Nerves don't count.<sup>138</sup>

The Soviet image of the Hungarian opponent was composed of perceptions of individual Hungarian leaders, such as Rakosi, Nagy, Kadar, and Munnich. To many of the Presidium members (viz. Suslov, Molotov, Marshal Zhukov), Matyas Rakosi--despite his ruthlessness and hesitation to follow the New Course--had more leadership qualities than did Imre Nagy. Since the Khrushchev was primarily interested in maintaining Soviet supremacy over the East European satellites, the capacity of the local leader in each country to

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problems on Nagy and Beria. "They can't hide behind Beria as Rakosi is trying to do," Khrushchev exclaimed. "We were there, too, when these errors were ascertained, every one of us!" See Nagy, On Communism, pp. 136-38. Khrushchev's criticism strikes one as rather hypocritical, when one considers the fact that during his rapprochement with Tito in 1955, he too blamed past Soviet behavior toward the Yugoslav leader on Beria. See Strobe Talbott's editorial comments in Khrushchev Remembers, p. 374.

<sup>137</sup> Roy Medvedev, Khrushchev (New York: Anchor Press, 1983), p. 106.

<sup>138</sup> Gati, op. cit., p. 132. Also Bill Lomax, "The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 and the Origins of the Kadar Regime," Studies in Comparative Communism 18 (Summer/Autumn 1985): 93.

control his population was crucial. On his visit to Budapest in July, 1956, Suslov said Rakosi would not be removed, and that "everything Rakosi had done was on the instructions of Stalin." He added, "Rakosi is no more to blame than we are in Moscow."<sup>139</sup> A few months after Malenkov's demotion in Moscow (February, 1955) and Rakosi's subsequent maneuvers to oust Nagy and regain his old position, Khrushchev is reported to have told Tito, "I have to keep Rakosi...because in Hungary the whole structure will collapse if he goes."<sup>140</sup>

Thus while Moscow did not actively dismiss Nagy and reinstate Rakosi in February, 1955, they tolerated Nagy's demise because of their confidence in Rakosi's ability to control the Hungarian people. This confidence is further illustrated by the fact that, even while Imre Nagy was prime minister between July, 1953 and February, 1955, both Rakosi and Gero were permitted to retain their high positions in the party. A deadlock resulted in the Hungarian leadership, for while Nagy shaped the ideological (and economic) program, Rakosi retained control over the party. As Brzezinski suggested:

...the Soviet leaders were presumably aware of the relative strength of the Rakosi and Nagy factions. Moscow's 'neutrality,' even if dictated in part by its own domestic complications, was thus a form of negative involvement and even implicit endorsement for Rakosi's

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<sup>139</sup> Micunovic, op. cit., p. 87.

<sup>140</sup> George Mikes, The Hungarian Revolution (London: Deutsch, 1957), p. 61. Mikes does not specify the exact date of Khrushchev's comment.

harder line."<sup>141</sup>

Indeed, it is difficult to imagine that Rakosi would have initiated his Machiavellian maneuvers against Nagy, had he not received some favorable signals from Moscow. Taking advantage of Khrushchev's denunciation of Malenkov's "rightist deviation" (in the February 3, 1955 issue of Pravda) and ensuing dismissal, which occurred simultaneously with Nagy's convenient illness,<sup>142</sup> Rakosi convened the Hungarian Central Committee in March to censure Nagy's "right-wing deviation." He created a scenario parallel to the one in Moscow within one month.

When Khrushchev decided to replace Rakosi for the second time, in July, 1956, it was primarily for the purpose of achieving a reconciliation with Tito. As part of the campaign to soften the Soviet international image, Khrushchev and Bulganin had travelled to Belgrade in the summer of 1955 to "bury the hatchet" with Tito. Tito could not easily forgive the Hungarian dictator who had led the Stalinist campaign against him, calling him the "chained dog of Western imperialists." He demanded \$100,000,000 from the Hungarians as reparations and compensations for "damages caused by

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<sup>141</sup> Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, The Soviet Bloc: Unity and Conflict (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960), p. 214.

<sup>142</sup> Rakosi used Nagy's illness as a pretext on which to exclude the latter from inner party discussions. In On Communism Nagy mentioned the "illegal and irregular resolution of the Political Committee that attempted to isolate me and silence me completely on the basis of the medical report composed by the Committee." These "exaggerated regulations," he wrote, were made "on the pretense of my illness." (pp.290-291).

the breaking of economic and trade agreements."<sup>143</sup> Little did the Soviet leaders know that in reconciling Tito, they would have to begin a chain of events that would ultimately lead to the Hungarian Revolution. Some analysts even posit that Khrushchev's desire to appease Tito, more than the Hungarians' hatred of Rakosi, explains the latter's dismissal on July 18, 1956.<sup>144</sup>

Rakosi had played a large role in denouncing Tito. He engineered the arrest and execution of Hungarian Foreign Minister Laszlo Rajk, accusing him of having plotted the murder of Stalin as a tool of Tito.<sup>145</sup> Because Rajk had fought in the Spanish Civil War, he had been exposed to the West and was therefore suspect. Unlike Rakosi, who was one of the inner group of Moscow-trained Hungarian Communists, Laszlo Rajk was a "red, white, and green" (Hungary-trained) Communist. His trial was part of Stalin's larger scheme to disgrace Tito; Rajk's counterpart in Czechoslovakia, Rudolf Slansky, was also executed, as was Traicho Kostov in Bulgaria.<sup>146</sup> Rakosi coaxed Janos Kadar, Rajk's best friend, to persuade the former Foreign Minister to confess to crimes implicating Tito.

The Rajk trial and execution (1949) so incensed the Hungarian

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<sup>143</sup> Sydney Gruson, "Yugoslavs Cheer Clearing of Rajk," New York Times, 30 March 1956, p. 4, col. 7.

<sup>144</sup> Endre Marton, The Forbidden Sky (Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1971), p. 102.

<sup>145</sup> "Hungary Clears Key Purge Victim," New York Times, 30 March 1956, p. 4, col. 4.

<sup>146</sup> Vali, op. cit., pp. 176-77.

people that it came to symbolize Rakosi's cruelty. The reburial of the national hero's remains on October 6 became the "dress rehearsal" of the October 23 student demonstration. So, in effect, the Russians had good reason to blame Rakosi for the crisis and subsequent perceived need to intervene, although perhaps the ultimate prime mover was Stalin.

Khrushchev arranged to have Gero and Tito meet each other in the Crimea, seemingly by accident. He no doubt was seeking someone to replace Rakosi who could still control the situation there. He probably thought that by making it appear as if Tito approved of the choice, Nagy and his followers, and perhaps other East European leaders, would be subdued. As Yugoslav Ambassador Micunovic wrote: "It looks as though we are responsible with the Russians for choosing Gero in Rakosi's place and are now confirming the new situation, though we are in fact learning about it only after the Russians have carried out their decisions."<sup>147</sup> In all likelihood, the Russians sought to create the impression that they chose Gero for Tito's sake, so if Gero proved inadequate, they could blame Tito.

The Soviet leaders' perception of Imre Nagy was a vital component of their image of Hungary as well. Khrushchev was ambivalent in his perception of Nagy. His comments about him were often contradictory. On the one hand Khrushchev saw him as a rival reformer who advocated the same policies he did. On the other hand, he saw Nagy as an idealistic and thus dangerous Communist;

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<sup>147</sup> Micunovic, op. cit., p. 102.

he could not be bullied. His refusal to recant publicly in 1955 and subsequent expulsion from the party was a major factor of his enormous popularity. The reforms he promulgated might spread to the other Peoples' Democracies, causing them to challenge Soviet hegemony, and then Khrushchev would find himself in an even worse quandary.

The Soviet leaders perceived Imre Nagy as a rival reformer, partly because Nagy had delivered his "New Course" speech (1953) before the Soviet leaders announced that the New Course reforms would be implemented in the Soviet Union. (Malenkov delivered his speech advocating a shift toward light industry in a major address to the Supreme Soviet in August, 1953, two months after Nagy's speech.)<sup>148</sup> Politically, Khrushchev favored Nagy's policies of improving agriculture and emphasizing light over heavy industry. In terms of his overall attempt to de-Stalinize, Imre Nagy proved quite useful to the Soviet First Secretary. In the weeks preceding the October crisis, Nagy was also useful to have in the Hungarian Communist Party, because he was popular and yet loyal to Moscow. Khrushchev did not hesitate, however, to sacrifice Nagy in order to get Malenkov demoted in February, 1955. He valued political power over any particular policy.

In his rhetoric, Khrushchev necessarily painted Nagy as an enemy of the people. He claimed that Nagy "used deceit and intimidation to draw people into mutiny and a fratricidal war;" and that "he shoved prominent citizens in front of microphones and

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<sup>148</sup> Brzezinski, op. cit., p. 213.

forced them to endorse his leadership and to denounce the Rakosi regime."<sup>149</sup> Khrushchev justified delay in withdrawing troops from Hungary by claiming Nagy was not a legitimate leader:

According to our obligations under the Warsaw Treaty, we could pull out our troops only if asked to do so by a legally constituted government. We certainly had no intention of doing what the leader of a putsch told us to do. From our viewpoint, a small clique taking advantage of the blunder committed by the Rakosi regime, had overthrown the legitimate government of Hungary [emphasis added].<sup>150</sup>

Despite this rhetoric, the Soviet leaders perceived Nagy as lacking in will; he was too idealistic to fight for political power. Many had probably met Nagy, since he had spent 15 years in the Soviet Union between the world wars, and spoke Russian well. His idealism and lack of political savvy was manifested in several ways. First, Nagy was temperamentally suited to some positions (e.g. Minister of Agriculture) more than to others (Minister of the Interior). As editor-in-chief of Radio Kossuth, which broadcast programs in Hungarian from Moscow during World War II, Nagy advocated a less intensive drive to industrialize, and greater production of consumer goods.<sup>151</sup> This had no doubt shown the Soviet leadership that he was more concerned about the welfare of the population than about gaining political approval from Moscow. He also performed well as Minister of Agriculture just

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<sup>149</sup> Nikita Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers (Boston: Little, Brown, 1970), p. 417.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., p. 416.

<sup>151</sup> Vali, op. cit., p. 33. Also Radvanyi, Hungary and the Superpowers (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1972), p. 4.

after the war, but he could not tolerate the position of Minister of the Interior for more than six months.

Second, when Suslov tried to persuade him to retreat from the premiership in 1955 and accept a less prestigious post, Nagy insisted on defending himself before the entire Hungarian Central Committee. The Russians and Rakosi could not afford to take this risk. Nagy was then stripped of his party membership. Nagy was willing to give up political power rather than to recant.

Third, in his "dissertation" On Communism (written in 1955), Nagy denounced Rakosi's use of torture, but praised the Party's record up to 1949, completely overlooking the cold-blooded methods of the Communist Party to seize power in 1947-8.<sup>152</sup> This myopia indicates a romantic, overly intellectual attachment to Communism, and uncritical ties to Moscow. So deep was his fundamental belief in the truth of Marxism-Leninism, that he did not see "Titoism" as a deviation. The fact that Marxism-Leninism could be applied to different situations was a testimony to its validity.

"Titoism"--so-called in an effort to designate the political principles of Yugoslav Communists for building socialism--cannot be regarded as a deviation from Marxism-Leninism or as a bourgeois ideology or as a detrimental viewpoint of imperialist agents, but as the creative application of Marxism-Leninism to building socialism under the specific, characteristic social and economic conditions of Yugoslavia.<sup>153</sup>

Because of Nagy's idealistic nature, the Soviet leaders did not fear him in relation to themselves; they feared his inability

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<sup>152</sup> Hugh Seton-Watson, op. cit., p. xxiv.

<sup>153</sup> Imre Nagy, On Communism: In Defense of the New Course (New York: Praeger, 1957), p. 13.

to control his own people. Even during Nagy's first term as Prime Minister (April, 1953 to 1955), Moscow did not give him full backing to reduce Rakosi's hold over the party.<sup>154</sup> They still wanted Rakosi nearby to maintain control. In addition, they did not fear that Nagy would volitionally institute capitalism. Nagy himself had written in his memoirs, "The party membership and the Hungarian people...do not want a return to capitalism."<sup>155</sup> Nagy abolished the one-party system on October 30 because compelled to by the sweep of events and the people's demands, rather than because he thought the one party system ineffectual. In fact, he was always lagging behind the tempo of popular demands. In "retirement" nearly a decade later, Khrushchev compared the 1956 intervention with the intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968, pointing that in Hungary "counterrevolutionaries were starting to get the upper hand," and "they had begun to kill Communists." In Czechoslovakia, "the Communists had a firm grip on power."<sup>156</sup>

Nagy's weakness was especially apparent to Soviet leaders when juxtaposed to the personalities of Gomulka, Kadar, and Munnich. Unlike Nagy, Gomulka had made it clear that the Poles were armed and would actively resist a Soviet intervention. He had refused to bend when a high-power Soviet delegation (Khrushchev,

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<sup>154</sup> Brzezinski, op. cit., p. 212.

<sup>155</sup> Nagy, op. cit., p. 25.

<sup>156</sup> Medvedev, op. cit., p. 252. Medvedev quoted verbatim this comment of Khrushchev's, which differs from Brezhnev's perception that the Czechoslovak Communist Party had indeed lost control of the situation in 1968.

Molotov, Kaganovich, Mikoyan) flew to Warsaw in October 1956 to intimidate the Polish Communists. Khrushchev had met Gomulka on an earlier trip in 1945 just after World War II, to help the Poles with their water supply and sewage system. Gomulka struck Khrushchev as being "an able political leader and statesman."<sup>157</sup>

Unlike Nagy, both Wladyslaw Gomulka and Janos Kadar had endured long years in prison. Perhaps the prison experience increased these mens' political will and desire for power. The stronger the local leader's desire for political power, in turn, the more likely he is to signal to Moscow his will to fight the Soviet Army. Thus, an important factor in determining whether or not the Soviet leadership decides to intervene is the background of the local leader in a target country.

Janos Kadar was the only one of the Hungarian intellectuals who chose to enter Hungarian politics after his release from prison. An interesting analysis of his character appeared in Der Monat (Berlin), written by Hungarian journalist George Palocz-Horvath in March, 1957.

Out of prison Kadar changed into the ultimate type of split personality, a kind of "controlled schizophrenia," a conscious mixture of delusion and cynicism, of obsession and opportunism. Many leading Communists suffered from this. They want and need power. But this naked private ambition is deeply unsatisfying unless they self-hypnotize themselves, at times, into that fine fervour of feeling, of fanatical faith which started them on their way.

In his comments about other political figures, Nikita Khrushchev revealed the type of personality he favored. He

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<sup>157</sup> Khrushchev, op. cit., p. 360.

preferred practical men hardened by experience over idealistic intellectuals like Nagy. He had initially wanted Ferenc Munnich, not Kadar, to become the leader of the new Hungarian Workers' Party after the October crisis:

I thought I could deal with him better than with Kadar. Munnich was a battered old wolf who had been through the Hungarian revolution with Bela Kun [in March 1919]. He'd lived in the Soviet Union for a long time, and I thought he was better prepared than anyone else to handle the problems which were still facing Hungary."<sup>158</sup>

Khrushchev also met Polish leader Bierut while supervising the repair of the sewage system in Warsaw; he considered Bierut's willingness to trust a handicap. "I considered him an honest Communist, devoted to the cause of Marxism-Leninism," he wrote. "[But] he had one weakness: he was too mild, good-natured, and trusting. This led to some complications in Poland later when his colleagues took advantage of him."<sup>159</sup>

The Soviet leaders' perception of Nagy's political weakness blinded them to the seriousness of the situation. They failed to perceive the determination of the Hungarian workers and intellectuals, among whom the discontent originated. According to Yugoslav Ambassador Micunovic, Khrushchev "mentioned the workers in the Miskolc region, where 'Hungarian miners had remained loyal though reactionaries were in power.'"<sup>160</sup> This was a misperception

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<sup>158</sup> Khrushchev, op. cit., p. 424.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., p. 359.

<sup>160</sup> In reality, according to Bill Lomax, "the events in Miskolc began well ahead of the outbreak or revolution in Budapest. The local Communist Party leadership included a number of people sympathetic to the ideas of Imre Nagy." Miskolc, together with its

on Khrushchev's part. The rebellion's leader might have been weak psychologically and politically, but not the "rebels" themselves. The discontent began among the dissatisfied workers and intellectuals. Hungary during the Stalinist years had been a bona fide totalitarian state; even its culture was regulated by the Hungarian Zhdanov, Jozsef Revai. No book could be published without Revai's permission. This narrow-mindedness incensed the intellectuals and led to heated meetings of the Petofi Circle, named after the Hungarian poet Sandor Petofi.

Meanwhile, the disturbances among the Hungarian workers were dismissed in Moscow as being on the level of the quickly suppressed strike among tobacco workers in Bulgaria and student demonstrations in Czechoslovakia.<sup>161</sup>

The October 24 intervention taught the Russians to take the workers' unrest seriously. By November 4, the Russians were better prepared, and appeared with more divisions, to put down the revolution. The Soviet leaders' underestimation of the Hungarian peoples' determination and will to resist stemmed in part from a growing confidence in their own military capabilities. In December

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suburbs, is the country's largest industrial complex outside Budapest. See Bill Lomax, Hungary, 1956 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1976), pp. 92-3. Lomax, having mastered the Hungarian language and traced the origins of the revolution in numerous cities and districts, has concluded that "from the very start it was the masses of working people, not the elite of writers and politicians, who were responsible for the birth and development of the revolutionary movement." In other words, the Hungarian Revolution was indeed a spontaneous occurrence.

<sup>161</sup> J. M. Mackintosh, Strategy and Tactics of Soviet Foreign Policy (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 159.

1955 the Soviet Union exploded its second thermonuclear device, at greater height than the first, showing the world it had a transportable hydrogen bomb. Khrushchev boasted in his December 30, 1955, speech that the Russians now had a hydrogen bomb equivalent to "many million tons of ordinary explosives, and its power can be considerably increased."<sup>162</sup> Having formed the Warsaw Pact a few months later that year, the Soviet leaders no doubt were feeling more confident vis-a-vis their rival superpower. Meanwhile, U.S. military and industrial power in relation to the USSR would never be as great as in the immediate post-World War II years.<sup>163</sup> The increased political prominence of military personalities in the Soviet leadership was demonstrated in several ways. First, Khrushchev selected Marshal Zhukov to be a candidate member of the Presidium. Other military figures such as Sokolovsky (Chief of the General Staff) became more visible among the ranks of senior apparatchiki.<sup>164</sup>

Second, Khrushchev told the Yugoslav Ambassador on November 2-3 that the Soviet Army was "the main factor in reaching a decision about the intervention in Hungary." When Marshal Konev told Khrushchev it would take only "three days" to take Budapest, the latter ordered him to start getting ready.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> New York Times, 30 December 1955, p. 4.

<sup>163</sup> Adam Ulam, The Rivals (New York: Penguin Books, 1971), pp. 217-219.

<sup>164</sup> Edward Crankshaw, Khrushchev: A Career (New York: The Viking Press, 1966), p. 232.

<sup>165</sup> Khrushchev, op. cit. pp. 417-418.

Third, the presence of Soviet troops in Hungary (legalized by Article 22 of the 1947 Treaty of Peace) prior to the October 24 intervention enhanced Soviet feelings of confidence. In comparing the interventions in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, Khrushchev explicitly noted the absence of Soviet troops in Czechoslovakia. Moreover, Soviet commanders refrained from sending in infantry, assuming tanks would suffice. The tanks could roll up and down the streets but were defenseless against Hungarians who jumped on top of the tanks and dropped Molotov cocktails (loosely corked bottles containing gasoline) inside them, then ran into building entrances to wait while the tanks passed by.

Finally, Soviet decision makers perceived the Hungarian security police to be strongly pro-Soviet and able to fight effectively against the Hungarian workers. They would help Soviet troops quickly suppress the revolution, it was thought. As it turned out, many of the AVH men were lynched by the so-called "Freedom Fighters." Those who were not hung by their feet on lampposts went into hiding. Not a single Hungarian soldier assisted Soviet forces, while some Soviet soldiers fought on the Hungarian side.

In brief, the stronger the Russians perceived themselves to be, the weaker they perceived their Hungarian adversary. These perceptions facilitated their initial decision to intervene.

#### Benefits, Costs, and Risks

The Soviet leadership, assuming it to be a rational actor, decided to intervene in Hungary because the perceived benefits

outweighed the costs.

### Benefits

There were six main benefits of a military intervention. First, a military intervention is a definite action, limited in time, to solve a crisis. Part of the definition of a crisis is that it restricts the amount of time available for response by the decision makers before the situation is transformed. A different solution might not be quick enough, resulting in more Communists being killed. Khrushchev wrote:

This was a historic moment. We were faced with a crucial choice: Should we move our troops into the city and crush the uprising, or should we wait and see whether internal forces would liberate themselves and thwart the counterrevolution? If we decided on the latter course, there was always the risk that the counterrevolution might prevail temporarily, which would mean that much proletarian blood would be shed.<sup>166</sup>

Second, a quick solution would permit the First Secretary to devote his attention to the Suez crisis. If it is true, as noted above, that Khrushchev thought the Western imperialists were taking advantage of his problems in Hungary to try to "reestablish colonial rule" in the Middle East, then speed was vital. The more quickly Khrushchev crushed the revolution, the sooner he could issue threats to the imperialists involved in the Suez crisis. One can conclude, by the fact that he threatened to send volunteers to Egypt, that Khrushchev considered the Middle East to be in the Soviet "sphere of interest" and that he intended to play a role in the crisis.

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<sup>166</sup> Khrushchev, op. cit., p. 417.

Third, an intervention would maintain the Soviet image of strength that Russians coveted. The Soviet Union would show the West that it had the will to intervene. As he told the Yugoslav Ambassador, Khrushchev perceived that the West in part was responsible for the uprising. First it had caused the Poznan riot, and now the revolution in Budapest. "We must give them [Western imperialists] a "rap over the knuckles."<sup>167</sup>

This "rap" would show the West how determined the Soviet leaders were to keep the Warsaw Pact intact. It would not tolerate insubordination among its members, especially not so soon after the formation of the military alliance. In short, an intervention would be an opportune time to display Soviet nerve, precisely when the United States was incapable of controlling its own allies. It would also reinforce old Soviet ideas about the West being on the verge of collapse.

As mentioned earlier, Stalin's successors had little bargaining and collective decision making experience. The Soviet reliance on superior military strength was an almost unconscious reflex; to refrain from using force was to exhibit weakness. Khrushchev thought it was important to establish himself as the number one decision maker in the Kremlin, and as someone who could manage crises effectively. He had proven that he could take the risk of initiating de-Stalinization, now he had to prove that he could crush a counterrevolution when necessary and establish the limits of just how far he was willing to let the East European

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<sup>167</sup> Micunovic, op. cit., p. 87.

countries go in their reform programs.

A fourth benefit of intervening, closely related to maintaining a strong image, is that it would set an important precedent. This precedent was relatively effective. Unlike Nagy, Dubcek in 1968 did not threaten to withdraw from the Warsaw Pact or institute a multi-party system. Apparently the Soviet Union taught sufficiently, by example, what would happen to any of the other East European countries if they followed in Hungary's footsteps. The harsh precedent would prevent a "domino effect" in the Communist world.

Fifth, this forceful act was a signal to the West that Soviet leaders clearly considered Hungary part of the Soviet sphere, and that NATO would risk a military confrontation--even nuclear war--if it intervened. Any visible hesitation of the Russians to intervene in Hungary would have indicated to the West that they were not sure to which sphere Hungary belonged. Although the West in essence accepted this demarcation of superpower spheres, i.e. the Soviet grip on Eastern Europe, the intervention in 1956 was a concrete reminder. Yugoslav Ambassador Micunovic reported that Khrushchev was afraid that the West wanted to break up the "camp." He said, "We shall show them they've made a great mistake."<sup>168</sup>

Finally, the Soviet Army would benefit by an intervention because it would acquire some field experience. Especially when Soviet military technology and the armed forces were improving and increasing, field experience was essential.

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<sup>168</sup> Micunovic, op. cit., p. 87.

## Costs

Judging from the evidence, the Soviet leaders do not seem to have thought too deeply about the costs of intervening; at least the costs of not intervening appeared higher to them. Since there is no explicit mention of the costs of intervening in Hungary, the analyst must infer this information from a case in which the costs did exceed the benefits. The Soviet leadership in all likelihood refrained from intervening in Poland in October, 1956, because the people and their leader, Gomulka, conveyed their intention to fight Soviet forces if they interfered in Poland's internal affairs. Khrushchev commented about the Polish "crisis" in 1956:

The people of Warsaw had been prepared to defend themselves and resist Soviet troops entering the city. Only later we learned that guns had been distributed and workers' regiments formed at the largest automobile factory in Warsaw. A clash would have been good for no one but our enemies. It would have been a fatal conflict, with grave consequences that would have been felt for many years to come. It would have taken a long time to heal the wound that would have been inflicted on Soviet-Polish friendship.<sup>169</sup>

One cost of intervening was a possible breakdown in U.S.-Soviet relations. However, this did not greatly concern Khrushchev. According to Micunovic, "Khrushchev said there was now going to be a resumption of the cold war, but that wasn't a bad thing for the Soviet Union. They had shown the West that they were strong and resolute. The West was weak and divided."<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> Khrushchev, op. cit., p. 204.

<sup>170</sup> Micunovic, op. cit., p. 156.

The analysis of costs and risks of a decision already made is difficult for three main reasons. First, the calculation of costs and risks of a tentative decision requires more effort, whereas the benefits are readily apparent, since they are what motivate the actor to make a decision. This is especially true if it is a crisis that demands a quick solution. The benefit is immediately apparent: take an action that will stop the danger, or one that will prevent the situation from being transformed in a way unfavorable to the decision maker.

Second, the costs tend to be more long-term, while the benefits are short-term. Finally, as mentioned earlier, a decision maker, when he writes his memoirs, tends to want to justify his past decisions. Thus he lists all the reasons for the decision, in an effort to portray them as being rational. If he too clearly explained the costs and risks of the decisions he made, he might be judged foolhardy. Having already been branded as "hare-brained," Khrushchev had a motive for avoiding a discussion of the costs and risks of his decisions.

#### Risks

Whereas a cost can be defined as a penalty or loss already incurred in achieving a certain objective, a risk can be defined as merely the possibility of incurring penalties or losses as a consequence of taking some action. There are both objective and subjective dimensions to risk-taking. While a situation might be objectively risky (e.g. have a probability of 0.9 on a scale ranging from zero to one), the awareness of the risk by the person

taking the action can be minimal or exaggerated. Risk in the objective sense is unrelated to the amount of knowledge the risk-taker possesses.<sup>171</sup>

In 1956 the only risks Khrushchev specifically referred to were those of not intervening. If Soviet troops did not intervene, "Hungarian emigres, spurred on by Radio Free Europe would assist the counterrevolutionary gang," thus "the counterrevolution might prevail," and "NATO might take root in the Socialist countries." Khrushchev must have perceived the risk of retaliation by NATO forces after a Soviet intervention to be considerably reduced in the light of events in the Middle East.

#### Goals, Policies, Commitments

The Soviet leaders decided readily to intervene in Hungary because a "counterrevolutionary," "capitalist" Hungary would be inconsistent with their political goals and economic policies.

The Soviet leaders' main political goal in relation to Hungary was to maintain the post-World War II status quo. They could not permit Hungary to break away from the Warsaw Pact, to become, in effect, another Yugoslavia. They feared this would set into motion a "domino effect" among the other East Europe states, particularly in this period of readjustment after Stalin's death. The Soviet leadership was groping about for new ways of managing intra-bloc relations in the 1953-1956 period; Khrushchev's "Secret Speech," connoting as it did an all-out relaxation of controls,

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<sup>171</sup> For a discussion of objective and subjective risks, see Adomeit, op. cit., pp. 9-15.

represented a solution on one end of a political spectrum, and the brutal invasion to crush the Hungarian revolution was a solution on the opposite end.

In addition to their political goals, Soviet leaders were also anxious to reestablish satisfactory economic policies toward Hungary, thus preventing the latter from turning to the West for help, as Yugoslavia had. Charles Bohlen, U.S. Ambassador to Hungary at the time, wrote that the Russians feared that "the satellites, once released from bondage, might establish economic ties with the West and thus bring about the gradual dissolution of the East European bloc."<sup>172</sup>

The Hungarian economy had rapidly deteriorated under Rakosi's rule. The Russians were well aware of this, despite the remarks Malenkov made to Nagy in January, 1955, blaming him for the state of the Hungarian economy.<sup>173</sup> The imbalance in foreign trade presented grave problems for Hungary between November 1954 and January 1955. The Soviet Union had cut off deliveries of raw materials to Hungary, and ordered the other bloc countries to follow suit. Thus in 1955 Hungary received only half of the 1954 quantity. It is not known whether this was a deliberate ploy against Nagy. More likely, according to one scholar, Ferenc Vali, "the Russians' decision was due to the uncertainty of their economic and foreign trade planning."

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<sup>172</sup> Charles Bohlen, Witness to History, 1929-1969 (New York: W.W. Norton, 1973), p. 407.

<sup>173</sup> Tibor Meray, Thirteen Days that Shook the Kremlin (New York: Praeger, 1959), p. 22.

However, the Soviet Five-Year Plan ended in 1955, and Soviet economists were planning a new and more cautious one because of the changes in the leadership (e.g. demotion of Malenkov in February, 1955). In Hungary, evidently in response to shortages, Nagy tried to get credits from the West. This no doubt increased the Soviet leaders' fear and distrust of Nagy. Moreover, the Russians have been especially sensitive to economic contacts with the West ever since their refusal both to participate in the Marshall Plan and to permit any East European country to do likewise.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> Vali, *op. cit.*, pp. 140-41.

## Memories of the Past

The Soviet leaders were predisposed to intervene in Hungary, in part due to their memories and knowledge of Hungary's particularly anti-Soviet past.

First, in 1848, the Hungarians, led by Lajos Kossuth, fought for liberation from Austria, with which it was then still bound. The Austrians asked Tsar Nicholas I to send in troops to crush the rebellion. In his memoirs Khrushchev wrote:

In 1848 there was a successful revolution in Budapest, but Nicholas I threw in his legions, crushed the revolution, and helped restore the rule of the Austrian monarchy in Hungary. That was a disgrace. Of course that black deed was committed by Nicholas I and those around him; the disgrace did not rub off onto the working class and peasantry of the former Russian Empire. But our country still owed a historical debt to the people of Hungary.<sup>175</sup>

The First Secretary's perception of a "historical debt" enabled him to rationalize the later invasion on November 4, 1956 and refuse to acknowledge that intervening in 1956 would essentially be repeating the experiences of 1848. Later, on his visit to Hungary in April, 1958, Khrushchev said, "Since the tsar did not quibble about intervening, how could the Soviet Union have withheld such help in 1956?"<sup>176</sup>

Second, the Austro-Hungarian empire had traditionally been a rival of Russia in the control of the Balkans in the 1870s. There might have been a latent fear in the Soviet mind that the Hungarians had not forgotten this legacy. The Austrian State

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<sup>175</sup> Khrushchev, op. cit., p. 420.

<sup>176</sup> New York Times, 3 December 1959.

Treaty had been signed in 1955, and inspired Imre Nagy to advocate the same neutrality for Hungary. Perhaps, from the Russians' viewpoint, neutrality was one step closer to a resurgence of this traditional rivalry, i.e. the Hungarians' desire to regain territory in the Balkans.

Third, Hungary had fought on the German side in both world wars. Khrushchev had been keenly aware of this. According to Micunovic, Khrushchev pointed out that Hungary had twice fought "in coalition with the West against Russia."<sup>177</sup> He stressed the animosity existing in the Soviet Army against Hungary, which wanted again to join the West against the Russians.<sup>178</sup> Khrushchev again mentioned this fact explicitly, when he, while in retirement, compared the 1956 intervention to the 1968 intervention in Czechoslovakia.<sup>179</sup> One scholar has suggested that, as a result of having fought with the Germans, the Hungarians had less fear of German "militarism" than did Poland and Czechoslovakia, and therefore Hungary was less vulnerable to the Soviet Union. The Czechs and Slovaks, in particular, as we shall see in the following chapter, tended to look to the Soviet Union for protection from Germany.

Malenkov, too, was aware of the hostility Hungarians naturally felt towards Russians. He noted that the Russians were "completely isolated" from the Hungarians, and therefore the

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<sup>177</sup> Micunovic, op. cit., p. 134.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

<sup>179</sup> Medvedev, op. cit., p. 252.

Soviet Army must go in "frontally and with great force."<sup>180</sup>

Fourth, given Hungary's monarchical past, there was an inherent antipathy toward communism, with its professed aim of establishing a stateless society and abolishing private property. Although Hungary had a constitutional government to manage domestic affairs, it had formed a dual monarchy with Austria in 1867. The same monarch conducted the foreign and military affairs of the two powers. Bela Kun's Communist regime lasted only four months in 1919, in part because the Hungarians resented the seizure of their farms and factories. In 1919 Admiral Horthy as regent established a monarchy again, which lasted 25 years. Furthermore, the Communist Party never did win an election, but gained control primarily because of the presence of Soviet troops and their gradual hold over key government posts.<sup>181</sup>

A fifth element of Hungary's particularly anti-Soviet history is the belated influence of communism in the interwar period. Moreover, while other East European countries except Czechoslovakia turned authoritarian or totalitarian after 1935, Hungary remained relatively liberal until 1944. It successfully resisted communist influences for a longer time period than other satellite countries.

Finally, in more recent history, Stalinist repression had been harsher in Hungary than in the other satellite countries, perhaps due to the more vehement resistance of the Hungarians.

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<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> Vali, op. cit., p. 23.

Therefore de-Stalinization had a sharper impact there.<sup>182</sup> The Russians probably realized that force would have to be used, since the Hungarians were releasing long pent-up hatred of Stalinist Russia, personified by Rakosi and the Stalinists remaining in the Hungarian bureaucracy. There were vigorous demands for Nagy to become Prime Minister, and for a fundamental turnabout in top personnel and policies. With such important decisions about to be made, Soviet leaders surely felt they needed to shape them in their favor.

Unlike Poland, of which a large area had been a Russian province, no part of Hungary had ever been under direct Soviet rule. There is no mention of this fact in any of the Soviet leaders' writings. If it can be deduced that they did not remember this fragment of Hungarian history, their ignorance of it might explain in part the Russians' underestimation of the spontaneous nature of the uprising, and the Hungarian peoples' determination to repulse the Soviet intruders.

The Hungarians, moreover, have been especially sensitive about territory and the right of self-government. The outbreak of World War I stemmed from the anger one Bosnian student felt toward the Hungarian politicians for ignoring the right to self-government.<sup>183</sup> The main reason some Hungarian workers were even

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<sup>182</sup> Ibid., p. 159.

<sup>183</sup> Austria-Hungary comprised many Slavs, Rumanians, and other national groups, which began to clamor for self-rule in the late 1800s and early 1900s. On 28 June 1914 Gavrilo Princip, a member of a secret nationalist movement, Mlada Bosna ("Young Bosnia") shot Austrian Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his wife in Sarajevo, thus

attracted to communism in 1919 was because they hoped the Russians would help them defend their country against the territorial claims of Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and Yugoslavia.<sup>184</sup> Later, Adolf Hitler coaxed Hungary to fight on the Axis side by promising the return of some territory Hungary lost in the 1920 Treaty of Trianon.<sup>185</sup>

In addition to the anti-Soviet nature of Hungary's history, the Hungarians' language and culture differs greatly from that of the Russians. The Hungarians' language, Magyar, is not a Slavic language, but a Finno-Ugric tongue, closely related to Finnish. Very few Russians speak Magyar, and those soldiers who did in 1956 (officers on leave and reserve officers in neighboring areas of Rumania) were recalled on October 21 and 22.<sup>186</sup> Perhaps because of the distinctive language, the Hungarians' culture was particularly homogenous (not torn--as that of Czechoslovakia--by the customs of many nationalities).

In short, Hungary has a distinctly anti-Soviet past, due to such aspects as the 1848 Russian invasion, its historical rivalry with the Russians over the Balkans, its former alliance with Nazi

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precipitating World War I. Mlada Bosna used weapons supplied by the terrorist organization known as the "Black Hand."

<sup>184</sup> Nagy, op. cit., p. vii.

<sup>185</sup> The Treaty of Trianon, part of the World War I peace settlements, resulted in Hungary's loss of more than two-thirds of its territory. Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Yugoslavia, Italy, and Poland all received portions. The territory ceded to Rumania alone was larger than the area left to Hungary. In 1914, Hungary had 21 million inhabitants; Trianon Hungary had less than 8 million.

<sup>186</sup> U.N. Special Committee Report, op. cit., p. 5.

Germany, its monarchical past, the belated influence of Communism in the inter-war period, and its vastly different language and culture. The Soviet leadership's awareness of Hungary's historic hostility greatly influenced its decision to apply force in response to the 1956 revolution.

### International Context

International events also shed light on the Soviet decision to intervene in Hungary. This section will cover briefly the nature of Soviet relations with the United States, Eastern Europe, China, and the Third World, and the influence these events may have had on the Soviet decision making process.

#### United States

The primary question to answer about Khrushchev's (and other Soviet leaders') perceptions is not: was he or was he not apprehensive about the American reaction to the November 4 intervention? It is, rather: how much of a risk or probability did Khrushchev assign to a US military intervention in Hungary (or to some type of US-Soviet confrontation over the Hungarian issue)? As stated above, there are both objective and subjective dimensions to risk. While it is known now that there was little or no objective risk that the United States would resort to, or even threaten, the use of force in order to prevent the Soviet Union from intervening in Hungary, Khrushchev and his colleagues could not have known this with absolute certainty.

It will be concluded in this section that Khrushchev did

perceive the risk of some kind of US military retaliation, but when compared to the benefits of intervention--given the auspicious timing and other situational factors--and the larger risks of not intervening--this risk figured very small in the overall decision calculus. Khrushchev's memories and images of Eisenhower and of past US behavior also influenced his subjective assessment of risk.

To determine how much of a risk Khrushchev did or did not perceive subjectively, one can examine several types of evidence: Khrushchev's own written account, his oral comments to participants in the crisis, public Soviet statements, public US statements, and past US behavior that might have influenced Soviet perceptions.

According to Khrushchev himself, the decision whether or not to intervene was difficult for him and his colleagues to make.<sup>187</sup> This difficulty may have stemmed from the Russians' uncertainty as to the degree of risk vis-a-vis the United States that a decision to intervene would entail. He wrote:

We sat up the whole night, weighing the pros and cons of whether or not we should apply armed force to Hungary...I don't know how many times we changed our minds back and forth...We finally finished this all-night session with a decision not to apply military force in Hungary...When I climbed into bed that morning, I found I was still too preoccupied with the problem to rest. It was like a nail in my head and it kept me from

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<sup>187</sup> Of course, as stated in the earlier discussion of the domestic context of the 1956 decision, Khrushchev wrote these memoirs many years later, when in "retirement," and may have been trying to dispel the image of being "hare-brained."

being able to sleep.<sup>188</sup>

Apart from this subjective account recorded many years later, the objective fact that the United States in 1956 had massive strategic nuclear superiority--and the Soviet leaders knew this--provides a sound explanation for some apprehension on their part. Even though there was no mention of "liberation" in the NSC-162 document (the result of the Eisenhower administration's task forces on defense policy during 1953), one cannot expect the Soviet leaders to have known this, since it was a highly classified document.<sup>189</sup> Khrushchev and his colleagues might have also recalled that Eisenhower had used the nuclear threat successfully at the end of the Korean conflict in order to achieve favorable terms for an armistice.

Although there is no mention of US strategic superiority in his account of the Hungarian Revolution, Khrushchev referred to it earlier in his memoirs, when recalling Truman's administration.<sup>190</sup> In addition, Janos Radvanyi, a Hungarian diplomat assigned to Moscow in 1956, recalled that:

In the course of conversations at which I was present, the Soviet premier always felt it necessary to explain that the Soviet leadership had to take into account the possible effect on Soviet actions of the US nuclear

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<sup>188</sup> Khrushchev, op. cit., p. 418.

<sup>189</sup> George, op. cit., p. 301.

<sup>190</sup> "America was conducting its foreign policy from a position of strength. The Americans had the atomic bomb, and they knew we didn't. For the atomic bomb to be in our enemy's hands was bad enough. To make matters worse, the President at that time was Truman...who was hostile and spiteful toward the Soviet Union." (Khrushchev, op. cit., p. 361).

striking capability.<sup>191</sup>

One conclusion Charles Bohlen reached as he took stock of his four years of experience as US Ambassador in Moscow was that "there is really only one country that the Soviets took very seriously, and which they keep their eyes on, and that is the United States."<sup>192</sup>

Thus it is safe to say that the Soviet leaders had US nuclear superiority always in the back of their minds, and were well aware of the risk of US retaliation, even if explicit mention of it is missing in their memoirs and conversations with foreign diplomats. It is possible that the Presidium members considered the potential US reactions in exhaustive detail, and that Khrushchev, many years later, simply forgot this part of his experience.<sup>193</sup>

The public rhetoric of the Republican party, beginning with the 1952 platform, probably contributed to the Russians' apprehensions. This new program contrasted sharply with the prevalent view of Americans in the 1945-48 period that the United States should not fight the Russians on the East European question. The campaigners in 1952 vowed to:

...end the negative, futile, and immoral policy of "containment" which abandons countless human beings to a despotism and Godless terrorism which in turn enables the rulers to forge the captives into a weapon for our destruction....The policies will revive the contagious,

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<sup>191</sup> Janos Radvanyi, Hungary and the Superpowers (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1972), p. 11.

<sup>192</sup> Bohlen, op. cit., p. 447.

<sup>193</sup> Although it is unlikely, there might even be other written accounts of the Russians' deliberations--by East European diplomats, for example--that have not been published.

liberating influences which are inherent in freedom. They will inevitably set up strains and stresses within the captive world which will make the rulers impotent to continue in their monstrous ways and mark the beginning of the end. Our nation will again become the dynamic, moral, spiritual force which was the despair of despots and the hope of the oppressed.<sup>194</sup>

These basic ideas found their way into Secretary of State Dulles' first public address on January 27, 1953, when he said, "To all those suffering under Communist slavery...let us say: you can count on us."<sup>195</sup>

The broadcasts of Radio Free Europe should also be taken into account as a factor in the Soviet leadership's perceptions of the US resolve on the East European issue. The messages had a profound impact on listeners in the East European countries, and the Soviet leaders could not have been unaware of this fact. Summarizing the results of a public opinion poll among Hungarian refugees, the International Research Associates wrote: "The puzzling circumstance that the Hungarians were willing to risk an armed uprising in the face of overwhelming odds...is explained by one simple fact: they apparently believed that the West would come to their assistance."<sup>196</sup> Such a strong faith among the Hungarians might conceivably have alarmed Soviet leaders as well, leading them to suspect that there was some concrete basis for the Hungarians' faith in the United States.

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<sup>194</sup> quoted in Brown, op. cit., p. 110.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

<sup>196</sup> George Urban, The Nineteen Days: A Broadcaster's Account of the Hungarian Revolution (London: Heinemann, 1957), p. 268.

Yet despite the Russians' possible apprehensions, the simple fact that the Russians (as rational actors) did intervene signifies that the risks of intervening were perceived to be smaller than the benefits of intervening, and smaller than the risks of not intervening. There is considerable evidence to suggest that the Soviet leaders eventually dismissed their apprehensions about US intentions to a great extent. As we discussed, there is no mention in Khrushchev's memoirs of the United States' possible reactions. After the Presidium discussed the issue, the members' first decision was not to intervene. But one day later, it was Khrushchev himself who reconsidered, reminding the Presidium of "what the consequences might be if we didn't lend a helping hand to the Hungarian working class before the counterrevolutionary elements closed ranks."<sup>197</sup> As mentioned earlier, a generalized sense of confidence in the Soviet Union's increasing military capability (due in particular to the new hydrogen bomb and newly formed Warsaw Pact) tended to make the Russians feel bolder with respect to the United States and to perceive the Hungarian adversary as weak.

Moreover, in his account of the Suez crisis Khrushchev claims that Western and Soviet diplomats said, in effect, "Let's have a tacit understanding between us that you'll liquidate your difficulties by whatever means you see fit, and you won't interfere while we do the same."<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> Ibid., p. 418.

<sup>198</sup> Khrushchev, op. cit., p. 430.

As early as July 15, 1956, according to Yugoslav Ambassador Micunovic, Khrushchev hinted that he would use military force in Hungary, and made no mention of the United States:

I was about to take my leave...[but Khrushchev kept me back and said: If the situation in Hungary gets still worse, we here have decided to use all means at our disposal to bring the crisis to an end. Khrushchev said he was telling me this in confidence, that such a decision had not yet arisen and that maybe it wouldn't arise, but that he wanted to inform Tito in good time about the internal decisions which had been taken here. He also said that the Soviet Union could not at any price allow a "breach in the front" in Eastern Europe, and that was just what the West was working for. [emphasis added]<sup>199</sup>

At a reception for the Syrians on November 3, one day before the invasion, Khrushchev said sarcastically to US Ambassador Bohlen that he assumed NATO was pleased at the possibility of some 'dislocation' in the Warsaw Pact.<sup>200</sup> According to Bohlen:

I said there seemed to be a contradiction between the talk of negotiations and continual reports of heavy Soviet reinforcements in Hungary. Khrushchev angrily replied that the Soviet Union was going to be just as strong as it needed to be to meet the dangers that confronted it. "We have enough troops there," he said, "but we will add more and more if necessary."..."This is no joke."<sup>201</sup>

This type of behavior would seem rather odd for a person genuinely apprehensive of the United States' reactions, unless it was a bluff.

Earlier, at a reception in the Kremlin on October 30 (one day

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<sup>199</sup> Micunovic, op. cit., p. 8. This is a longer version of the passage quoted earlier in this chapter.

<sup>200</sup> Bohlen, op. cit., p. 417. These are Bohlen's--not Khrushchev's--words.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

after the Israelis' attack in the Sinai Peninsula), Molotov spoke to Ambassador Bohlen about the likely response of the British and French. Molotov was sure the Europeans were about to join the attack against Egypt. When Bohlen expressed his doubts, Molotov "smiled cynically and said 'We shall see.'"<sup>202</sup> This exchange suggests that the Soviet leadership<sup>203</sup> was counting on an impending attack on Egypt--possibly to divert attention from a second Soviet invasion of Hungary.<sup>204</sup> (The reader will recall that most analysts agree that the Soviet decision to invade Hungary was reached on October 30).

Despite the sloganeering rhetoric of "liberation" and "massive retaliation," many other official statements issued by the Eisenhower Administration were intended to communicate to the Presidium that the United States would not employ--nor even threaten to employ--military force in Hungary. On October 25 President Eisenhower released a statement deploring the first intervention the day before (October 24), but the accompanying New York Times article read: "There was no indication from White House

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<sup>202</sup> Ibid., p. 432.

<sup>203</sup> Vyacheslav Molotov was probably the most experienced and thus respected "expert" on foreign affairs in the Kremlin.

<sup>204</sup> According to Micunovic, "Khrushchev said that British and French aggressive pressure on Egypt provided a favorable moment for a further intervention by Soviet troops. It would help the Russians. There would be confusion and uproar in the West and the United Nations, but it would be less at a time when Britain, France and Israel were waging a war against Egypt." This view seems more plausible than that of Condoleeza Rice and Michael Fry, viz. that the simultaneous occurrence of the two crises was a "coincidence." Rice and Fry in Adelman, op. cit., p. 181-95.

personnel...that the President intended to do more than speak out sharply."<sup>205</sup> On October 27, Secretary of State Dulles gave a speech in Dallas, in which he announced that "the United States has no ulterior purpose in desiring the the independence of the satellite countries."<sup>206</sup> He offered economic aid to any country attempting to free itself from total dependence on the Soviet Union, without posing a rejection of Communism as a precondition for such aid.<sup>207</sup>

Two days later, on October 29 (one day before the Russians supposedly decided to intervene in Hungary), Ambassador Bohlen conveyed this message of US military noninvolvement directly to Khrushchev, Bulganin, and Zhukov at two afternoon receptions, one honoring Turkey's National Day and the other at the Afghan Embassy.<sup>208</sup> As Bohlen recollected:

I had just received a cable from Dulles, who urgently wanted to get a message to the Soviet leaders that the United States did not look on Hungary or any of the Soviet satellites as potential military allies. The cable quoted a paragraph from a Dulles speech at Dallas to that effect, and emphasized that it had been written after intensive consideration at the "highest level"--an obvious reference to President Eisenhower.<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>205</sup> New York Times, October 26, 1956, p. 14.

<sup>206</sup> President Eisenhower considered this paragraph in Dulles' speech sufficient to convey to the Soviet leaders that the United States would not take military action. See The White House Years: Waging Peace, 1956-1961 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1965), p. 71.

<sup>207</sup> See a discussion of this speech and its implications in George, op. cit., p. 301.

<sup>208</sup> Bohlen, op. cit., p. 413.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

Finally, in a televised address, President Eisenhower said again that the United States would extend economic aid to the East European countries without "any particular form of society as a condition." He said the United States supported these countries' struggle for sovereignty, but that the United States "could not, of course, carry out this policy by resort to force."<sup>210</sup>

Viewing the international scene objectively, the Soviet leaders might also have concluded that the US statesmen had enough problems with countries within the Atlantic Alliance (what Lenin termed "intraimperialist contradictions") without concerning themselves as well with problems within the Warsaw Pact. The European members of NATO had not wanted Spain to join the organization. (Volunteers under Spanish dictator Franco had fought on the Axis side against them.) But the United States did. In 1953, without consulting its allies, the United States reached an agreement with Spain, whereby the United States would obtain military bases in that country, in return for assistance to the Spanish army, navy, an air force. Later, in 1955, Dulles and Franco jointly issued a communique, stating that they were in agreement about "the principal problems that affected the peace and security of free nations [emphasis added]."<sup>211</sup> The phrase "free world" might conceivably have sounded phony to the British and French, emboldening them also to take the initiative within

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<sup>210</sup> New York Times, November 2, 1956, p. 14.

<sup>211</sup> Felix Gilbert, The End of the European Era, 1890 to the Present (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1979), p. 434.

the alliance three years later.

The Soviet leaders might have observed, too, that in each crisis since 1953, Secretary of State Dulles had been forced to backtrack on earlier slogans. In the President's message of January, 1953, he "unleashed" Chiang Kai-shek to invade the China mainland. In 1954 he told the American people he would make an "agonizing reappraisal" if France did not join the EDC. He declared his policy of "instant retaliation" and "united action" to warn the "Chinese Reds" not to invade Indochina.

But by late 1954 Dulles was compelled to leash Chiang Kai-shek up again, accept France's rejection of the EDC without so "agonizing" a reappraisal, abandon his goal of "united action" in Indochina, and clarify to the public that there would be no "massive retaliation" except in response to some momentous Communist move that actually threatened United States' security.<sup>212</sup>

In 1955 the American Democrats and critics within NATO had seen no point in threatening massive nuclear retaliation over two small islands off mainland China--Quemoy and Matsu--which they called the "Staten Islands of Communist China." This first Taiwan Straits crisis began in September 1954 and lasted for nine months. As Eisenhower wrote in his memoirs the crisis was to "threaten a split between the United States and nearly all its allies, and seemingly carry the country to the edge of war, thus constituting

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<sup>212</sup> Norman Graebner, New Isolationism: A Study in Politics and Foreign Policy Since 1950 (New York: The Ronald Press, 1956), pp. 183-84.

one of the most serious problems of the first eighteen months of my administration."<sup>213</sup> When Peking continued low-level operations against the offshore islands, Eisenhower issued a statement on March 16, 1955, affirming that the United States would use tactical atomic weapons in a war with Communist China.<sup>214</sup> While Peking did relent after Eisenhower's statement, his policy can be seen as only a partial success as well as partial deterrence (a more serious crisis over the Quemoy and Matsu islands was to recur in 1958). This episode might have signalled to the Soviet leaders that Communist China (a lesser power) was able to call the United States' bluff and erode the American commitment. It also exposed the Massive Retaliation doctrine for what it was: a mismatch between threat and response.

Two additional dimensions of American behavior might have infused the Russians with some degree of confidence as they calmly surveyed the international scene. When the Soviet army suppressed the June 17, 1953 uprising in East Berlin, all the Eisenhower Administration did was make a few protests and send foodstuffs to the German workers.<sup>215</sup> Again, after the first intervention in Hungary on October 24, the United States sent \$20 million in food and other relief for the people, but nothing more.<sup>216</sup> The United

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<sup>213</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, The White House Years: Mandate for Change, 1953-1956 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1963), p. 459.

<sup>214</sup> George, op. cit., p. 291.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid., p. 300.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid., p. 302.

Nations did not meet on the Hungarian issue until October 27, and no resolution was introduced until November 3.<sup>217</sup> (It is true that the United States had taken military action in Guatemala in 1954 and Iran, but these were small CIA operations.)

If the sexagenarians in the Kremlin had been clairvoyant, they might have known President Eisenhower's private reservations about taking any action that might alarm such a "dangerous dictatorship." As he told the White House Staff later, on November 5, the Russians, "seeing their failure in the satellites, might be ready to undertake any wild adventure...[they] are as scared and furious as Hitler was in his last days. There's nothing more dangerous than a dictatorship in that frame of mind."<sup>218</sup> The President even thought the Russians might start a world war.<sup>219</sup> In addition Eisenhower was convinced that an intervention in Hungary was strategically impossible. He wrote:

I still wonder what would have been my recommendation to the Congress and the American people had Hungary been accessible by sea or through the territory of allies who might have agreed to react positively to the tragic fate of the Hungarian people. As it was, however, Britain and France could not possibly have moved with us into Hungary. An expedition combining West German or Italian forces with our own, and moving across neutral Austria, Titoist Yugoslavia, or Communist Czechoslovakia, was out of the question. The fact was that Hungary could not be reached by any United Nations or United States units without traversing such territory. Unless the major nations of Europe would ally themselves spontaneously with us (an unimaginable prospect), we could do nothing.

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<sup>217</sup> Kaplan, op. cit., p. 248.

<sup>218</sup> Quoted in Brown, op. cit., p. 108.

<sup>219</sup> Eisenhower, Waging Peace, p. 67.

[emphasis added]<sup>220</sup>

Khrushchev's personal impression of Eisenhower during the Geneva Conference in 1955 is perhaps worth noting. The former noted that whenever a vital question was raised, Eisenhower would pass a note to Dulles under the table and wait for Dulles' reply before saying anything, much like "a dutiful schoolboy taking his lead from his teacher."<sup>221</sup>

Finally, in the scholarly literature and memoirs pertaining to the two crises (the Hungarian Revolution and the Suez crisis), most writers emphasize one of three viewpoints. Some stress the fact that the United States adequately signalled its noncommitment to the Soviet Presidium.<sup>222</sup> Others add that the Eisenhower Administration unintentionally misled the Hungarian people, but not the Soviet leadership.<sup>223</sup> The rest ignore the US-Soviet dimension entirely, focusing only on politics within the Soviet bloc,<sup>224</sup> or the Soviet determination to maintain hegemony over

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<sup>220</sup> Ibid., pp. 88-89.

<sup>221</sup> Khrushchev, op. cit., p. 397.

<sup>222</sup> See, for instance, Kaplan, op. cit., pp. 248-49; Brown, op. cit., pp. 111-2; Ulam, Rivals, op. cit., p. 265; George, Deterrence, op. cit., pp. 298-304; and the memoirs of Bohlen, op. cit., pp. 412-18, and Radvanyi, pp.11-22.

<sup>223</sup> See the memoirs of BBC broadcaster George Urban, op. cit., pp. 268-272.

<sup>224</sup> See Brzezinski, op. cit., pp. 207-235; Vali, op. cit., pp. 358-80; Rice and Fry in Adelman, op. cit., pp. 181-97.

Eastern Europe, at whatever cost.<sup>225</sup>

To conclude, the Soviet leadership must have had some reservations about intervening in the face of US strategic superiority and its professed policy of "liberation," but signals of US noncommitment, as well as memories and images outweighed these reservations.

#### Eastern Europe

The liberalizing trend in Eastern Europe, begun after Stalin's death on March 9, 1956, steadily snowballed: rebellions erupted in East Berlin (1953); in Poznan, Poland (1956), and finally, in Budapest (1956). Uneasiness must have been increasing in Soviet leaders' minds as they debated how to strike a balance between the "Scylla of Stalinism and the Charybdis of runaway relaxation of controls."<sup>226</sup> The decision to crush the revolution was the Soviet leaders' answer to the unspoken question in East Europeans' minds as to how far de-Stalinization would be permitted to go.

In the summer of 1955, Khrushchev travelled to Yugoslavia to reconcile past differences with Tito. A communique on June 20 resulted from this meeting, declaring that "the ways of socialist development vary in different countries and conditions," and "the wealth of the forms of socialist development contributes to its strength." This was meant to send a message to other East European

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<sup>225</sup> See Micunovic, op. cit., pp. 134-40.

<sup>226</sup> Alvin Rubinstein, Soviet Foreign Policy Since World War II (Boston: Little, Brown, 1984), p. 8.

countries that they had a right to experiment with different forms of socialism better tailored to their particular national characteristics.

In Poland, a string of events led to the confrontation between the Polish Communist Party and the Soviet Presidium. The death in March 1956 of Boleslaw Bierut (the Polish counterpart to Stalin) had a liberalizing influence on the Polish people. The next month 30,000 prisoners were released, 9,000 of whom were political prisoners. As stated earlier, a strike broke out in June in Poznan. The government realized the need to accelerate liberalization. Marshal Konstantin Rokossovsky, the Polish-born Soviet commander of Soviet troops in Poland, lost his membership in the Polish Politburo. Finally, Wladyslaw Gomulka was elected head of the Polish Communist Party against Soviet preferences. To intimidate them, a Soviet delegation (Khrushchev, Malenkov, Molotov, Kaganovich) travelled to Poland unannounced. Gomulka remained firm, convincing the Russians that, as a sincere Marxist-Leninist, he would cooperate with the Soviet Union in foreign and military policies.

The main differences between the Polish and Hungarian situations were that: 1) Poland was better prepared to defend itself against the Russians; 2) Gomulka was better able to control his people; and 3) Poland had a much larger population (25 million) than did Hungary (9 million). Having endured two long prison terms, Gomulka had become more realistic about Soviet intentions. He knew that in the circumstances they would not allow

Poland to leave the Warsaw Pact, since it was a strategic link to the large Soviet Army in East Germany.

#### National Liberation Movement

Five African countries became independent between 1955 and 1958: Sudan (1955), Morocco (1956), Tunisia (1956), Ghana (1957), and Guinea (1958). Of the rest of the African countries, four (Liberia, South Africa, Egypt, and Libya) won their independence before 1955, while the majority of countries (forty-two) became independent in the 1960s.<sup>227</sup> The 1955 Bandung Conference, which was attended by many developing and newly independent countries, including China and Egypt, stressed the principles of noninterference and sovereignty. Imre Nagy was inspired by these ideas, as the tracts he wrote in 1955 illustrate. He advocated the same for Hungary.

The Soviet leaders apparently felt some pressure to portray themselves as "peace-loving" liberators, fighting on the side of the incipient working class,<sup>228</sup> against the reactionary forces of the West. At the Twentieth Party Congress, which began on February 14, 1956, Khrushchev had stressed in his General Report the existence of a "zone of peace," comprised of the former colonial states, with which strengthened ties were advocated.<sup>229</sup> In

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<sup>227</sup> Encyclopedia Britannica, 1979 ed., s.v. "Africa."

<sup>228</sup> To be sure, there is not much of a working class in many of these agrarian countries.

<sup>229</sup> This "open" General Report, delivered by Khrushchev at the beginning of the Congress, must not be confused with his speech denouncing Stalin ("On the Cult of Personality and its

publicly revising the "two camp" thesis of Stalin and Zhdanov and giving verbal recognition to these neutral, nonsocialist states as "active powers for peace," the Soviet Union in all likelihood was surreptitiously attempting to woo them over to the socialist side. The neutral states' acceptance of the Soviet Union's so-called "fraternal assistance" to Hungary was thus crucial to the Russians' long-term political strategy.

Only by claiming that the "imperialists" directly supported the "counterrevolutionaries" in Hungary would Soviet anticolonial policies toward the National Liberation Movement (articulated in 1955-56) seem consistent with their use of force against a bloc member. There were at least two earlier attempts of the Soviet leaders to identify with the nonaligned states.

First, in November and December of 1955, Khrushchev and Bulganin went on month-long tour to India, Burma, and Afghanistan. The Soviet Union even pledged \$100,000,000 in aid to the Afghans. In his speech on December 30, Khrushchev made it clear that he was relying heavily on the support of India, Burma, and Afghanistan to "swing the power balance against the capitalist countries."<sup>230</sup> "The Soviet Union will strive unflaggingly to undermine and

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Consequences") read at a closed session on the morning of February 25, 1956. Among the countries specifically mentioned in the first speech were: Indonesia, India, Burma, Afghanistan, Syria, Egypt, and Pakistan (which Khrushchev called "a neighbor"). See N. S. Khrushchev, Report of the Central Committee of the CPSU to the Twentieth Party Congress (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1956); also Jack Raymond, "Moscow Widens Peace Overture," New York Times, February 24, 1956, pp. 1, 4.

<sup>230</sup> New York Times, December 30, 1955, p. 4.

destroy the remains of the colonial system in Asia and Africa," he declared later in the same speech.

Second, the Soviet peace-loving image was symbolized by the New Delhi Communique, issued earlier on December 13, 1955 by Bulganin, Khrushchev, and Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. In it, the Soviet leaders emphasized the "futility of war, which owing to the development of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons, could only bring disaster to mankind."<sup>231</sup> In striking this peace-loving pose, the Russians were later able to claim that they were merely "fighting for peace" in Hungary.

Although a detailed analysis of Sino-Soviet relations is beyond the scope of this study, it is important to note in passing that the Sino-Soviet rift was already beginning deep below the surface. China had begun to play a larger role in East European politics in the latter half of the 1950s. Chou Enlai's lavish tour throughout the region in January 1957 symbolized the new Chinese role.<sup>232</sup> In his memoirs, Khrushchev intimates that he greatly valued the advice of Liu Shao-chi and Mao Tse-tung.<sup>233</sup> Bulganin's proposal to the United States in January 1956 for a 20-year treaty of "friendship" and "economic, cultural, and scientific cooperation" omitted the usual mention of the PRC's rights over

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<sup>231</sup> Welles Hagen, "Soviets Now Said to Acknowledge Atom Stalemate Ruling Out War," New York Times, December 20, 1955.

<sup>232</sup> Adam Ulam, Expansion and Coexistence (New York: Praeger, 1968), p. 599.

<sup>233</sup> Khrushchev, op. cit., pp. 418-419.

Formosa and to a seat in the United Nations.<sup>234</sup>

Later, at the Moscow Conference of all the Communist Parties in November 1960 (at the height of the Sino-Soviet rift), the Chinese insisted that they had urged Moscow not to intervene in Poland, but to apply force in Hungary. They argued that, in the first case, an intervention would amount to war between two Communist governments, whereas in the second case, force was necessary to crush counterrevolutionaries. According to Janos Radvanyi, a Hungarian diplomat at the time, Mao had watched the events closely through his knowledgeable Ambassador to Hungary, Ho Te-ching (fluent in Magyar), and had sent an urgent message to the Kremlin "asking Khrushchev for quick military action against the Hungarian revisionists."<sup>235</sup> Moscow later (on October 15, 1957) rewarded the Chinese for their support in the Hungary intervention issue with a verbal promise to lend them economic and technical assistance, including aid in developing an atom bomb.<sup>236</sup> This agreement was rescinded on June 20, 1959.

#### Soviet Methods of Deception

According to Michael Handel, political deception can be defined as "a purposeful attempt by the deceiver to manipulate the perceptions of the target's decision makers in order to gain a

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<sup>234</sup> Adam Ulam, The Rivals (New York: Penguin Books, 1971), p. 241.

<sup>235</sup> Radvanyi, op. cit., p. 27.

<sup>236</sup> Adam B. Ulam, Expansion and Coexistence, (New York: Praeger, 1968), p. 599.

competitive advantage."<sup>237</sup> A definition of deception in more of a military setting has been provided by Everett Wheeler: "the act(s) of trickery or deceit designed to gain psychological advantage over an opponent, to neutralize some part of an opponent's superiority, to minimize one's own expenditure of resources, or to restore the morale and physical state of one's own forces."<sup>238</sup>

Deception, or "stratagem," was developed as a theory and guide to action in military affairs. The first appearance of the Greek word "strategema" (ca. 370 B.C.) occurs in the writings of Greek soldier and historian Xenophon, specifically in an anecdote in which Socrates discusses with young Pericles (elected strategos at Athens, 406 B.C.) the learning of generalship.<sup>239</sup>

The analysis of deception in Soviet behavior is itself a deceptive process. A given action can amount to deception (misleading a target country), or simple lying (ex post facto justification), or political provocation (initiating a confrontation).<sup>240</sup> In addition, deception is not restricted to human behavior. Animals also deceive, but they do so for survival,

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<sup>237</sup> David Charters and Maurice Tugwell, eds. Deception Operations: Studies in the East-West Context (London: Brassey's Inc., 1990), p. 4.

<sup>238</sup> Everett L. Wheeler, Stratagem and the Vocabulary of Military Trickery (Leiden, the Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1988), p. 10.

<sup>239</sup> Wheeler, op. cit., p. 10.

<sup>240</sup> Jiri Valenta, "Soviet Uses of Surprise and Deception," Survival 24 (March/April, 1982), p. 51.

whether to catch food or to prevent attack. The Bolas spider, for example, makes a sticky ball and gives it a scent similar to that of the female moth of the armyworm. When the male moth draws near, the spider swings the ball, and the moth sticks to it. Then the spider climbs down the thread and eats the moth. Man, however, has the capacity to deceive purely for personal gain. Human deception is guided, that is, by more complex purposes. In military situations, it can be employed not merely to mislead one's adversary, but also to provide a military commander with freedom of action, to gain surprise, and to save the lives of his own troops.<sup>241</sup> While in war, the targets of deception operations are usually the political and military decision makers and senior intelligence and operations staffs of the enemy camp, deception operations are also often designed for an electorate, faction, or lobby that has the potential to influence a nation's policy.<sup>242</sup>

In a comprehensive study of surprise attack, one scholar found that the reason for strategic surprise was often not the lack of intelligence warning per se, but "political disbelief."<sup>243</sup> The intensity of surprise depended upon the nature and depth of the victim's misperceptions vis-a-vis the antagonist.<sup>244</sup> In fact, excellent intelligence often tends to

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<sup>241</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>242</sup> Charters and Tugwell, op. cit., p. 4.

<sup>243</sup> Richard Betts, Surprise Attack: Lessons for Defense Planning (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1982), p. 18.

<sup>244</sup> Ephraim Kam, Surprise Attack: the Victim's Perspective (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), pp. 8-9.

make leaders overconfident, thus less sensitive to what they do not know about enemy capabilities.<sup>245</sup> It has often been said, perhaps beginning with Goethe, that all deception is "self-deception."

While it is often true that one is inclined to believe what one wants to believe, or what one has accepted to be true in the past, this is not always the case. Barton Whaley has drawn a crucial distinction between "self-induced" and "other-induced" deception, and claims that deception is but one form of perception.<sup>246</sup> The problem of political disbelief is particularly troublesome, since it does not necessarily stem from stupidity. Leaders adept at deception techniques are not less susceptible to them than the most ingenuous leaders. They have learned to disregard discrepant indicators (assuming them to be lures), which makes them slow to revise their estimates. This explains why the most effective deception stories are those which reinforce, rather than change, the victim's preconceptions.

Deception is often, but not always, more achievable between people with similar values, since they will be less mutually suspicious.<sup>247</sup> This tendency can be advantageous if the two

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<sup>245</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>246</sup> Charters and Tugwell, op. cit., p. 4.

<sup>247</sup> Of course, if--hypothetically--these two countries were allies, there would be no rationale for a deception scheme, unless it were part of a grander deception plan aimed at an adversary, such that the allied country's ignorance was intended to maintain secrecy. Another social scientist found that people ordinarily tend not to believe threats (either verbal or non-verbal) from friends, but believe them from enemies. See Thomas W. Milburn, On the Nature

countries are fighting against each other (e.g. two communist countries). On the other hand, if one or both countries' leaderships suspect deception operations, it (or they) will be more knowledgeable of the victim's prejudices and hence able to anticipate his likely reactions to various tricks and lures. In such a case, deception would be very difficult to achieve.

Deception was all the more prevalent among communist countries (before the East European states achieved independence from the USSR), despite similar value systems, due to the need to mask the presence of factions or personal dislikes. It is politically expedient to deceive oneself and others, thereby upholding the image of monolithic party unity. If a Communist Party member speaks out, he disobeys Lenin's historical ban on factions (issued at the Tenth Party Congress in 1921), and risks his own excommunication. With respect to the Hungarian case, it was Nagy himself who proposed that the frontier with Austria be closed.<sup>248</sup> The first action he took when the Yugoslavs told him new tanks were rolling into Budapest was to order Bela Kiraly, commander of the National Guard, not to fight.<sup>249</sup> "The Russians are our friends," Nagy said on the radio, "don't shoot."<sup>250</sup>

Conversely, peoples of discrepant value systems and cultures

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of Threats: A Social Psychological Analysis (New York: Praeger, 1981), pp. 28-9.

<sup>248</sup> Corriere della Sera (Milan), November 29, 1956.

<sup>249</sup> Kaplan, op. cit., p. 295.

<sup>250</sup> Zinner, op. cit., p. 336-7.

(e.g. communists versus Muslims, or authoritarian states versus democratic states) will most likely be instinctively suspicious of each other. This tendency can be disastrous if states with discrepant values are allies in warfare. Stalin's behavior regarding the German deception plan before Operation Barbarossa--the invasion of the Soviet Union--illustrates this tendency. Both the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and the U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt provided Stalin with detailed information about the imminent invasion. He knew that at 0300 hours on June 22, 1941, about 164 German divisions would cross the border on a front of roughly 2,000 miles between the Baltic and Black Seas.<sup>251</sup> And yet, as Churchill later wrote:

...the Soviet Government, at once haughty and purblind, regarded every warning we gave as a mere attempt of beaten men to drag others into ruin...Now, having been deceived and taken by surprise...their first impulse and lasting policy was to demand all possible succour from Great Britain and her Empire.<sup>252</sup>

Stalin's failure to heed the British and American warnings certainly did not stem from any trust of Hitler's motives, despite the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact (supposed to last ten years), since as Khrushchev later wrote, Stalin was mortally afraid of Hitler, "like a rabbit in front of a boa constrictor."<sup>253</sup> Although it is difficult to explain Stalin's behavior in this case, the

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<sup>251</sup> Jock Haswell, The Tangled Web: The Art of Tactical and Strategic Deception (Wendover: John Goodchild Publishers, 1985), p. 132.

<sup>252</sup> Winston Churchill, The Second World War (London: Cassell, 1949), p. 132.

<sup>253</sup> Khrushchev, op. cit., p. 169.

discrepancy between the Soviet and British-American political cultures can be seen as one explanatory factor. Stalin suspected deception from the Western democratic states, despite objective signs that they were trying to help him.

In the post-World War II era of nuclear weapons and the real or perceived irreconcilability between the capitalist and communist political systems, a certain proclivity to use deception has prevailed.<sup>254</sup>

For the purpose of analyzing Soviet deception in the 1956 intervention, it is helpful to consider two basic principles of successful deception: preparation and credibility.<sup>255</sup> The following section will explain how Soviet decision makers observed these principles in their deception of the Imre Nagy and the other Hungarian leaders.

#### Preparation

A successful deception scheme, according to British analyst Jock Haswell, is never "haphazard" and must be "carefully planned on the basis of the target's likely reactions." He continues:

This involves detailed knowledge of the target and his resources for collecting information, careful attention to detail and, in addition to all the groundwork needed before the ruse is to be put into effect, preparation of all the measures needed subsequently to support it. Thus preparation includes thinking out the whole deception scheme from the first germ of an idea to final achievement of the aim, and at the same time calculating the reaction of the target to each step or stage in the

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<sup>254</sup> Charters and Tugwell, op. cit., p. 2.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

plan.<sup>256</sup>

In a sense there is little difference between this type of preparation and the act of deception itself. It is unlikely that one can deceive another without any degree of preparation. Yet while preparation is a necessary component of deception, it is not sufficient. There are other intervening variables involved. Deception is an act of communication, whereby the one who intends to deceive sends false signals which he hopes the target will receive and accept as true (or vice versa: true signals which will be accepted as false). Since a successful deception scheme requires both a sender and receiver of messages, the sender alone--despite extensive preparation--cannot guarantee that his plan will work. First, he is not omniscient, and thus can overlook an isolated fact, which from the target's view would immediately seem inconsistent and cause the target to reexamine his own preconceptions. Second, while the deceiver might know all the strengths and weaknesses of his intended victim, he might underestimate the extent to which his victim knows his--the deceiver's--strengths and weaknesses. The degree of preparation necessary is a direct function of the intended victim's alertness to the possibility of being deceived. In short, an effective deception scheme requires both a well-prepared deceiver and a credulous victim. Credibility is thus the second crucial component of deception, and will be discussed later.

The negotiations to withdraw troops reveal the Soviet use of

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<sup>256</sup> Haswell, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

preparation as a principle of deception. First, the negotiations were begun on November 3, the day before the invasion. This timing allowed the Russians physically to separate the Hungarian military leaders from Nagy and the political leaders. On the night of November 3, the Hungarian military leaders were kidnapped at the Soviet headquarters, and thus were prevented from helping Nagy and his civilian colleagues from fighting the Soviet troops.

Second, by beginning the negotiations on the day before the invasion, Nagy would be less likely to order the Hungarian military to resist for fear of disrupting the progress of the negotiations. Third, the fact that the second negotiating session of that day was to be held in Soviet headquarters reveals the Soviet intention to kidnap them. With the victim on the kidnapper's territory, the latter's task was already half accomplished.

The second visit by Mikoyan and Suslov to Budapest (on October 30-31) also reveals the broad extent of Soviet preparation. According to one student reporter, they appeared relaxed, beaming as they shook the reporter's hand. They were arriving in Budapest at the same time the Presidium was meeting in Moscow (and presumably when the decision to invade was made). Yet it is doubtful that Mikoyan and Suslov, as Soviet Vice-Premier and Presidium member respectively, were unaware of the plan to invade Hungary a second time.

Even if they did not know, Khrushchev certainly did; the visit thus was a clever way to mislead Nagy and his colleagues as

to Soviet intentions. In fact, the two officials' presence would be all the more deceptive if they did not know of the impending attack: ignorance is persuasive.

Finally, the Soviet deception is shown by the way the Russians misled the Hungarian people. They refused to let Nagy tell the people on the radio that he was not responsible for calling in the Soviet troops. This had the effect of lowering the people's morale, since they had believed in Nagy and swept him into power against his will. Nagy was a moral banner for them. Thus by discrediting him, the Russians attempted to break the unity of the people, to cause friction among them, so they would not be able to fight in an organized way against the Soviet Army.

The manner in which Nagy was abducted on November 22 also reveals careful preparation of deception. Kadar, knowing the plans, had guaranteed Nagy's safety in writing, in order to create credibility.<sup>257</sup> The bus that arrived at the Yugoslav Embassy at 6:30 p.m. to pick up Nagy, Losonczi, and other Hungarian leaders had been sent by Ferenc Munnich, the pro-Soviet Minister of the Armed Forces and of Public Security Affairs (the same man whom Khrushchev favored over Kadar as head of a new puppet regime).<sup>258</sup> When Soviet military personnel entered the bus, Yugoslav Ambassador Micunovic ordered two embassy officials to ride along, to make sure that Nagy and the others reached their homes. But instead of Nagy's home the bus was driven to the headquarters of

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<sup>257</sup> Kaplan, *op. cit.*, p. 221.

<sup>258</sup> U.N. Report, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

the Soviet military command. After the Yugoslav officials were forced off the bus, it then drove to an unknown destination, escorted by armored cars.

Soviet preparation in the military sense was thorough. Admittedly, it is difficult to distinguish between military preparations that are simply standard operating procedures and those specifically designed to mislead an opponent. Yet since the preparations for intervention in Hungary were conducted unobtrusively, and were intended to achieve surprise, they can be considered preparations for military deception. They began as early as October 20, when floating bridges were built on the Tisza river forming the border between the two countries. Soviet troops in Rumania were alerted on October 21.<sup>259</sup> In addition, as discussed earlier, reserve officers and officers on leave who spoke Hungarian or German were recalled to the Soviet Union on October 21 and 22.<sup>260</sup>

Before the first intervention on October 24, Soviet tanks entered Hungary from two locations: from the Soviet Union (via Zahoney), and from Rumania. Yet in the official announcement on October 24 it was announced only that "Soviet forces stationed in Hungary" were called upon.<sup>261</sup> No doubt the information about additional troops was omitted, so the Hungarian forces would be caught unprepared, having underestimated Soviet military

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<sup>259</sup> Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid., p. 39.

capabilities. In fact, as mentioned, only two Soviet divisions--the Second and Seventeenth Mechanized Divisions--were stationed in Hungary before the invasion.<sup>262</sup> Before the second intervention on November 4, tanks approached also from Czechoslovakia (via Esztergom), as well as from the USSR and Rumania. According to intelligence reports collected by the Hungarian Central Revolutionary Committee, 304 tanks entered from Zahoney on November 2, and another 301 from Rumania the same day.<sup>263</sup>

One purpose of the military preparations was systematically to cut off all means of communication, thus helping to break the unity of the people, so they could not effectively fight back. First, tanks were deployed all along the strategic road and railway links along the Budapest-Szolnok-Debrecen-Nyiregyhaza-Zahoney circle.<sup>264</sup> Second, the heaviest tank forces were arranged around Budapest, in order to isolate it from the rest of Hungary and to exert psychological pressure against Nagy. Third, all major airfields were seized, beginning with the Ferihegy airfield in Budapest on October 29 (which was not handed back until December 28). By the evening of November 3, the telephone was the only medium of communication open to the Hungarians.<sup>265</sup>

Moreover, the Soviet military commanders used the more developed communication system of Czechoslovakia since bottlenecks

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<sup>262</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>263</sup> Gordon Shephard, Daily Telegraph, November 3, 1956.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid.

<sup>265</sup> U.N. Report, op. cit. p. 27.

had developed at the approach from Zahoney, and the approach from Rumania. Thus the deployment of Soviet forces occurred north of Slovakia and along the Danube, as far east as Esztergom (north of Budapest). On November 2, Soviet troops from Czechoslovakia crossed the Danube bridge at Komarom.<sup>266</sup> Finally, the partial withdrawal of tanks, regrouping, and then all-out frontal attack indicates extensive preparation. The October 24 attack taught Soviet commanders that four divisions were not enough to take Budapest. Seven divisions were reserved for the second phase of military action, and a greater number of reserves were kept ready.<sup>267</sup>

#### Credibility

This principle dictates that the deception story support a preconceived idea in the target's mind. Because the Hungarians were expecting a great deal of tank movement at the Soviet-Hungarian border, they were initially deceived about the influx of more troops from the USSR. They perceived more tanks leaving than coming, because it fitted their preconceived idea. They believed what they wanted to believe.

Second, the negotiations supported the preconceived idea in the Hungarians' minds that the Russians intended to withdraw their tanks. During the first set of negotiations, begun at 3 p.m. on November 3, the Russians focused on minute details. They did not inform General Malinin of their plans to arrest the entire

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<sup>266</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>267</sup> Vali, op. cit., p. 374.

Hungarian delegation.<sup>268</sup> As Ambassador Bohlen wrote:

Curiously, the Soviets pulled the same deceptive trick on the Hungarians as they did on the English and French in 1939 at the time of the Nazi-Soviet pact. The Soviet general who was negotiating with the Hungarians, as Voroshilov was with the British and French in 1939, thought that he was negotiating in good faith for a pullout of Soviet troops. He was shocked, I was told, when another Soviet officer entered the room [KGB chief, Ivan Serov] and arrested the Hungarians. The only difference in 1939 was that the British and French were not arrested.<sup>269</sup>

The Soviet decision makers probably knew that by not informing General Malinin of the deception plan, he would be likely to focus on the details of a withdrawal, thereby enhancing Soviet credibility in the Hungarian delegation's eyes. Also, the Soviet negotiators insisted upon a "cheerful farewell."<sup>270</sup> This probably showed the Hungarians that the Russians were concerned about losing face, a matter which--if the negotiation process was a trick from the start--would not have concerned the Russians.

On November 1, Nagy announced that he was withdrawing Hungary from the Warsaw Pact. It was a preconceived idea in Nagy's mind that the withdrawal was to become a reality. Thus, the Soviet leaders played on this idea, suggesting that two committees be set

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<sup>268</sup> The Hungarian delegation was composed of Major General Pal Maleter, Minister of State Ferenc Erdei, Major General Istvan Kovacs, and Colonel Miklos Szucs. The Soviet delegation consisted of General Malinin, Lieutenant General Stepanov, and Major General Shchelbanin.

<sup>269</sup> Bohlen, op. cit., p. 419.

<sup>270</sup> UN Report, op. cit., p. 8-9.

up to discuss the implications of Hungary's withdrawal.<sup>271</sup>

One psychological technique to create credibility is the "repetitive process." An action consistently repeated conditions the victim to accept as harmless ostensibly routine events, which in reality provide a cover for a subsequent action.<sup>272</sup> The negotiations were begun in the afternoon of November 3, and were merely to be resumed at 10 p.m. that same evening. Given the earnest and correct Soviet behavior of the earlier session, Pal Maleter and others expected another successful session. Since most of the issues had been covered and an agreement appeared to be near, the next session was intended only to discuss certain technical details; it would only be a "wrap-up."<sup>273</sup> They were not suspicious that the next session was to be held at the Soviet Military Command at Tokol on Csepel Island, as opposed to the Hungarian Parliament Building.<sup>274</sup>

Credibility was established in yet another way. Soviet propaganda built on the issue of economic problems in Hungary, but then accused "the counterrevolutionaries" of taking advantage of the economic difficulties to ruin the revolution.

The official statement of October 30 ("On Friendship and

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<sup>271</sup> Bohlen, op. cit., p. 417. "At a party for the Syrians on November 2, he [Bulganin]...said that a Hungarian-Soviet Commission would be established to consider Nagy's statement on withdrawal of all Soviet troops inside the country and of Hungary from the Warsaw Pact."

<sup>272</sup> Haswell, op. cit., p. 45.

<sup>273</sup> U.N. Special Committee Report, op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid.

Cooperation Between the Soviet Union and Other Socialist States"), declaring that the Soviet leadership wished to negotiate a withdrawal, was also an act of deception designed to create credibility. As US Ambassador Charles Bohlen commented, "I could not shake off a suspicion...that something else was afoot, and cautioned the State Department that the Soviet pledge of a withdrawal from Budapest might be 'nothing more than a cover pending arrival of reinforcements.'"<sup>275</sup> This document was a sophisticated way to restore the Russians' credibility in the Hungarian leaders' eyes. Effective deception presupposes a believing, trusting victim. If that trust is absent, it must be revived before a new act of deception can begin. After the first intervention, the Russians had to restore the Hungarians' faith in their word, to make further deception possible.

Finally, in a larger context, the restraint the Russians showed toward Poland earlier that month (when they knew trouble was brewing in Hungary) also employed the repetitive process technique. It set a precedent of nonviolent action toward a bloc nation, making Hungarians expect the same restraint toward themselves.

In short, through techniques including the scheduling of negotiations one day before the intervention, arresting the Hungarian negotiators and preventing their communication with Nagy, arranging for Soviet troops to simultaneously enter and exit

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<sup>275</sup> Charles Bohlen, Witness to History, 1929-1969 (New York: Norton, 1973), p. 412.

Hungary, and so on, the Soviet leadership in 1956 successfully deceived Imre Nagy, his government, and the population as to its true intentions.

In summary, the Soviet leadership was largely predisposed to intervene in Hungary. Khrushchev was determined to prove his worthiness to be Stalin's successor (whose strength he admired) and to consolidate his power in the Kremlin. He did not want the Stalinist diehards to blame him for the "loss of Hungary." He perceived Imre Nagy as having lost control over the local population, and the rebellion as having been organized by an external group. In their cost-benefit calculations, Khrushchev and his colleagues probably found that the benefits of a military intervention far outweighed the costs and risks. Their main goal was to maintain Soviet hegemony over Eastern Europe. Their memories of past relations with Hungary as part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in all likelihood reinforced their predisposition to intervene. Although the Presidium members were conscious of the risks concerning the United States' reactions, they did not perceive these risks to be large enough to justify abstaining from an intervention. Previous uprisings in Eastern Europe increased the Soviet leaders' desire for a decisive crackdown by which to deter the other satellites. Chinese pressure to suppress the Hungarian "revisionists" was also an important factor. Given Nagy's basic loyalty to Marxism-Leninism and the Soviet Union, Khrushchev and others found it fairly easy to deceive him (and

eventually to kidnap and execute him). (See the chart on the next page.)

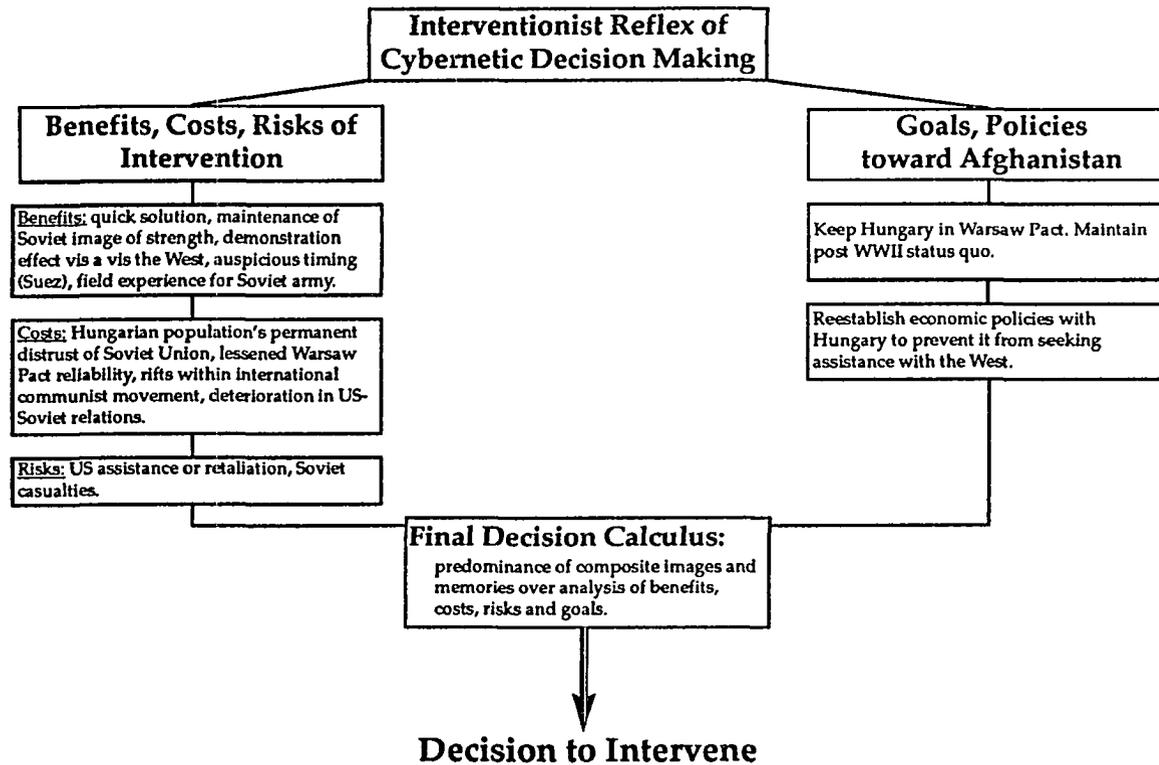
The Soviet Leadership in 1956 as Cybernetic  
Decision Making, Reiterative Learning, Unit

There is considerable evidence to suggest that Khrushchev's leadership functioned as a cybernetic decision making unit and reiterative learner before and during the 1956 crisis in Hungary. This section will analyze the Soviet leaders' decision making process with respect to three main criteria of cybernetic decision making and reiterative learning: 1) dependence upon a subjective image of the opponent as a source of knowledge; 2) primary reliance on memories of past relations with the opponent as a factor in decision making; and 3) reluctance to reevaluate past knowledge in the light of new concretes in the present.

According to the definition of reiterative learning (characteristic of the cybernetic decision maker), images and memories are the predominant factors in the decision making process, and tend to reduce the likelihood of a scrupulous calculation of benefits, costs, and risks of numerous options, and of a comparative assessment of those options to long-range goals and policies.

It would be useful to review the nature of the Soviet image of Hungary and its function in the decision process. As we have seen, the image was flawed in several important respects. The Russians perceived the disturbance in Hungary as a mere





"counterrevolutionary putsch," when in reality it was a widespread, spontaneous revolution. They regarded Hungary initially as a model satrap, and yet, had they sought accurate information, they would have known that the country lagged behind the others in the implementation of the New Course. To them Rakosi was a trustworthy, able leader despite his ruthlessness; in reality he was one of the major causes of the revolution. Nagy, on the other hand, seemed politically weak to them; in reality he metamorphosed into a resolute leader--the only East European who dared to attempt to withdraw his country from the Warsaw Pact (before 1989). The Russians had confidence in their armed forces, yet they underestimated the number of divisions required to subdue the Hungarian population in the first (October 24) intervention. No Hungarian soldiers or police fought on their side; instead some Soviet soldiers went over to the Hungarians' side, and the pro-Soviet AVH officers were hanged by their feet on lampposts. Without the superiority in sheer numbers of Russian men, and with military aid to the Hungarians from the West, the Russians probably would not have succeeded in crushing the rebellion.

In effect, the Soviet leaders, in perceiving the Hungarian satellite, tended generally to downplay its strength as an adversary and exaggerate their own political and military capability. This perception reveals two characteristics of cybernetic decision making and reiterative learning, namely: 1) the desire to avoid new information and reduce risks in attempting to solve problems; and 2) the reluctance to consider a large

number of alternatives.

Had Khrushchev sought more accurate information, he might have considered in more depth the possible dangers of intervening. In sharing these reservations with his colleagues, a more severe division of opinion among these Presidium members would be likely to occur, at a time when Khrushchev was attempting to assert his control as the most important decision maker. An inchoate image of the satellite, held in common by all the other members of the so-called "collective membership" and by leaders of the other East European countries would result instead in a unanimous vote in favor of a military intervention. Moreover, a swift, successful intervention to "liberate the Hungarian workers" would enhance Khrushchev's own budding cult of personality, while the "loss of Hungary" might prompt accusations by his rivals that he was unworthy to succeed Stalin. (In spite of Stalin's "crimes," no one disputed the fact that he had been a strong leader.) To Khrushchev the risk of tarnishing his growing reputation was too great; he preferred the course of action that would most enhance his power, as opposed to the solution that was most beneficial to the two countries.

The Soviet image of Hungary reveals a second characteristic of cybernetic decision making closely related to the first one: the reluctance to consider a large number of alternatives. To be sure, it cannot be known conclusively to what extent the Presidium members weighed alternatives, but judging from Khrushchev's own statements, the problem seemed to be constructed as an "either-or"

proposition: either the Soviet Union should send in more troops to crush the "counterrevolution" or no troops should be sent in and the Hungarian working class would have to "deal with" the counterrevolution itself. He wrote: "We sat up the whole night, weighing the pros and cons of whether or not we should apply force to Hungary." [emphasis added]<sup>276</sup> It was politically expedient to portray Hungary as an errant, but weak, satellite that needed to be quickly chastised, than to perceive and conduct business with Hungary as between two equal sovereignties. The former, more simplistic portrait enabled the Soviet leaders to choose a simple method of problem solving, the extreme of de-Stalinization: a harsh military crackdown. The latter, more realistic portrait would require them to contemplate alternatives that lie in between the two extremes.

For example, they might have seriously invited suggestions from the other East European leaders, rather than simply "informing" them of the Soviet Presidium's choice of action. Second, they might have requested that a popular "national Communist" such as Gomulka or Tito persuade Nagy in a one-on-one encounter not to carry his reforms too far, or not to allow his people to push him too far in his reform program. Gomulka, in particular, as a reformer who had nevertheless managed to stay in the Russians' good graces, would have had a certain amount of credibility in defining for Nagy what "too far" meant. Third, the Soviet leaders might have withdrawn their hitherto permanently

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<sup>276</sup> Khrushchev, op. cit., p. 418.

stationed troops from Hungary and allowed the Hungarian leader to establish a multi-party system on the condition that the country remain in the Warsaw Pact. (They might have remembered how they had accepted Gomulka's ascent to power, once he had assured them that he was a sincere Communist and would always support the Soviet Union in foreign policy matters.)

A fourth alternative, with respect to Soviet fears that Imre Nagy could not control his people, may have been simply to observe Nagy's growth as a leader more closely. Instead, no high-level Presidium member visited Hungary for more than a week. Mikoyan and Suslov merely came on two different occasions for short three to four-day sojourns, usually for the purpose of conveying a message.

Finally, the Soviet leadership might even have considered granting to Hungary the status of an independent Communist regime, a second Yugoslavia as it were, or precursor to a kind of Eurocommunism. The burgeoning of such independent communist regimes--states that had chosen communism as their national creed--would send an affirmative message to the Western democracies of the genuine self-sustaining nature of the Marxist-Leninist ideology. Had Khrushchev truly pondered the "correlation of forces," he would have realized the powerful psychological effect that this option would have on Western statesmen.<sup>277</sup> By applying

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<sup>277</sup> A good case might be made that the 1957 launching of Sputnik, ahead of the United States, caused more anguish among US statesmen and strategists than did the 1956 invasion. The former event raised questions about the educational standards in the United States and challenged common assumptions about communism, namely that only the less developed countries were attracted to it, and that it hampered technical innovations.

military force in Hungary, the Soviet leaders sent the opposite message to the West, namely that Hungary had remained a communist country until 1956 only because its inhabitants were physically coerced. Here Khrushchev seriously misjudged the West's reaction; he told Ambassador Micunovic (as quoted earlier) that by sending in tanks to crush the rebellion he would be giving the West "a rap on the knuckles."

There is no tangible evidence that the Khrushchev's leadership considered these alternatives. Since the decision makers were fairly certain of a military victory, it probably seemed easier to send in troops than to generate many alternatives, consider each one carefully, analyze their benefits, costs, and risks, consider the relation of those alternatives to their long-range goals, and--perhaps most importantly--run the risk of making mistakes. The most grievous mistake might conceivably be the Soviet Union's loss of reputation as a strong, resolute power.

The Soviet leadership's memories of past relations with Hungary also in all likelihood played a predominant role in the 1956 decision. It will be recalled that these memories included those of the 1848 Russian invasion to suppress Hungarians fighting for liberation from Austria; the traditional rivalry with Russia over the Balkans; Hungary's former alliance with Germany in both world wars; its monarchical past with its inherent antipathy toward Communism; the belated influence of communism in the inter-war period; and, generally, the vastly different Hungarian

language and culture.

Some of these memories served as justifications for the 1956 invasion. For example, Khrushchev's comment about the 1848 invasion suggests that the Soviet Union was "obligated" to intervene in order to save the Hungarian workers from the "fascists" and "imperialists." According to this reasoning, it was the Soviet Union's fault that Hungarian workers had not been "liberated" sooner. By intervening in 1956, Soviet leaders would be "atoning" for Tsar Nicholas I's "sins."

The composite Soviet memory of Hungary as especially hostile tended to further motivate and justify the decision to intervene, both in October and November, 1956. The Soviet leaders' image of the satellite country as weak did not conflict with their composite memory of Hungary as having an especially anti-Soviet past. On the contrary, because they felt Hungary to be weak, and because the Russians were aware of Hungary's anti-Soviet past, swift military action seemed the most expedient and logical solution. Because Marxist-Leninist ideology forbade them to acknowledge that a whole country was united against the Soviet Union, they explained the source of antagonism as coming from outside or underground; the Hungarian workers were explained as being captives of these "underground fascists" (remnants of Hungary's old regime) or "US-sponsored saboteurs and counterrevolutionaries."

This overly simplistic memory of the Hungarian satellite as being automatically an adversary (because of external

contamination) reveals--much as the image does--a failure to consider alternative ways of remembering and perceiving Hungary. Although it lasted only four months, one of the first fledgling communist regimes "exported" or transplanted from Soviet Russia was that of Bela Kun in Hungary in March, 1918. Moreover, Imre Nagy was a sincere Communist, and thus it was highly unlikely that--to use Khrushchev's words--he "used deceit and intimidation to draw people into mutiny and a fratricidal war."<sup>278</sup> Perhaps had the Soviet leaders not relied so heavily on their memories of Hungary as an adversary, they would have found a *modus vivendi* in the early stages of the disturbances in Hungary, before they developed into a crisis. It will be recalled that Nagy did not declare neutrality and try to withdraw his country from the Warsaw Pact until after several futile attempts to extract an explanation from Ambassador Andropov for the influx of fresh Soviet troops.<sup>279</sup> The students in the October 23 demonstration had listed "withdrawal of Soviet troops" at the bottom of their resolution. According to one source, it was not the primary consideration in the early days of the movement. More basic concerns for housing and student loans figured most prominently.<sup>280</sup>

As far as it is possible to tell, the Soviet calculus of benefits, costs, and risks seem to have influenced the 1956

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<sup>278</sup> Khrushchev, *op. cit.*, p. 417.

<sup>279</sup> Radvanyi, *op. cit.*, p. xv.

<sup>280</sup> Lomax, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

decision less than did memories and images. More accurately, these memories and images seem to have determined the degree of subjective risk Khrushchev and his colleagues assigned to the chosen option of intervention. For example, the Soviet Foreign Ministry reminded the Presidium in an internal report that the Truman administration had recommended military action against North Korea in 1950 in the UN Security Council while the Soviet Union had been boycotting the meetings. The Foreign Ministry predicted that the Eisenhower administration would again call for an emergency special session of the General Assembly regarding the Hungarian "question." But this time, the report advised, a Soviet delegation must be present at all times, even if under heavy verbal attack, so that it can negate any possible Security Council action by its veto.<sup>281</sup>

The Presidium took further precautions. There was no danger of Soviet representatives at the UN not supporting the Soviet Union's actions, but how would the Soviet leaders make sure that the Hungarian representative--appointed by the Imre Nagy government--would also support them in his reports to the Security Council? Dr. Janos Szabo, a career diplomat, ended up supporting two contradictory views. He transmitted to Secretary-General Hammarskjold the communications of Prime Minister Nagy, but at the same time he relayed to both the Security Council and Emergency

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<sup>281</sup> Radvanyi, op. cit, p. 16. Radvanyi, a Hungarian diplomat cites this information, which he received from Dr. Gyorgy Heltai, who was first deputy foreign minister of the Imre Nagy government in October-November, 1956.

Special Session whatever he had been told by the Soviet mission to the United Nations in New York. Dr. Szabo was guarded around the clock by two Hungarian security agents; he spent his days in New York under house arrest. He knew that he might be physically eliminated if he did not follow Soviet instructions.<sup>282</sup>

In this case a memory (of the conditions necessary for the UN to take military action) influenced the Soviet leadership to take precautions that would reduce the degree of risk involved in an intervention. As explained earlier, the Soviet leaders probably perceived some risk of military aid to Hungary from the United States or United Nations, but with the guidance of memories of their past mistakes, they took as many precautions as possible to reduce the risk.

There is another reason that the behavior of Khrushchev and the Presidium members can be viewed as corresponding to the cybernetic model. It will be recalled that, in addition to the primary reliance on memories and images as sources of information, a major criterion of cybernetic decision making and reiterative learning is the reluctance to reevaluate past knowledge in the light of new concretes in the present, and the failure to adjust policy as a result. Khrushchev demonstrated this reluctance in at least two ways.

First, in spite of his knowledge that Prime Minister Rakosi was responsible for Hungary's severe economic problems and that the Hungarians would no longer tolerate him, Khrushchev was

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<sup>282</sup> Ibid., pp. 14-5.

apparently unable to completely reevaluate his past "knowledge" of Rakosi's capability to lead the nation. Apparently he could not grasp the conceptual difference between dictatorship and government by popular consent. In his view, a resolute and ruthless leader, however hated by his people, was a strong and effective one. Even when Khrushchev appointed Imre Nagy as prime minister on July 4, 1953, he retained Rakosi as first secretary, thus thwarting Nagy's efforts to reform the economy. When he finally forced Rakosi out of all key posts in the party in July, 1956, he replaced him with Erno Gero, who--as head of the Economic Policy Committee in the summer of 1954--was closely linked to Rakosi and thus equally detestable to the Hungarian population. The concrete evidence of popular outrage regarding these political appointments, e.g. the mass demonstrations involving anti-Soviet slogans and the burning of books in the Russian language, seemed to pass by Khrushchev unnoticed.

Second, the long years of disadvantageous trade agreements with the Soviet Union during the Stalinist period had left Hungary heavily indebted to that country. Hungary was forced to import military equipment and other items that it did not need. Nagy as prime minister was especially helpless in changing Hungary's foreign trade because of the party's (meaning Rakosi's) tight control over this sector of the economy. Since Nagy openly addressed these problems, it is doubtful that the Soviet Presidium was not apprised of them. Nagy wrote:

The serious consequences of an erroneous and harmful economic policy that has been pursued for years cannot

be eliminated in eighteen months, especially when the government's new, corrective economic policy is resisted to a great extent. Not only internal, but much more powerful external forces and factors exerted a harmful influence, especially in the field of foreign trade agreements...[I]t must be pointed out that a considerable part of our foreign debt derives from expenditures and investments for security and defense, which place a heavy load on our foreign trade balance. The June, 1953, resolution pointed out that there were excesses in this field also. [emphasis added]<sup>283</sup>

It is not difficult to guess what were the "external forces and factors" to which Nagy referred. The Soviet leaders most likely knew that their foreign trade agreements with Hungary were skewed in the Soviet Union's favor. They were also probably informed of the more recent facts (in 1955) that: 1) the successful implementation of the New Course in Hungary required new credits and investments and the importation of new machinery; and 2) since the Soviet Union was unwilling or unable to provide these, Nagy had renewed a bid for credits from Western countries.<sup>284</sup> Yet despite their knowledge of these latest facts, the Soviet leaders not only did not reevaluate and change their foreign trade policies with Hungary, but (as noted earlier) in 1955 they even cut by half the deliveries of essential raw products badly needed by the satellite country.<sup>285</sup>

Perhaps the Soviet leadership's reluctance to reassess past knowledge and policies can best be explained by Festinger's cognitive dissonance theory. Khrushchev and others were faced with

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<sup>283</sup> Nagy, op. cit., p. 191.

<sup>284</sup> Vali, op. cit., p. 141.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid., p. 140.

two contradictory cognitive elements: 1) the Hungarian people and government are united and loyal to the Soviet Union, and 2) the harsh Rakosi and Gero dictatorships and severe economic hardships of the past decade have caused a national revolt in Hungary, strongly anti-Soviet in nature. Of the three methods for eliminating the inconsistency between these two elements, Khrushchev chose the two methods characteristic of the reiterative learner: denying the knowledge of the inconsistency and avoiding new information that would most likely increase the dissonance. He denied the inconsistency by rationalizing that there was no spontaneous national rebellion, but merely a small "putsch" organized by a "clique" formed from "fascists" left over from the Horthy<sup>286</sup> regime and sponsored by the United States. These "counterrevolutionary forces," in his view, could and should be quickly suppressed. As he explained later in a speech to Hungarian workers in December, 1959, "The saliva of the imperialists was running in their mouths at the prospect of Hungary's leaving the Socialist camp."<sup>287</sup> Khrushchev avoided exposure to new information that would contradict his views by, for example, failing to send more protracted fact-gathering missions to Budapest and outlying regions.

Critics may counter that the careful timing of the November

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<sup>286</sup> Admiral Horthy was the last Commander in Chief of the Austro-Hungarian Navy who overthrew Bela Kun's four-month-old communist regime and ruled Hungary as regent from 1920 to 1944. The Horthy regime was extremely conservative, with authoritarian leanings, although it did permit a multi-party system.

<sup>287</sup> New York Times, December 3, 1959, p. 1.

4 invasion with the outbreak of the Suez Crisis indicates that the Khrushchev leadership, having collected a large quantity of information, operated in close contact with the international political environment, and therefore it functioned as an analytical, rather than a cybernetic, decision making unit. This line of reasoning can be refuted in at least four ways. First, there is no unambiguous explanation for Soviet actions during the Suez crisis. As pointed out earlier, TASS announced on October 31 at 11 a.m. Soviet intentions of withdrawing troops from Hungary, seven hours after the Anglo-French ultimatum was issued to Egypt. This can mean that Khrushchev wanted to regroup and attack again, believing that a crisis was well under way in the Middle East that would distract the West. But it could also mean that he genuinely wanted to withdraw Soviet divisions from Hungarian soil (possibly for use in Egypt). There is not necessarily any tight link between the two crises.

Second, if Khrushchev did carefully time the intervention with the Suez crisis, there is some evidence to suggest that he acted without possessing a crucial piece of information, thus acting more in accordance with the cybernetic model. He could not have known with absolute certainty that there would be a rift between the United States and the British and French, because the rift did not become known until November 2, when a cease-fire resolution was introduced in the United Nations. But the decision to intervene in Hungary for the second time could not have been made any later than November 1, because troops were already

crossing the border on that day.

Third, even if the timing of the intervention was precisely coordinated with the timing of the Suez crisis, that fact in itself does not imply that the fundamental decision of whether or not to apply force in Hungary was determined by the events in the Middle East. As explained earlier, it is important to distinguish between a decision about the willingness to use force and a decision about the timing in the use of force. There are many important factors to take into account when making a rational decision other than the timing of the implementation of that decision. Hence Khrushchev may have behaved as an analytic agent concerning the timing of the intervention, but as a cybernetic agent regarding the overall decision making process.

Finally, since the practice of timing a military intervention to coincide with another international crisis or major event is hardly novel to the Soviet Union, it can be argued that Soviet timing in 1956 was not an exercise in analytic decision making and discontinuous learning, but merely a repetition of past behavior, i.e. an example of reiterative learning. If Soviet tactics in 1956 were merely a repetition of earlier practices (e.g. the 1940 invasion in the Baltics while France was defeated by Nazi Germany), this would reveal several characteristics of the cybernetic decision maker. It would reveal a fundamental conservative purpose and avoidance of variety in decision making; i.e. if a chosen option worked well in the past, it will work well again. It would also reveal an avoidance of uncertainty and risk;

i.e. it is better to choose an option about which there is more information regarding the likely consequences, than one for which there is no precedent.

In addition, this repetition of earlier interventions indicates a process of reasoning by faulty analogy: 1) the definition of the situation in 1956 was (or could have been) seen to be similar to a previous situation (e.g. events in the Baltic states in 1940); 2) feedback after the chosen response (military intervention) was perceived to be positive (i.e. no US or UN-sponsored military assistance was rendered to Hungary); and thus 3) the response is felt to have been correct, and reinforcement learning takes place.

Critics might also argue that the Soviet uses of deception before and during the intervention in Hungary indicate that Khrushchev's leadership conducted itself in accordance with the analytic model. It is true, to some extent, that the practice of deception, by its very nature, requires a degree of analytic decision making and discontinuous learning. But again, the Russians have practiced deception techniques of the same general nature (e.g. kidnappings, arrests during meetings and negotiations, introduction of troops for ostensibly defensive purposes, etc.) on numerous occasions prior to 1956. For this reason the Soviet leaders have drawn upon replicative skills, as well as or more than, analytical skills in their practice of deception in 1956. To give just a few brief examples, Marshal Mikhail Tukhachevsky and Lavrentii Beria were both arrested during

meetings, the latter during a Presidium meeting in June, 1953. Countless arrests of lower echelon officials occurred during fictitious meetings and "consultations," as well as did kidnappings in the middle of the night during the 1930s in the Soviet Union. And in Manchuria just before the Soviet surprise attack (August, 1945), Marshal Meretskov told a local Japanese commander that the masses of Soviet soldiers had come for the purpose of defending the Primore area from attack by the Japanese.<sup>288</sup> Recall that Ambassador Yuri Andropov told Nagy repeatedly that the fresh Soviet troops (on October 31 and November 1) had crossed the Soviet-Hungarian border merely in order to protect the Russian civilian population in Hungary. In many other, if not all other, occasions prior to 1956, the use of Russian or Soviet troops has been for allegedly "defensive" purposes only.

#### Cybernetic Uses of Marxism-Leninism

Khrushchev's use of Marxism-Leninism to articulate and justify the decision to invade Hungary in 1956 further supports the conclusion that he was a cybernetic, as opposed to analytic, decision maker. Because a national rebellion of Hungarian workers against the Soviet Union was not accounted for in the ideological doctrine, there was nothing in the Soviet repertory of responses that would enable the leaders to deal with the crisis effectively.

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<sup>288</sup> Peter H. Vigor, Soviet Blitzkrieg Theory (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), p. 105. Primore is the strip of Soviet territory which lies between the Sea of Japan and the frontier with Manchuria.

Khrushchev thus had to recast the definition of the crisis situation in terms of the international class struggle and East-West military conflict: the "imperialists" (in NATO) directly supported and sustained the Hungarian "counterrevolutionaries," because they hoped to lure Hungary into the Western democracies' "den".

"So long as there are exploiters and exploited in the world," ran an editorial in Pravda, "so long as there are capitalists holding power in their hands and the working class, so long will the conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat remain the starting point for an analysis of historical events."<sup>289</sup>

If they were not stopped in time, the capitalists would lure other socialist countries into their den. Khrushchev wrote: "If the counterrevolution succeeded and NATO took root in the midst of the Socialist countries, it would pose a serious threat to Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Rumania, not to mention the Soviet Union itself."<sup>290</sup>

Thus by intervening militarily the Soviet Union was performing a noble deed, pursuing an internationalist goal:

Whichever course we chose, we would not be pursuing nationalist goals, but the internationalist goal of fraternal proletarian solidarity.<sup>291</sup>

Khrushchev disclaimed responsibility for the Nagy government and explained Soviet sponsorship of the Kadar government in the

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<sup>289</sup> Pravda, December 18, 1956.

<sup>290</sup> Khrushchev, op. cit., p. 417.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid., p. 417.

following manner:

Now I realize there are some people who might claim that the Kadar government was pro-Moscow, that it had been created under our sponsorship and influence. Well, we can kick this ball to the other end simply by asking, under whose sponsorship was the government of Imre Nagy created? In whose planes were waves of bourgeois agents and counterrevolutionary emigres flown back into Hungary? The answer is, under the sponsorship and in the planes of the imperialistic forces of the world, especially the United States.<sup>292</sup>

It was to Khrushchev's advantage to perceive the capitalist countries as a permanent source of conflict rather than of cooperation because such a practice has benefited the leadership in the past. This Manichean world view served as a convenient way of legitimizing all the Soviet Union's actions and explaining any anti-Soviet rebellions. The all-embracing "good versus evil" construction embodied in Marxist-Leninist ideology led Khrushchev and other communist authorities to define the Hungarian situation in 1956 in an erroneous, self-serving way, thus enabling him to make sweeping claims and assertions without any supporting data. His account of the Hungarian uprising appears to proceed from the inclination to fit events into a preconceived pattern, rather than to study them by an objective consideration of evidence.

For example, the Hungarian White Book claims that the demands and programs that appeared in the Hungarian press during the uprising lagged far behind what it calls the "orally proclaimed demands." Although no slogan was ever published that all state and municipal functionaries in leading positions who were communists

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<sup>292</sup> Ibid., p. 428.

were to be dismissed, the White Book asserts, "in practice this is actually what began to take place in various administrations and institutions."<sup>293</sup> By so claiming, the communist authorities have unlimited freedom to explain events in a self-serving way, since their explanations cannot be verified by concrete data (i.e. the alleged oral demands were not recorded).

In sum, it can be argued that Khrushchev employed Marxism-Leninism in a cybernetic manner. In perceiving the Hungarian conflict as stemming from the larger conflict between capitalism and communism, Khrushchev filtered out new variables pertaining to the specific conditions in October-November, 1956, and thus failed to generate more innovative alternatives by which to solve the crisis.

### Conclusion

Khrushchev's decision making and learning behavior in 1956 tended to adhere more closely to the cybernetic, rather than to the analytic, model. Of the four major factors in decision making analyzed in the crisis, it appears that both the images and memories of the Hungarian opponent figured more prominently than did calculations of benefits, costs, and risks, and of national goals and commitments. The images and memories also determined to some extent the subjective dimension of risks involved in the

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<sup>293</sup> Information Bureau of the Council of Ministers of the Hungarian People's Republic, The Counter-Revolutionary Forces in the October Events in Hungary ["White Book"], vol. 2 (Budapest: Information Bureau of the Council of Ministers of the Hungarian People's Republic, 1957), 32.

decision to intervene.

## CHAPTER 3

### SOVIET INTERVENTION IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Evidence indicates that Brezhnev's Politburo decided to intervene in Czechoslovakia in 1968 after a more lengthy and more careful weighing of pros and cons than that undertaken by Khrushchev's Presidium in 1956. The decision was perhaps more difficult for the Soviet leaders to make, due in part to the differing opinions of the Politburo members. Nevertheless, the decision was facilitated by the earlier decision in 1956 to invade Hungary. The intervention was largely a success because the Soviet leaders compelled Alexander Dubcek and others in the Czech Presidium to capitulate to their demands as articulated in the Moscow Protocol (e.g. strict control of the press).

#### Chronology

The crisis in Czechoslovakia can be divided roughly into three periods in 1968: January to early April, April to early July, and July to late August. In the first period, Antonin Novotny was verbally attacked by the Central Committee, thus prompting his "resignation" as First Secretary on January 4. Later, on March 22, he resigned as President. Alexander Dubcek was elected by the full Central Committee on January 6, two days after Novotny's departure. Over the next three months, censorship

controls were relaxed, and as a result people spoke more freely about housing problems, the details of trials in the 1950s, the injustice of press censorship, etc. Edward Goldstuecker became chairman of the Writers' Union, accentuating the nonconformist course begun a year earlier. Literari noviny, the Union's newspaper, was relaunched under a new name, Literarni listy. On April 5, the "Action Program" was approved by the Central Committee; Dubcek delivered his famous speech advocating "socialism with a human face." New political clubs (K231, Kan) emerged.

In the next period, April to early July, popular demands accelerated, and the Czech government made more concessions than it probably wished. Meanwhile, East European leaders, especially Ulbricht and Gomulka, sharply criticized the reforms in their newspapers. On May 5 the Soviet Presidium met in Moscow; Dubcek, Cernik, Smrkovsky, and Bilak attended. On May 18, Kosygin came to Karlovy Vary, in western Czechoslovakia. Marshal Grechko went to Prague on May 29 to plan military exercises to be held in June.

Marshal Yakubovsky commanded the maneuvers, which lasted from the 20th to 30th of June; Soviet troops remained on Czech territory. On June 27 the "Two Thousand Words" manifesto, demanding thorough democratization, was published in Literarni listy. The Czechoslovak Presidium initially condemned it as "counterrevolutionary," but later reversed this position. Earlier, on June 1, Dubcek and his colleagues had decided to hold the Czechoslovak Communist Party congress on September 9, and the

Slovak Communist Party congress on August 26.

In the third phase, July to August, relations between Czechoslovakia and the other East European countries steadily worsened. Negotiations were held on July 29-August 1, between the Presidiums of the Czechoslovak and Soviet Communist parties in Cierna nad Tisou. In August, Dubcek met individually with Walter Ulbricht, Janos Kadar, Josif Broz Tito, and Nicolae Ceascescu. A seeming "reconciliation" was reached on August 3 at the Warsaw Pact summit meeting in Bratislava.

Nevertheless, on August 20 at about 11 p.m. the armies of five Warsaw Pact members (Poland, East Germany, Hungary, and Bulgaria), approximately 200,000 to 500,000 troops, invaded Czechoslovakia, catching its people by surprise. The Czech Central Committee issued a proclamation, appealing for peaceful resistance. Dubcek and other leaders were taken to Moscow and forced to sign a document, renouncing sections of the reform program and permitting Soviet troops to remain in Czechoslovakia. Key politicians were arrested. The Russians approached Svoboda, attempting to persuade him to head a new pro-Soviet regime, but they failed. Dubcek was allowed to remain First Secretary until April 17, 1969, when he was ousted and replaced by Gustav Husak.

#### Domestic Context

Just as Nikita Khrushchev felt the need to distinguish himself politically from Stalin, so Brezhnev needed to distinguish himself from Khrushchev, whom he had worked to depose. Rather than create yet another cult of personality, Brezhnev presented himself

simply as one of the many personalities in the Politburo: that of a calm, rational "chairman of the board," presiding over the different viewpoints of his colleagues, and guiding them to choose the right decision. He projected a modest image. (It was N. G. Yegorychev, the First Secretary of the Moscow Urban Committee, not Brezhnev, who proposed that the title of "First Secretary" be changed to "General Secretary").

Modesty was perhaps Brezhnev's strategy of self-protection. His whole career had depended on Khrushchev, while other members of the "apparat" had risen without Khrushchev's help, and were distrustful of the Khrushchevites. These included three key Politburo members in 1968: M. A. Suslov, A. N. Kosygin, and N. V. Podgorny. Suslov, as a Central Committee member since 1947, was senior to Khrushchev. He was promoted, in order to offset three men close to Khrushchev who were promoted to the Secretariat simultaneously (Aristov, Beliaiev, and Shepilov). Finally, he did not criticize members of the "anti-party group" (who had promoted him) until 1961, a fact which also illustrates his aloofness from Khrushchev.<sup>294</sup>

Kosygin, too, had owed nothing to Khrushchev. He had held a more prestigious position under Stalin than under Khrushchev. From 1948 to 1952 he had been a full member of the Party Politburo and a Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers, in the Government.

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<sup>294</sup> For background on political connections between Brezhnev and his contemporaries and Khrushchev, see Michel Tatu, Power in the Kremlin: From Khrushchev to Kosygin (New York: Viking Press, 1968), pp. 24-31, p. 95. Also Robert Conquest, Russia After Khrushchev (New York: Praeger, 1965), pp. 136-7.

Later, in October 1952, he was demoted to alternate status, even though the Politburo had been enlarged at the Nineteenth Party Congress (one of Stalin's preparations for the aborted purge).

Even Podgorny did not owe his ascent in the hierarchy to Khrushchev. He had been loyal to Khrushchev as a fellow Ukrainian, and had held the post of First Secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party, but he was not Khrushchev's "client." In fact, from 1950 to 1953, when Podgorny was First Secretary of the Kharkov Oblast Committee, his patron was Leonid G. Melnikov, an outright enemy of Khrushchev.

Brezhnev, on the other hand, had started his political career in the Ukraine, where--due to Khrushchev's ruthless purges--many positions had been vacated for younger, ambitious men. He was born in the Ukraine in 1906 (although he was Russian) and joined the Party in 1931. After graduating from the local Institute of Metallurgy in 1936, Brezhnev was appointed Deputy Mayor of Dneproderzhinsk in May, 1937 (just as Stalin's purges struck). From 1941 to 1945, he served on Khrushchev's Military Council of the Stalingrad Front and in other Army political posts. After the war he served at Zaporozhe and Dnepropetrovsk as Provincial First Secretary. Then, due to Khrushchev's patronage, Brezhnev became a Secretary of the Central Committee and a candidate member of the Presidium. He suffered a setback after Stalin's death, but in February, 1956--again, because of Khrushchev's support--he became a candidate member of the Presidium, and in June, 1957 became a

full member.<sup>295</sup> Thus, because of his close links with the disgraced Khrushchev, and his wish to remain number one in the Politburo, Brezhnev had a clear incentive to disassociate himself from any qualities that Khrushchev exhibited as a decision maker. He was predisposed from the start to act as a member of a collective leadership, in a more "scientific," less "voluntaristic" manner. He encouraged the "stability of cadres" by promoting apparatchiks on the basis of their seniority and long-time party loyalty, rather than on the basis of merit. Clearly, the nomenklatura ("list of names" of party elites) thrived under Brezhnev's leadership.

Brezhnev would benefit by acting in this more "scientific" manner and allowing his colleagues' viewpoints to be heard, because if any decision taken were to backfire--like Khrushchev's decision to place missiles in Cuba--he would not have to bear all the blame. Accordingly, Brezhnev listened to the other Politburo members argue pro and con regarding the Czechoslovak situation, and they, in turn, became more assertive. To understand the 1968 Soviet decision to intervene in Czechoslovakia, it would be useful to examine briefly the biographies of key Politburo members. The full Poliburo members were: Brezhnev, Kosygin, Podgorny, Suslov, Voronov, Kirilenko, Mazurov, Pel'she, Polyansky, Shelepin, and Shelest. According to Victor Zorza of The Guardian, the "inner body of four" consisted of Brezhnev, Kosygin, Podgorny, and

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<sup>295</sup> Conquest, op. cit., p. 136.

Suslov.<sup>296</sup> Karen Dawisha calculated the inner core of decision makers by counting the number of negotiations with Czech leaders in which each Politburo member participated. She found that Kosygin participated in twelve of the thirty-three negotiations; Brezhnev (nine); Podgorny (eight); Katushev (eight); Suslov (six); Demichev (four); Voronov (three); Shelest (three); and Ponomarev (three).<sup>297</sup> The backgrounds of Kosygin, Podgorny, Katushev, and Suslov will be considered below.

Alexei Kosygin was trained in economics and known to favor light industry. He made his career in Leningrad under Zhdanov when the old cadres were liquidated in the 1930s. Afterward, he served in economic ministries, and as Premier of the RSFSR (1943-1946). He became a full member of Stalin's Politburo in 1948. Amazingly, he survived the purge of the Zhdanovites, but had been construed as a "leftist" ever since. Kosygin replaced Kuzmin (Khrushchev's protege) as head of Gosplan in March, 1959. He was prime minister in 1968. As the archetypical "technocrat" who had practically never held any Party posts, Kosygin was probably considered "safe" by Brezhnev, since he was probably not as politically ambitious as other officials.

Kosygin's stance on the Czechoslovak issue could be regarded as less polemical than those of some other colleagues. On his visit to Karlovy Vary on May 18, he did not speak exclusively

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<sup>296</sup> Victor Zorza, The Guardian, April 9, 1966, p. 9.

<sup>297</sup> Karen Dawisha, The Kremlin and the Prague Spring (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 294-316.

about the threat the reforms presented to the socialist community.<sup>298</sup> Instead, in an interview with Magyar Hirlap, Kosygin referred to "positive tendencies in Europe." Kadar's Hungary at this time (mid-May) tended to encourage the Czech reforms. Thus, Kosygin's subsequent remark had special meaning: "the stand of the Soviet Union and Hungarian Peoples Republic is uniform in the evaluation of every fundamental problem of international life."<sup>299</sup> These remarks might suggest that Kosygin sided with Kadar vis-a-vis Czechoslovakia. As an economics expert, he was probably keenly aware of the need for economic reform, not only in Czechoslovakia, but in the Soviet Union as well.

In an earlier speech on February 28, 1968 Kosygin made repeated references to economic reform as being "correct."<sup>300</sup> He referred to the danger of West German "revanchism and militarism," but added:

...all this does not, of course, signify that a military situation is shaping up in Europe. Such [a] situation does not exist, but it is imperative to keep watch.<sup>301</sup>

Podgorny took a harder line toward Czechoslovakia. During the crisis period he gave four speeches, the last of which concerned

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<sup>298</sup> Pravda, July 15, 1968.

<sup>299</sup> Magyar Hirlap, May 19, 1968, U. S. Joint Publication Research Service (JPRS), East Europe 2775/A2/1.

<sup>300</sup> Jiri Valenta, "Soviet Decision Making and the Czechoslovak Crisis of 1968," Studies in Comparative Communism, vol. 8 (spring/summer, 1975), pp. 150-1.

<sup>301</sup> Sovetskaia Belorussia, February 28, 1968, pp. 1-2.

Prague and was the last Soviet speech before the invasion.<sup>302</sup> "Remnants of the defeated, exploited classes, revisionist and nationalist elements," he said, "are subjecting the very foundations of socialist construction to fierce attacks."<sup>303</sup> Podgorny was also born in the Ukraine, where he worked as an engineer in a sugar factory and later became Deputy Commissar for the food industry. In Moscow he served as Director of the Technological Institute of the Food Industry until 1944. From 1946-1950 Nikolai Podgorny remained a permanent representative of the Ukrainian Government, and finally in 1953 he was promoted to the position of Second Secretary (of the Ukrainian Republic) when his patron, Kirichenko, was promoted to First Secretary.<sup>304</sup> On December 9, 1965, Podgorny replaced Mikoyan as Chief of State (a demotion) and in April, 1966 (at the 23rd Party Congress) lost his post in the Secretariat. Kirilenko replaced Podgorny as Brezhnev's chief lieutenant and supervisor of cadres. Since Podgorny--a member of the Defense Council--had assumed an image (oblik) on military and security issues, such as the role of defense expenditures and resource allocation, it is not surprising that he was sharply critical of the Czech reforms.<sup>305</sup>

Katushev, appointed as First Secretary of the Gorki Oblast

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<sup>302</sup> Ibid., pp. 302-2.

<sup>303</sup> Speech at the meeting of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet, Pravda, July 20, 1968.

<sup>304</sup> Conquest, op. cit., p. 140-1.

<sup>305</sup> Harry Gelman, The Brezhnev Politburo and the Decline of Detente (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), p. 79.

Committee in 1965, was a client of Brezhnev. Like Brezhnev, he probably had reservations about intervening in Czechoslovakia.<sup>306</sup> He was promoted at the April 9 CPSU Plenum to Central Committee Secretary in charge of liaison with ruling Communist and workers parties, thus filling the post vacated by Yuri Andropov, who was promoted to head the KGB. His doubt about a possible intervention resulted in all likelihood from concerns about the other Communist Parties' reactions.

Finally, Suslov was one of the two senior secretaries who supervised other Politburo members during Brezhnev's leadership; the other was Kirilenko. Judging from Suslov's position and statements, many Western observers have concluded that he was against the intervention in Czechoslovakia. He was a secretary in the Soviet Politburo responsible for relations with the international Communist movement. It is believed that he and Ponomarev (head of the International Department) were focusing their efforts on plans for a world Communist conference in 1968, which was intended to restore

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<sup>306</sup> According to Pavel Tigrid, an emigre editor of Svedectvi and later Le Monde, both Ponomarev and Katushev visited Jozef Lenart, the Secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party's Central Committee in September (after the invasion). "When they assured him of their own personal regret at what had happened in August, they gave him their opinion of the matter. According to Ponomarev, those chiefly responsible were the dogmatic and 'semi-fascist' elements in the Soviet Party's Politburo--mainly military men and 'centrists' of the Brezhnev type 'who had kept their district secretary mentality.' The Czechoslovak affair had apparently been severely censored by all the 'sensible' progressives in the Soviet Party leadership but they were unluckily in the minority. See Pavel Tigrid, Why Dubcek Fell (Paris: Calmann-Levy: 1969), p. 127.

"unity" within the movement on an anti-China basis.<sup>307</sup> At the preparatory meeting in Budapest in February 1968, Suslov said, "We are for strict observance of the autonomy, independence, and equality of all parties [emphasis added]."<sup>308</sup> This statement might be interpreted as a significant concession toward the Czechoslovak Communist Party.

Indeed, as the ideological watchdog, Suslov was in a difficult position; to excoriate "revisionism" (Prague) too much would be to side with Mao's China, whereas to damn "dogmatism" (Peking) would be to encourage the Czechoslovaks. Michel Tatu reported that Suslov later blamed Chervonenko (the Soviet Ambassador to Czechoslovakia) for influencing other Soviet leaders to believe there were Czech officials willing to be quislings for the Soviet Union, should the Soviet Army intervene.<sup>309</sup> This suggests that Suslov himself did not believe the Czech government was divided, and that an intervention would be unwise.

In addition to the views of Brezhnev, Kosygin, Podgorny, Katushev, and Suslov, what did other Politburo members advocate regarding the crisis in Czechoslovakia? According to Jiri Valenta, the interventionists included: N. V. Podgorny, P. Ye. Shelest, A. Ya. Pel'she, and Yu. V. Il'nitsky (First Secretary, Transcarpathian Oblast'). Valenta believes the anti-interventionists were: A. N. Kosygin, M. A. Suslov, A. N.

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<sup>307</sup> Valenta, op. cit., p. 153.

<sup>308</sup> Pravda, February 29, 1968, p. 4.

<sup>309</sup> Michel Tatu, Le Monde, September 24, 1968.

Shelepin, B. P. Ponomarev, and D. S. Polyansky. Those who probably were undecided included: L. I. Brezhnev, P. N. Demichev, K. T. Mazurov, P. M. Masherov, and K. F. Katushev.<sup>310</sup>

Valenta supports his claims about the divisions of opinion in the Politburo by interpreting statements made by the key members in various speeches, journals, and newspapers. Shelepin, for example, was also an anti-interventionist, in Valenta's opinion, because of his statement in Trud on February 28, 1968 that "Economic reform is inseparably connected with the further democratization of production management."<sup>311</sup> A dangerous rival of Brezhnev, Shelepin had been demoted from his position in the secretariat and appointed as chairman of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions. He urged the trade unions to "stop the violation of the labor laws and to prevent "illegal dismissal of workers." These demands had not been made by Soviet officials since the Workers' Opposition in the early 1920s.<sup>312</sup> In Valenta's view, these demands suggest that Shelepin wanted to increase his personal influence by extending the role of the trade unions. The fact that his declared intentions were omitted in the hard-line newspaper Sovetskaia Rossiia indicates that the opponents of economic reform viewed his pronouncements as a threat to their power, Valenta argues.

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<sup>310</sup> Gordon Skilling, Czechoslovakia's Interrupted Revolution (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 725.

<sup>311</sup> Trud, February 28, 1968, pp. 2-5; also cited in Valenta's article.

<sup>312</sup> Valenta, op. cit., p. 151.

Although it might be true to some extent that the views of the top Soviet decision makers toward the Prague Spring might have differed in the early months of 1968, it is also true, as discussed in an earlier chapter, that a national crisis tends to force a consensus among decision makers; thus Suslov and the other "anti-interventionists" could very well have changed their original views by August. As mentioned earlier, the vote by the CPSU Central Committee plenum was unanimous (according to Dmitri Simes), and no official was dismissed until 1972.

Moreover, as Simes also pointed out, coalitions that allegedly emerged on the Czechoslovak issue could be merely functional, rather than institutional. It cannot be assumed, for example, that Shelepin's position as head of the trade unions automatically meant that he would advocate economic reform over military intervention in every situation.

Finally, the analysts who laboriously combed the Soviet press (e.g. Jiri Valenta, Karen Dawisha, Gordon Skilling, and David Paul) tended to find disparate points of view, which lends invaluable insight into the Soviet view of the situation. And yet to discover that, say, Shelepin was against the intervention is only half the problem; one needs to determine how influential he was in actually making the final decision. Since Brezhnev in 1968 struck an aloof pose, his colleagues were obliged to air their views in the press more, in an effort to get his attention. Thus, it is perhaps more accurate to say there were "tendencies," but not bureaucratic factions that could determine whether or not to

intervene.<sup>313</sup> Their disparate views appeared esoterically in the press, because that was the only outlet; they could not lobby or picket in Red Square with much success--at least, not in the Soviet Union of 1968.

Indeed, it is rather lame to suggest, as David Paul does,<sup>314</sup> that no consensus was reached. A crisis, as we said, tends to force a consensus; the Soviet leaders perceived the Czechoslovak situation to be a crisis. The present study assumes a rational (and for theoretical purposes, unitary) actor.

When was the decision to intervene reached? Again, analysts disagree. There are two main schools of thought: 1) that the Cierna and Bratislava conferences on July 29 and August 3 were merely deceptive ploys (and the basic decision to intervene was reached much earlier, in late June or early July), and 2) that they were bona fide conferences, and that the Kremlin decided to intervene only thereafter, in mid or late August.

Richard Lowenthal argues that the decision was made between the 10th and 17th of August.<sup>315</sup> He gives four reasons. First,

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<sup>313</sup> Gelman argues that Valenta overlooks the extent to which non-Poliburo members were influenced by what they thought to be Brezhnev's own preferences. He writes, "The notion that figures such as the head of the Writers' Union imagined that they were summoned to speak [at the Central Committee plenum] in order to express their own views--much less to put pressure on the leadership--is at odds with the realities of Soviet politics."

<sup>314</sup> David Paul, "Soviet Foreign Policy and the Invasion of Czechoslovakia: A Theory and a Case Study," International Studies Quarterly 15 (June, 1971): pp. 159-201.

<sup>315</sup> Richard Lowenthal, "The Sparrow in the Cage," Problems of Communism (November/December 1968): pp. 1-28.

most Politburo members were on vacation between August 6 and August 16. (They could have met in Yalta, however; Kadar is reputed to have gone there on August 14 to dissuade them.)<sup>316</sup> Second, Soviet units in East Germany got their marching orders on August 14. Third, the Soviet press resumed its attacks on Czechoslovakia in Literaturnaia Gazeta also on August 14. Fourth, high Soviet military leaders (e.g. Marshal Grechko and General Yepishev) are reputed to have visited East Germany and Poland on the 15th and 16th to give instructions to units there for a surprise attack.

Adam Ulam, on the other hand, believes that an invasion of Czechoslovakia shifted from the "possible" to the "imperative unless" category in the Russians' minds as early as late June.<sup>317</sup> The "Warsaw letter"<sup>318</sup> of July 15, he claims, proves that the basic decision to intervene had been reached. Zdenek Mlynar reports that a proposal he submitted to the Czech Presidium for banning certain articles damaging to Czechoslovakia's foreign relations was rejected--even by the Bilak, Indra and other Soviet

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<sup>316</sup> John Dornberg, Brezhnev: The Mask of Power (New York: Basic Books, 1974), p. 226.

<sup>317</sup> Adam Ulam, Expansion and Coexistence (New York: Praeger, 1968), p. 599.

<sup>318</sup> The Warsaw "five" (U.S.S.R., East Germany, Bulgaria, Poland, and Hungary) convened in Warsaw to compose a letter outlining the rationale for intervention: a) a counterrevolution was developing; b) Dubcek had lost control of local events; c) Czechoslovakia, having deviated from the socialist path, threatened the frontier of the socialist community in Europe; d) the "healthy forces" should be organized and reassured that they could count on "fraternal assistance" by the other Peoples' Democracies. Pravda, July 18, 1968.

sympathizers. He concludes from this fact that soon after the Warsaw Conference (on July 14), the pro-Soviet members were consciously preparing for an intervention and therefore wanted the reforms to accelerate, making the need for intervention more apparent to the Soviet leaders.<sup>319</sup>

Gordon Skilling and Robert James agree with Lowenthal that the decision was reached in August.<sup>320</sup> They claim the Bratislava conference probably was not deceptive, because later Soviet publications, such as the Alexandrov report on the 18th and the final CPSU letter to the CPCz on the 17th accused the Czech leadership of not complying with the agreements made at Cierna and Bratislava, which would suggest that the Russians had been negotiating seriously with Dubcek and other Czech leaders.

Jiri Valenta believes that the Soviet leaders had reached a consensus on the need to prepare militarily for an intervention very early, but the political decision was reached months later. The preparations began as early as February, 1968, and had probably been completed by late June or July, he asserts. The political decision to intervene was made only in August "after

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<sup>319</sup> Zdenek Mlynar, Nightfrost in Prague (New York: Karz Publishers, 1980), p. 171.

<sup>320</sup> James estimates the Kremlin decided between August 10 and 13, while Gordon Skilling believes it was between August 14 and 18. See Robert R. James, ed. The Czechoslovak Crisis 1968 (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969); Gordon Skilling, Czechoslovakia's Interrupted Revolution (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 721.

much pulling and hauling among senior decision makers."<sup>321</sup>

Karen Dawisha, utilizing Michael Brecher's "three-period model," divides the Soviet crisis into pre-crisis, crisis, and post-crisis periods. She then identifies five phases of the crisis, and 47 sequential decisions the Politburo members made. According to Dawisha, decision #45, the final tactical decision to proceed with plans to invade, was made on August 17.<sup>322</sup>

The writer would agree with Ulam, Valenta, and Dawisha, and disagree with Lowenthal, Skilling, and James. First, a political decision to intervene is pointless if the military means have not been prepared meticulously in advance.<sup>323</sup> So it is unlikely that anything other than tactical decisions were made in mid-August.

Second, the Cierna conference was probably not a very sincere attempt by the Russians to negotiate, because they were unreasonable in their haste to declare the Czechs had violated the "agreement" reached there. Josef Smrkovsky, a major participant in the talks, testified in a taped interview not long before his death in January 1974, that the Soviet side raised six concrete demands, including bans on the Social Democratic Party, the

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<sup>321</sup> Jiri Valenta, Soviet Intervention in Czechoslovakia, 1968: Anatomy of Decision (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), p. 15.

<sup>322</sup> Karen Dawisha, The Kremlin and the Prague Spring (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 297.

<sup>323</sup> William Kaufmann, comparing Soviet preparations against Czechoslovakia (1968), Afghanistan (1979), and Poland (1981), has concluded that the Soviet Union needs at least three months to prepare for a surprise attack. Kaufmann, "The Defense Budget," in Joseph A. Pechman, ed. Setting National Priorities: The 1982 Budget (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1981), p. 142.

political clubs (KAN and K231), and the "communications media." Smrkovsky reported: "We said ...we did not wish to introduce censorship anew...but wished to do it democratically, to reach agreement--by the discipline of the journalists; [we said] we shall undertake the necessary steps in this direction." After Cierna, he said, Czech leaders--true to their word--talked extensively with the journalists. But the Russians did not wait very long. "Almost at once," Smrkovsky said, "the Soviet side complained that the Czechs were not fulfilling the agreement."<sup>324</sup> "Everything they said there were pretexts; hence the difficulty in coming to an agreement. These were details which could not give reasons for a conflict of any kind, because we were solving or had resolved them."<sup>325</sup> Hence, the Russians were in all likelihood ready to intervene, and held the conference primarily to create a legitimate excuse, as well as to line up potential quislings for the new pro-Soviet government.

Moreover, the Bratislava conference on August 3, Smrkovsky said, was not really a conference; there was no negotiation, just an editorial council that elaborated on the Cierna declaration.

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<sup>324</sup> On August 14 a Soviet journalist [name not given] rebuked the Czech writer J. Valka for his article in Literarni Listy. "J. Valka proposes that the Czechs and Slovaks consider anyone their allies except the Communist and Workers' Parties whose representatives sealed the Bratislava statement with their signatures." "Political Milk of Literarni Listy," Literaturnaia Gazeta, no. 33, August 14, 1968, p. 3.

<sup>325</sup> Josef Smrkovsky's testimony, Listy, March 1975, pp. 4-25, cited in Philip Windsor, Czechoslovakia in 1968: Reform, Repression, Resistance (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), appendix D, p. 882.

Interestingly, the other East European leaders were confused about the purpose of the Cierna and Bratislava meetings. Wladislaw Gomulka is reported to have remarked that he had no idea why the Bratislava meeting had been called since the common line had already been fixed in Poland on July 15, when the Warsaw letter was composed.<sup>326</sup>

Third, since Dubcek had announced on May 30 that new elections would be held for the Slovak Communist Party on August 26, and for the Czechoslovak Communist Party on September 9, Soviet planners had a specific deadline: August 26. (Alois Indra, for example, one of the pro-Soviet "Stalinists" in the Party, would most certainly lose his position.) The planners knew they had some time to consider other options before militarily intervening. The prolonged nature of the decision-making process reveals caution, rather than confusion.

Thus, a strong case can be made that, while August 17 was the date of the tactical decision to invade, intervention first became a contingency plan on May 5, at a meeting between Czech and Soviet leaders in Moscow. The Kremlin then decided around May 14-15 to hold military maneuvers as part of a campaign of minatory diplomacy. Later Brezhnev and others observed that, not only were Czech intellectuals not cowed by this saber-rattling, but were in fact emboldened to abolish the press censorship law and issue the "Two Thousand Words" manifesto, even while the maneuvers were

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<sup>326</sup> Henry Kamm, "Bratislava Conference Put Soviet in an Awkward Spot," New York Times, August 6, 1968, p. 1.

taking place.

The Russians then must have reasoned: these people are not intimidated, and Dubcek can barely control them; but because they are not killing pro-Soviet secret policemen (as in Hungary in 1956), we would have no legitimate excuse to send in our troops, even if we wanted to. Hence the famous "Warsaw letter," which--predating Sergei Kovalev's article on September 25-- was the first manifestation of what the West has come to know as the "Brezhnev Doctrine." The Warsaw Pact countries conveyed a simple message: it is not just your task, but ours too, to forcefully rebuff the "anti-socialist forces" in your country, because they threaten the whole socialist community. The Warsaw Pact countries were not afraid Czechoslovakia would leave the Warsaw Pact, but infect it.

In conclusion, Brezhnev, Kosygin, Podgorny, and others decided cautiously (in phases) how to solve the Czechoslovak problem. Brezhnev had a vested interest in winning a consensus within the Politburo, so that when a decision was finally implemented Brezhnev, unlike his "adventuristic" successor, would be in no danger of losing his job because of it.

### Image of the Opponent

Brezhnev's style as a more cautious, consensus-oriented decision maker stemmed not merely from a personal desire to maintain power as number one in the Kremlin, but also from his (and that of his colleagues) image of the Czechoslovakian population as traditionally passive. An image, as explained earlier, is a mental conception resulting from the selective perception of stimuli. The Soviet image of the Czechoslovak adversary can be seen to have been composed of: a) the perception of Czechoslovakia as a bloc country; b) the perception of individual leaders in that country; and c) the perception of the Czechoslovak people in general.

Czechoslovakia's geographical position was an important aspect of the Soviet image. The country shared a common border with the USSR (unlike Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, or Albania), which no doubt increased Soviet leaders' sense of vulnerability. The country's location between West Germany and the Soviet Union heightened Russian fears of West German political and economic influence; Soviet newspapers at the time were filled with references to "German revanchism." Moreover, Czechoslovakia juts westward, further than other bloc countries, and belongs more properly to Central rather than Eastern Europe. Yet, despite this proximity to West Europe, Czechoslovakia had no Soviet troops stationed there.

In addition, Czechoslovakia is adjacent to the Ukraine. Soviet leaders were especially alarmed about the "leakage" of

democratic ideas into this Soviet region. As we have seen, more political figures were emerging from the Ukraine, thanks to the system of cadres Khrushchev had built up in the 1940s and 1950s. Before 1957, there was never more than one Ukrainian in the top decision making bodies, and often not even one.<sup>327</sup> In 1968, four Ukrainians sat on the Politburo: N. V. Podgorny, D. S. Polyansky, A. P. Kirilenko, and P. Ye. Shelest. Brezhnev himself, to reiterate, was born in the Ukraine and had his closest and oldest ties there. Not to adopt a policy harsh enough to assuage the fears of his Ukrainian colleagues could jeopardize his own influence among them. Petr Shelest, First Secretary of the Ukrainian Central Committee, especially feared the restoration of national rights of the Ukrainian minority in Slovakia, and the revival of the Greek-Catholic Church.<sup>328</sup> Parts of the Western Ukraine in the interwar period had formed part of Ruthenia, now a province in Czechoslovakia.

Individual Czech leaders also formed part of the Russians' perception of the country as a whole. Leonid Brezhnev had never liked Antonin Novotny, who became president in 1957.<sup>329</sup> In 1963 Khrushchev had sent Brezhnev to Prague to help Novotny, who faced fierce political opposition. Although he obeyed Khrushchev, Brezhnev was less eager to help Novotny four years later as

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<sup>327</sup> Conquest, op. cit., p. 153.

<sup>328</sup> Valenta, op. cit., p. 16.

<sup>329</sup> William Shawcross, Dubcek (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970), pp. 138-140.

General Secretary of the CPSU since Novotny had played a large role in triggering the intellectuals' protest movement in Czechoslovakia by concealing from Party members and people alike the true extent of the crimes committed during the Stalin era.<sup>330</sup> The C.P.Cz. also disliked Novotny. It had already selected Viliam Siroky as a candidate for the presidency. Nevertheless, Khrushchev sent Voroshilov to Prague to enforce Novotny's election.<sup>331</sup>

In many ways Brezhnev favored Dubcek. He made a point of visiting Dubcek in Slovakia while he was in Czechoslovakia in 1963 rescuing Novotny from the opposition. There is a rumor that Brezhnev and Dubcek met and became friends at the Higher Party School in Moscow.<sup>332</sup> At the post-invasion "negotiations" Brezhnev answered Dubcek's impassioned defense with an emotional, impromptu speech, in which he told Dubcek: "I believed in you, and stood up for you against the others. Our Sasha is a good comrade, I said. And you disappointed us all so terribly."<sup>333</sup>

It is no wonder that Brezhnev considered Dubcek a "good comrade." He had a sterling record. His father Stefan was a real member of the proletariat (a carpenter). The Dubcek family moved to Gorkii in the USSR in 1933, where Alexander attended high school. He joined the illegal Communist Party of Slovakia and

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<sup>330</sup> Jiri Pelikan, Socialist Opposition in Eastern Europe: the Czechoslovak Example (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1975), p. 13.

<sup>331</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>332</sup> Shawcross, op. cit., p. 141.

<sup>333</sup> Mlynar, op. cit., p. 239.

started working as a locksmith. From 1955 to 1958 he did in fact study at the Higher Party School in Moscow where he graduated with a first (na pech'erke). The Soviet leaders must have perceived him to be a sincere Communist who would be loyal to Moscow. They knew he had only visited the West once; in 1960 he went to Helsinki for the Finnish Communist Party Congress. His stale speeches revealed his lack of knowledge about foreign relations. He took an uncompromising view toward "peaceful coexistence" with the West, often more dogmatic than Khrushchev or Brezhnev. As First Secretary of the Slovak Communist Party in 1963, he wrote:

We will stand in all matters at the side of the Soviet Union...But that does not mean that we accept the idea of the peaceful coexistence of the two ideologies. Peaceful competition does not provide ideological peace. The class fight continues...The Soviet Union forever and nothing else."<sup>334</sup>

Also, judging from Brezhnev's comments and speeches between March 22 and May 4, 1968, he retained his faith in Dubcek and the latter's ability to control his people. Only when the mood shifted in the Politburo in early May (around May 5, the time of Dubcek's meeting with the Soviet leaders in Moscow), did Brezhnev's adherence to consensus politics override his liking for Dubcek.<sup>335</sup> Dubcek himself wavered in his position on the reforms, and only became a reserved supporter during the May-June Party Conferences at the regional levels.<sup>336</sup>

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<sup>334</sup> Pravda (Bratislava), December 14, 1963.

<sup>335</sup> Abdurakhman Avtorkhanov, Sily i bessiliye Brezhneva: politicheskiye etyudy (Frankfort/Main: Possev-Verlag, 1979).

<sup>336</sup> Valenta, op. cit., p. 37.

In contrast to Dubcek, Gustav Husak struck the Russians as more sceptical of the Soviet Union, but less liberal than Dubcek, and therefore a reliable "healthy force." They probably drew an analogy between him and Kadar; both had endured long years in prison and then returned to politics.

Ludvik Svoboda, a career army officer who had been closely linked to the Red Army and the Soviet Union, was the man the Russians hoped would head a new quisling government after the invasion. He was the only high Czech official they did not arrest on August 21. When they flew him to Moscow to negotiate, however, he threatened to shoot himself if they did not release Dubcek and others who were in a Moscow prison.

The other pro-Soviet elements in the Czech leadership were: Kolder, Indra, Bil'ak, O. Svestka, A. Kapek, M. Jakes. The Soviet Ambassador Chervonenko provided Moscow with biased information to make this anti-reformist coalition seem stronger than it actually was. According to Michel Tatu, Suslov blamed Chervonenko for providing information that led the Soviet leaders to believe a quisling government would be easy to install.<sup>337</sup>

Finally, Moscow perceived the Czechoslovak population to be generally non-violent, despite the rhetoric in Soviet newspapers. In a historical sense, the Czechoslovaks and the Russians had cooperated peacefully as peoples of the Slavic race. Jaroslav Hasek's famous novel The Good Soldier Schweik had created a stereotype for Czechoslovak citizens in general as docile and

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<sup>337</sup> Michel Tatu, Le Monde, September 24, 1968.

opportunistic Communists who never challenged the Austro-Hungarian monarchy's authority. Indeed, two of the most famous documents of the Prague Spring, the "Action Program" and the "Two Thousand Words" manifesto, emphasized the leading role of the Czechoslovak Communist Party. The authors of the Action Program wrote:

Especially during the present time has the Party proved its ability to lead this society, when from its own initiative it launched the process of democratization and ensured its socialist character....The role of the Party is to seek a way of satisfying the various interests which does not jeopardize the interests of the society as a whole, but promotes them and creates new progressive ones. <sup>338</sup>

Ludvik Vaculik reiterated the idea of the Party's leading role in his "Two Thousand Words" manifesto of June 27, 1968.

We will oppose the view...that it is possible to conduct some sort of democratic revival without the Communists or possibly against them. This would be both unjust and unreasonable. The Communists have well-structured organizations, and we should support the progressive wing within them. They have experienced officials and, last but not least, they also have in their hands the decisive levers and buttons. <sup>339</sup>

Unfortunately, this section of the manifesto was overlooked by Kremlin leaders. The "Two Thousand Words" letter acted as a catalyst for the hardening of Soviet-Czech relations. The Czech crisis took precedence over detente by the beginning of July. <sup>340</sup>

In a very broad sense, one might conclude that Soviet leaders

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<sup>338</sup> "Action Program of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia," cited in Robin A. Remington, Winter in Prague (Cambridge: M. I. T. Press, 1969), p. 92.

<sup>339</sup> Ludvik Vaculik, "Two Thousand Words to Workers, Farmers, Scientists, Artists, and Everyone," Literarni Listy, June 27, 1968; also cited in Remington, op. cit., p. 196.

<sup>340</sup> Dawisha, op. cit., p. 171.

did not perceive Czechoslovakia to be a problem until the course of events in May and June forced them to alter that image. Specific events and rational calculation of their meaning to the Soviet Union seemed to shape the Russians' image of Czechoslovakia, not vice versa. As rational decision makers, Kremlin leaders did not, for the most part, allow their preexisting image of the Czechoslovak adversary to guide their understanding of objective events in Prague. To be sure, all perceptions are to a certain extent selective, but the cautious nature of Soviet decision making before the intervention suggests that the leaders were very well-informed, and their perceptions rational.

#### Benefits/Costs/Risks

If the Soviet leadership decided to intervene as a last resort, it follows that some Politburo members wanted to be certain that the benefits of an invasion at least equalled, if not outweighed, the costs and risks. In the pre-crisis period (April 10 to May 5), the Kremlin must have perceived at least eight major costs of using force.

1. Detente with the United States would suffer a severe setback.
2. The Soviet Union would alienate many communist parties around the world. The conference of all communist parties, scheduled for November, 1968 would be jeopardized.
3. An invasion would play into the Chinese hands, and widen the Sino-Soviet rift even more.
4. Soviet prestige in the Third World would suffer.
5. The traditional sympathy of the Czechoslovak people would be destroyed.
6. An invasion would stimulate NATO to increase its military preparations.
7. Yugoslavia and Rumania, both not members of the Warsaw Pact, would tighten their own defenses.

8. Attempted reforms of the Soviet economy would be stalled.

However, in the crisis period these costs, when juxtaposed to the benefits of intervention, seemed less serious. There were at least eight major benefits.

1. The Czechoslovak reformist "disease" would be contained.
2. The Soviet Union would be able to station troops permanently in Czechoslovakia, thus making another "Prague Spring" less likely in the future.
3. A military invasion would bolster the Warsaw Pact's Northern Tier (East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia).
4. Politically, an intervention would ensure Soviet hegemony over the other East European states.
5. An incisive, efficient invasion would demonstrate to NATO planners that the Soviet Union had both the will and technical skill to preserve the Warsaw Pact's cohesiveness.
6. The invasion would sharply curtail the dissident movement inside the Soviet Union.
7. An intervention would put an end to the West German-Czech rapprochement. West German venture capitalists would be sufficiently warned to keep away.
8. A successful intervention would install a trustworthy Czechoslovak Communist who understood the importance of following Moscow's orders.

What risks did the Soviet leaders perceive that an intervention would entail? This is difficult to measure, of course, but there was a slight risk of an East-West confrontation, various forms of retaliation by the U.S. and the United Nations, Czech military resistance, and Soviet failure to control ("normalize") Czechoslovakia after the invasion, through lack of a quisling government.

#### Goals, Policies, Commitments

Novotny's disastrous economic policies, in large part, precipitated the political changes, which ultimately resulted in

the Soviet invasion. In 1962 the economy was in such a critical condition that by August of that year the third Five-Year Plan had to be scrapped.<sup>341</sup> The negative growth of the Czech economy strengthened Novotny's opposition, necessitating Brezhnev's "rescue" visit in 1963. Out of desperation, Novotny turned to Ota Sik, who composed a plan (the New Economic Model) to ease administrative controls and institute "levers" or incentives, similar to those proposed by Liberman in the Soviet Union. The plan failed, because it was not implemented on a large enough scale. Disgusted, Sik stated flatly that political reforms had to come before economic reforms.<sup>342</sup>

The fact that in January 1968 Brezhnev again visited Prague, but this time allowed Novotny to lose his office illustrates Moscow's realization of the gravity of Czechoslovakia's economic problems. Alarm concerning Novotny's mismanagement probably contributed to Brezhnev's and Kosygin's initial preference for Dubcek as Novotny's successor. He was loyal to them in Moscow, but also popular with the Czech people; for the first time in the country's history the First Secretary had been elected by the full Central Committee of 100, not by a 14-man Presidium. It is likely that they perceived him to be capable of improving the economy within "socialist" guidelines, i.e. without having to ask the West for capital. They were wrong. Although he knew little about

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<sup>341</sup> Galia Golan, The Czechoslovak Reform Movement: Communism in Crisis, 1962-1968 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 3.

<sup>342</sup> Rude Pravo, June 5, 1966.

foreign policy, Dubcek was swept into a more active foreign policy as the reform movement intensified. Soviet fears for the state of the Czech economy faded; fears for the cohesion of the socialist commonwealth increased.

Moscow's overriding economic priority in relation to Prague was to keep Czechoslovakia in COMECON and discourage the development of more extensive economic ties between that country and the West (especially West Germany and the United States). Alerted by the January 21 visit to Prague of a West German trade mission, Soviet, East German, and Polish officials invited Dubcek and Party Secretary Jozef Lenart to meet with them in Dresden on March 23. According to Secretariat member Zdenek Mlynar, Kosygin, Ulbricht, and Gomulka offered Dubcek \$400 million credit in hard currency for Czech goods. Linked with attacks on their growing ties with West Germany, the offer was clearly a bribe. By the May 5 meeting in Moscow, the Czech government still had not received the economic aid. Instead, Kosygin used their request for it as an excuse for probing their economic orientation and long-term investment motives. Was it to manufacture consumer goods? But the West would not buy Czech goods, nor would the socialist countries. The socialist countries needed the Czechs' "investment goods."<sup>343</sup>

The hand that pulled was combined with a hand that pushed: on April 30 the Soviet Union halted wheat shipments to

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<sup>343</sup> Josef Smrkovsky, An Unfinished Conversation. Australia Left Review Pamphlet (Sydney: Red Pen Publications, 1976), p. 12; cited in Dawisha, op. cit., p. 73.

Czechoslovakia.<sup>344</sup> This was the first sign of economic pressures since Dubcek took office, reminiscent of the 1955 cut-off of raw materials to Hungary. Later on May 2, Pravda reported the wheat shipments would be resumed. On July 30 Pravda lectured the Czechoslovaks about their economic dependence on the Soviet Union, reminding them that Soviet prices were set in order to help Czechoslovakia. If the comrades in Czechoslovakia should deal with the West, it warned, they would be subjected to discriminatory trade prices.<sup>345</sup> Meanwhile, the Czech government continued to seek economic assistance from the West. While the Soviet hard currency loan was pending, Czech officials requested 30 U.S. industrial licenses (to spur domestic industry), an 80% increase over the amount requested in 1967.<sup>346</sup> Deputy Prime Minister Sik announced publicly that his country would accept Western capital for joint industrial ventures with state enterprises.<sup>347</sup> Prague had also put out "feelers" concerning possible membership in the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.<sup>348</sup> Finally, talks with West Germany continued in mid-August. In exchange for a

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<sup>344</sup> Pravda, April 30, 1968.

<sup>345</sup> Pravda, July 30, 1968.

<sup>346</sup> New York Times, May 3, p. 10.

<sup>347</sup> Rude Pravo, May 15, p. 1.

<sup>348</sup> According to a White House Memorandum for the Record, April 26, 1968, a National Security Council meeting was held on April 24 in Washington, where the requests of both Czechoslovakia and Hungary for membership in the World Bank and I.M.F. were discussed by President Johnson, Secretaries Rusk, Clifford, Fowler, CIA Director Helms, Deputy Under Secretary Bohlen and others. See Dawisha, op. cit., p.72n.

German credit extension of \$500 million in hard currency and a declaration voiding the 1938 Munich Pact, Czechoslovakia would reestablish diplomatic ties with West Germany, as Rumania had done in January, 1967.<sup>349</sup> Earlier in July, in connection with this offer of investment capital, West German Free Democratic Party head Walter Scheel was received by Czechoslovak Foreign Minister Hajek.<sup>350</sup>

Moscow also had important strategic goals concerning Czechoslovakia. Before the August invasion, the Soviet Union had no forces stationed in Czechoslovakia. In fact, Czechoslovakia was the weakest link in the Northern Tier. As of 1968, the Warsaw Pact countries had no nuclear sharing plan like the two-key system of NATO.<sup>351</sup> Thus, if hostilities began in Europe, nuclear warheads would have to be delivered from the Soviet Union. The massive airlifts of warheads and troops pouring into Czechoslovakia could alarm the West and result in a pre-emptive NATO nuclear strike.

Soviet resolve to station troops in Czechoslovakia must have stiffened when Major-General Prchlik challenged the Russians' right to introduce troops without the Czechs' permission, calling the proposed act a violation of Czechoslovakia's sovereignty. A dispute flared up between Prchlik and Soviet Marshal Yakubovsky, who insisted that the stationing of troops in Czechoslovakia was

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<sup>349</sup> New York Times, August 8, p. 1.

<sup>350</sup> New York Times, August 14, p. 1.

<sup>351</sup> Lawrence L. Whetten, "Military Aspects of the Soviet Occupation," The World Today 25 (February 1969), pp. 60-69.

his prerogative as Commander of Warsaw Pact forces. The Soviet leaders were incensed when, in a press conference on July 15, Prchlik revealed to the Czechoslovak people that Czechoslovak authorities had no influence over the Warsaw Pact armies. In a scathing editorial, one Soviet journalist wrote:

Matters recently reached the point where the joint staff exercises of Warsaw Pact forces, so usual in the socialist countries' military cooperation, were used as a pretext for ...charges of "violation of the sovereignty" of Czechoslovakia...We have in mind the recent speech that Gen. V. Prchlik, chief of the CPCz Central Committee's Department for State and Administrative Affairs, made at a press conference given in Prague....He told an insulting lie about the officers and generals of the Czechoslovak and other fraternal armies, who..."have no powers whatever."<sup>352</sup>

#### Memories of the Past

The Soviet leaders' caution and exploration of other options before deciding to intervene militarily in Czechoslovakia was influenced in part by Czech history and past Soviet relations with Czechoslovakia. The Russians had benefited first-hand from the traditional passivity of Czech leaders and citizens. There seemed no reason to employ military force except as a last resort.

Even some of Czechoslovakia's most celebrated heroes are famous not for active (military) bravery, but for courageous martyrdom. The thirteenth century Czech religious reformer Jan Hus is one example. Hus was born at Husinec in southern Bohemia in 1372. He became both a teacher at the University of Prague (in 1398) and a preacher at the Bethlehem Chapel (in 1402). Since the

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<sup>352</sup> "Whose Favor is General V. Prchlik Currying?" Krasnaya Zvezda, July 23, 1968, p. 3.

chapel was the center of the Czech reform movement, he soon became the movement's leader. He followed the ideas of English reformer John Wycliffe, although he rejected Wycliffe's explanation of the Eucharist. In his fiery sermons Hus attacked the practices of bishops, cardinals, and popes, as well as the papacy itself, calling it an "institution of Satan." Hus continued to express his views, even at the cost of losing close friends and political support. When, in 1409, the king of Bohemia appointed him as rector of the University of Prague, some angry German teachers and students there left the university in protest, and spread rumors that Hus was a notorious heretic. As a result, he was excommunicated and then condemned and burned at the stake by the Council of Constance on July 6, 1415, without the opportunity of defending his beliefs.<sup>353</sup> In many ways, of course, Jan Hus was an active, not passive, reformer, since he led the reform movement and vigorously challenged political and religious authorities. His ultimate fate, however, suggests a failure physically to conquer his opponents.

The passivity of the Czechoslovak people developed over a long period of time, due to the repeated suppression of their nationalist aspirations: the crushing of the June 1848 Prague uprising by the Habsburg army; the total neglect of Czech nationalism when the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was established in 1867; and especially the Munich "Diktat," which forced the Czechs

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<sup>353</sup> This passage draws on Matthew Spinka's John Hus: A Biography (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), pp. 53-55, 59-60, 321.

to surrender the Sudetenland and with it their defenses against Hitler. Neither Czechoslovakia nor Russia (who, with France, was Czechoslovakia's ally) was invited to the Munich Conference or consulted about the agreement. Soviet propoganda against the British and French "imperialists" further stimulated the Czechs' anger against Chamberlain, Daladier, and Mussolini for betraying them.

It is not surprising that when the Soviet and other four Warsaw Pact armies invaded, the Czechoslovaks did not resist by force. They had observed the West's failure to help, both in 1938 and especially in 1956 when the Hungarians had appealed to the U.N. Confronted with several times as many divisions as the Hungarians had faced, the Czechoslovaks wisely decided not to resist.

In any case, the Russians had learned how easy it was to gain the Czechs' support merely by being the enemy of their enemies. The Czechs' passivity vis-a-vis the Russians stemmed not so much from a strong pro-Russian tradition, as from the absence of a strong anti-Russian tradition (such as existed in Hungary, for example). Hatred of the Sudetendeutschen,<sup>354</sup> whom they punished mercilessly for having "caused" the nation's suffering, and whom they feared would some day try to get revenge, led to a "national

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<sup>354</sup> The Sudetendeutschen were the two to three million Germans who inhabited the Sudetenland, an area in northern Bohemia adjoining Germany. When the Czechoslovaks regained control of the area in 1945, they stripped all the German-speaking inhabitants of their property and expelled them from the area. They then organized the settlement of Czechs from other parts of Bohemia in the area. Stillman, op. cit., p. 37.

psychosis" about the security of their borders.<sup>355</sup> They allied themselves with their superior--and more bitterly anti-German--Slavic neighbor, the Soviet Union. The growth in pro-Russian, pro-Communist sentiment during World War II is exemplified in the election results. Before the war the Czech Communist Party polled a paltry 10%; after the war (in May, 1946) it polled 38%. The leftist Social Democratic Party, led by Zdenek Fierlinger ("the gravedigger of Czech democracy"), received 12.8%.<sup>356</sup> Thus, together the two parties controlled an absolute majority. Until 1968, the Russians had not needed to strong-arm the Czechs in order to control them.

Ironically, even the February 1948 coup was made possible by a volitional act of the Communists' democratic opponents. When, early in February the Communist Minister of the Interior dismissed eight oppositionist commanders of police in Prague, replacing them with loyal party men, the democratic majority in the Cabinet passed a motion of censure against the Minister of the Interior. Neither Gottwald nor the Minister answered. Thus the twelve democratic Cabinet ministers resigned, hoping to crush the government by parliamentary means. But they played into Gottwald's hands. He issued a manifesto accusing the "reactionary" political parties of trying to undermine national unity. Soviet Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Valerian A. Zorin, flew in from

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<sup>355</sup> Edward Stillman, "The Fall of Czechoslovakia," New York Times, February 18, 1968, pp. 34-42.

<sup>356</sup> Ibid., p. 38.

Moscow, and after a series of meetings and clever moves, the Communists managed to seize control of the country via "Akční Vybory" (action committees).<sup>357</sup>

Jan Masaryk, the popular son of Czechoslovakia's founder Thomas Masaryk, was permitted to remain in the cabinet as nonparty Minister of Foreign Affairs. Yet on Wednesday, March 10, his body was found lying on the pavement four stories below his bathroom window. Jan Masaryk, like Laszlo Rajk in Hungary, became for students and writers in 1968 a symbol of the Stalinist past. Although no one could prove conclusively that the Russians had murdered Masaryk by defenestration, there were enough clues to suggest Moscow was responsible. On March 12, 1968 three thousand students turned a memorial meeting for Masaryk into a demonstration for Czech democracy.<sup>358</sup> On April 3, philosopher Ivan Svitak published an open letter in a student weekly, calling for a probe into the cause of Masaryk's death. He named several people connected with the initial inquiry, who died later under suspicious circumstances. This started a zealous debate which enraged Soviet authorities and impressed upon them the need to curtail Czech freedom of the press. The habitually docile Czechoslovaks were now challenging their traditional ally. It was time to act swiftly.

Not only memories of Czechoslovakia's history, but also of

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<sup>357</sup> Jozef Korbela, The Communist Subversion of Czechoslovakia, 1938-1948 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), pp. 214-7.

<sup>358</sup> New York Times, March 12, 1968, p. 2.

those of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution were activated in Soviet decision makers' minds in the spring and summer of 1968. Although difficult to prove, one could speculate that Soviet officials involved in, or with keen memories of, the 1956 decision to intervene who held positions of power in 1968 drew an analogy between the two crises. Such officials include Brezhnev, Suslov, and Andropov. Leonid Brezhnev was a candidate member of the Presidium in November, 1956, and General Secretary in August, 1968. Mikhail Suslov was a Presidium member who visited Hungary twice in October-November, 1956; he was a Central Committee Secretary in August, 1968. Yuri Andropov was the Soviet Ambassador to Hungary in November, 1956, and KGB chief in August, 1968.

#### International Context

The purpose of this section is to describe briefly what was occurring in other parts of the world, in order to place the Soviet decision to invade Czechoslovakia in better perspective.

#### United States

Ironically, while a spirit of US-Soviet detente (first developed in 1963-4) survived the escalation of hostilities in Vietnam in 1965, and the war in the Middle East in 1967, it broke down briefly in 1968-9 over the Czechoslovak crisis. While conflicts in the Third World did not obstruct U.S.-Soviet talks on strategic arms control, the conflict in Europe did. The August intervention bolstered the Republicans' arguments for nuclear superiority rather than parity, and ultimately helped Richard

Nixon win the November elections.

However, a strong case can be made that Soviet leaders did not fear the United States' reaction to the intervention to a great extent; repercussions within the international communist movement appeared much more costly. They had a number of reasons to downplay the Americans' reactions.

First, the Soviet leaders had learned from the 1956 intervention in Hungary, that despite the Americans' harsh rhetoric, when it came to actually lending military assistance to the people in Eastern Europe, their actions did not match their words. They also no doubt observed that the United States did not treat the 1968 intervention as a casus belli, but instead respected the Soviet "sphere of influence" in Eastern Europe.

Second, Washington had carefully abstained from doing anything that would raise false hopes on the part of the Czechoslovak people. The State Department did not issue a high-level statements concerning Czechoslovakia until May 1, and even then it was bland. The United States, it said, "watching with interest and sympathy" the developments in Czechoslovakia "which seem to represent the wishes and needs of the Czechoslovak people."

Moreover, Johnson's policy toward Eastern Europe differed from the "liberation" policy of Eisenhower and Dulles. Exemplified in his October 7, 1966 speech, the policy of "peaceful engagement" and "bridge-building" placed more emphasis on the efforts of the East Europeans themselves than did the earlier policy. Johnson wanted to heal the division of Europe and reunify Germany not

against the Soviet Union, but only with its consent. Despite Soviet polemics about peaceful engagement being just another, more insidious, form of intervention, it is plausible that the Kremlin realized that Eastern Europe was not a major item on the U.S. foreign policy agenda simply by observing what Washington did and did not do.

Third, President Johnson's desire for a strategic arms agreement outweighed his interest in resolving the European problem. A successful summit meeting with Premier Kosygin in Moscow--something Eisenhower in 1960 had not managed to arrange--would be just the foreign policy achievement Johnson needed to shed his "war image." (It is ironic that an American president should look to Moscow to improve his image after fighting a war that was begun because of the fear of Moscow and of the spread of Communism, a war that Moscow strongly supported.) The arms race was tightly connected to presidential politics; Democratic candidate Vice-President Humphrey advocated nuclear parity, while the Republican candidate Nixon stressed nuclear "sufficiency". If Johnson were successful in his talks with Kosygin, he might help the Democratic Party maintain the presidency. Considering the closeness of the presidential race (Humphrey: 30,587,809; Nixon: 30,721,046),<sup>359</sup> it is reasonable to assume that Humphrey could have won.

Fourth, the Soviet leaders knew that Washington's focus was

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<sup>359</sup> New York Times, November 7, p. 1.

directed at other conflicts, namely at Vietnam and the Middle East. Since the upcoming Johnson-Kosygin summit would also seek accords concerning these conflicts, U.S. leaders had even more reason not to help the Czechoslovak people in their struggle, or to protest Soviet actions in Czechoslovakia too strenuously, for fear that the talks would not take place. Also, Brezhnev had learned from the Kremlin's decision in 1956 that it is "safe" to intervene in Eastern Europe when the United States is sufficiently distracted elsewhere.

A fifth reason for the Russians' general dismissal of American recriminations is the fact that problems existing in U.S.-Czechoslovak relations that could have been resolved easily, were nevertheless allowed to fester. Despite Czechoslovak Foreign Minister Hajek's demands,<sup>360</sup> the U.S. continued to hold onto Czechoslovak gold that it had possessed since World War II, plus \$5 million in Social Security funds payable to Czech citizens who had once lived in the U.S. The Czechs' right to it was not contested, but American citizens claimed it as compensation for nationalized property. Another problem concerned Czechoslovakia's desire for most-favored-nation treatment. The U.S. had conferred it earlier, but retracted it after American claimants raised strong objections. Restoration of most-favored-nation treatment required Congressional action, and Czechoslovakia was still sending weapons to North Vietnam.

Yet another problem concerned Major General Jan Sejna, who was

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<sup>360</sup> New York Times, April 20, p. 30.

about to be purged as a last-ditch supporter of Novotny and consequently escaped from Prague to the U.S. via Rome. Although officially accused of embezzling the property of farm cooperatives, Czech writer Prochazka claimed (and General Prchlik confirmed the claim)<sup>361</sup> that General Sejna had been involved in a coup attempt engineered by Novotny against Dubcek.<sup>362</sup> The Czech government demanded that he be extradited on criminal charges. Naturally, Washington had no intention of parting with the highest ranking East European official ever to have defected to the West. American officials expected to receive intelligence data on the military forces of Warsaw Treaty nations and the political struggle in Prague.

All of these problems could have been solved had the United States really wanted to. But Washington hesitated to signal any willingness to treat the Dubcek regime differently than the old Novotny regime. Such overt efforts to assist Czechoslovakia could have contributed to motivating the Soviet leadership to invade, justify an invasion ex post facto, or both.

#### Western Europe

West Germany, perhaps more than the United States, alarmed the

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<sup>361</sup> General Sejna had drawn up a letter of support for Novotny, and had top-ranking officers sign it. It lent credibility to the rumor that the Soviet Union was prepared to intervene to save him. General Vaclav Prchlik told Dubcek, who confronted Novotny. Unlike Rakosi in Hungary, Novotny failed to oust his more liberal rival. He was forced to resign as President on March 22, 1968. See William Shawcross, Dubcek (New York: Schuster, 1970), p. 135.

<sup>362</sup> Literarni Listy, March 7, 1968.

Soviet and East European leaders. The new (October 1966) Kiesinger-Brandt coalition had abandoned the Hallstein Doctrine<sup>363</sup> and promulgated its Ostpolitik, which later became official policy when Willy Brandt became Chancellor in September, 1969. Ignoring all remonstrances by Soviet, East German, Polish, and Czechoslovak governments, Rumania had established diplomatic relations with Bonn on January 31, 1967. Now Soviet and East European leaders perceived the West German "revanchists" to be trying to establish diplomatic and economic relations with Czechoslovak leaders, and the latter was responding zealously. The Russians even claimed that Ostpolitik was a newer version of the 1915 Mitteuropa plan for dominating Eastern Europe, and that a military plan, "Operation Deposit," had been drawn up for a "short, 'limited' war" against the GDR and Czechoslovakia.<sup>364</sup>

Their suspicion was based on some degree of truth, in the sense that the West Germans and Czechs were indeed trying to renew diplomatic and economic ties, but there certainly were no German plans for a limited war against the bloc countries. On January 18, West German diplomat W. Bouget led an eight-member advance party of a trade mission to Prague. The party was West Germany's first

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<sup>363</sup> The so-called Hallstein doctrine, as formulated in December 1955, was primarily intended to warn neutral and nonaligned states not to recognize the German Democratic Republic (GDR) since the Federal Government, claiming to speak for Germany as a whole, would regard such a recognition as an unfriendly act.

<sup>364</sup> Maievsky, Pravda, April 2, 1968. See also Ernst Henry, Izvestia, August 15.

official representation in Czechoslovakia.<sup>365</sup> Moscow must have chastised Dubcek for the Germans' presence, for--shortly after his return from Moscow on January 31, he said he did not plan to alter foreign policy while encouraging liberal reforms.<sup>366</sup> Yet on March 3, at a Budapest conference, Czech Ambassador to the Soviet Union and chief party ideologist Vladimir Koucky said there was still a "role for maneuver" in Czech policy toward West Germany.<sup>367</sup>

#### Eastern Europe

The two countries most antagonistic to the Czech reform movement were East Germany (because of its fear of a West German-Czech rapprochement) and Poland (because of the rebellions it stimulated there). Sharp criticisms in both country's presses appeared before denunciations of the Czech reforms were printed in Soviet newspapers, which might suggest that Ulbricht and Gomulka strongly influenced the Soviet leaders' view of the situation.<sup>368</sup>

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<sup>365</sup> New York Times, January 18, p. 11.

<sup>366</sup> New York Times, January 31, 1968, p. 10.

<sup>367</sup> New York Times, March 3, 1968, p. 16.

<sup>368</sup> For example, as early as March 14 at a meeting in honor of the 150th anniversary of Marx's birth, Kurt Hager, Politburo member of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED) expatiated heatedly on Bonn's attempts to "soften up the socialist countries from within, to separate them from each other and...to isolate the GDR." He charged that Czech leaders such as Smrkovsky were encouraging the West Germans to think that Czechoslovakia could be "drawn into the whirlwind of evolution." Later a diplomatic protest was sent to Prague condemning an article in Rude Pravo of May 3, which criticized East German visa and passport measures to curtail the travelling of West Germans through East Berlin. See Neues Deutschland, March 27; East Berlin domestic radio broadcast (FBIS, March 28); also New York Times, March 14, p. 15.

One could plausibly argue that the East German leader Walter Ulbricht was more alarmed about Bonn's burgeoning relations with Prague than were the Soviet leaders themselves. His increasingly mordant diatribes against Prague began earlier than those from Moscow, and his domestic policies to "contain" the "revisionist disease" were more stringent.<sup>369</sup> He had the most to lose if a) the Prague reforms "spilled over" into East Germany; and b) diplomatic and economic relations between Bonn and Prague flourished.

Ulbricht's position as head of East Germany was perhaps more vulnerable than that of the other East European<sup>370</sup> leaders because of the natural attraction his people had for their German-speaking neighbors (and blood relatives) living beyond the Berlin Wall, in West Germany. It was imperative that he conduct an extremely conservative, repressive regime, merely to stay in power. Ulbricht thus had the most self-interested motive for attempting to contain the Czechoslovak reform movement. If the East Germans were given the same freedom of speech that Dubcek had granted his people in Czechoslovakia, it would only be a matter of

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<sup>369</sup> These policies included: stopping the issue of tourist visas for travel to Czechoslovakia, banning or censoring Czech German-language publications, and preventing Czech students from participating in public debates. See New York Times, March 24 and 30, 1968; Neues Deutschland, March 27, 1968.

<sup>370</sup> with the possible exception of the Polish leader Gomulka, since the Oder-Neisse boundary included as part of Poland regions that had long been considered part of Germany: Pomerania and Silesia.

time before they would clamor for Ulbricht's resignation, much the way Hungarian students in October, 1956, overthrew the incumbent prime minister Erno Gero. "Any weakening of the CPCz will lead to a weakening of the alliance with the socialist countries and the foundations of socialism in general," he said.<sup>371</sup> As the last surviving Stalinist leader in Eastern Europe, Ulbricht must have felt an inherent antipathy toward any notions of "socialism with a human face."

Moreover, once government and trade officials in Bonn started granting--and profiting from--loans to Prague,<sup>372</sup> Ulbricht would lose his bargaining position on the question of the normalization of relations between West Germany and the bloc countries. As the bloc leader with the most to lose from normalization with West Germany, Ulbricht was determined to maintain his key role in shaping the communist bloc's policy on the "German question." Furthermore, if economic relations grew between Bonn and Prague, East Berlin's own business transactions with Prague would surely dwindle.

Ulbricht and the Soviet leaders had several preconditions for the normalization of relations between West Germany and the rest of the bloc countries, at least two of which persisted from

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<sup>371</sup> This statement was quoted by pro-Soviet Czech leader Vasil Bil'ak at a press conference after the invasion. See Rude Pravo, September 3, 1969 as cited in Pravda pobezhdaet (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1971), p. 137.

<sup>372</sup> On March 25, 1968 Bonn sent positive signals to Prague concerning a massive hard currency loan for the restructuring of the Czech economy. New York Times, March 26, 1968.

earlier conferences<sup>373</sup> on the so-called German question, namely 1) Bonn's recognition of East Germany as a separate and equal sovereignty, and 2) Bonn's acceptance of the Oder-Neisse line as the western boundary of Poland. In addition, although the Soviet and East European leaders no longer seemed to expect West Germany to leave NATO, they continued to insist on its renunciation of force against any of the bloc countries.<sup>374</sup> They demanded separate and identical renunciation-of-force agreements between Bonn and all the bloc members, and retained the Soviet right of intervention in West Germany until such agreements were signed.<sup>375</sup> Another precondition for normalization was the reduction of West Germany's presence in West Berlin.<sup>376</sup>

While Kremlin leaders were also alarmed by the prospects of a cultural spillover from Czechoslovakia into the Ukraine, they

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<sup>373</sup> On September 9-13, 1955, for example, a conference between West Germany (represented by Adenauer) and the Soviet Union (represented by the post-Stalin "collective leadership") was held in the Spiridonova Palace in Moscow. Khrushchev and others insisted on the finality of the frontier lines [i.e. as established by the Potsdam Agreement of 1945] and the powers of the DDR. See David J. Dallin, Soviet Foreign Policy After Stalin (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1961), p. 267.

<sup>374</sup> At the twenty-third CPSU congress in March-April, 1966, Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko stated that the normalization and improvement of relations between West Germany and the Soviet bloc depended on the renunciation of nuclear weapons and the acceptance of the existing frontiers of all states in Europe. Alvin Z. Rubenstein, Soviet Foreign Policy Since World War II (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1985), p. 114. These demands were repeated at the conferences in the summer of 1968 (before they were curtailed on July 10). See Dawisha, op. cit., p. 191-2.

<sup>375</sup> Dawisha, op. cit., p. 192.

<sup>376</sup> Ibid.

were less apprehensive about diplomatic relations between Bonn and Prague, which stemmed, after all, from their own efforts to initiate a Westpolitik that would mesh with Bonn's Ostpolitik. As early as June, 1964 (three years after the Berlin crisis was resolved), Khrushchev spoke to the West German ambassador about a new Soviet policy toward his country and a possible visit to Bonn.<sup>377</sup> Clearly, the benefits from a rapprochement would outweigh the disadvantages. A detente with Europe would stimulate the Soviet economy and serve as a useful bargaining chip vis-a-vis the United States. Soviet leaders were in all likelihood less daunted by the spectre of a nuclear-armed Federal Republic, acting as a tool of US imperialists, since the FRG's signing of the non-proliferation treaty, and the pacifist nature of its postwar foreign policy. The United States had demonstrated on at least two occasions its respect for the Soviet sphere of influence and post-World War II boundaries, first in 1956 (noninvolvement in the Hungarian Revolution) and then in 1961 (acquiescence in the erection of the Berlin Wall).<sup>378</sup>

Because of the necessity of maintaining a logically consistent, united foreign policy as a bloc, and the overriding influence of the interventionists (including the East Germans, Poles, and Red Army generals), Moscow temporarily discontinued its

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<sup>377</sup> Rubenstein, op. cit., p. 114.

<sup>378</sup> This discussion draws on Adam Ulam's Expansion and Coexistence (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1968), pp. 750-53.

Westpolitik in July, 1968.<sup>379</sup> But soon after the intervention, Soviet-West German dialogues were resumed.

The Polish leadership feared the reform movement in Czechoslovakia, because the latter had stimulated student revolts, backed by older intellectuals, throughout the country. In the Polish leaders' view, these revolts had to be crushed mercilessly. Some members of university faculties were fired as well. This decreased Gomulka's popularity, and gave his rivals, such as Mieczyslaw Moczar (Minister of the Interior) and Edward Gierek, an opportunity to best him.

In addition, Gomulka had at least five petty grievances against the Czechoslovaks. First, the Prague press and radio constantly flayed Warsaw's anti-Zionist campaign.<sup>380</sup> Second, the Czechs had invited Professors Leszek Kolakowski and Bronislaw Backo to lecture at Charles University in Prague. Though a seemingly innocuous event per se, in Gomulka's eyes it was one more symptom of the Czech "disease" infecting the Polish intelligentsia.<sup>381</sup> Third, some members of the Czech Academy of

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<sup>379</sup> According to Karen Dawisha, the Soviet leadership discontinued its exchange of letters with West Germany on July 10. Dawisha, op. cit., p. 191.

<sup>380</sup> Robin A. Remington, ed., Winter in Prague: Documents on Czechoslovak Communism in Crisis (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1969), p. 162.

<sup>381</sup> William F. Robinson, "Czechoslovakia and its Allies," Studies in Comparative Communism, vol. 1, nos 1 & 2, (July/October, 1968), pp. 144-7.

Sciences had sent letters of protest to the Polish Embassy.<sup>382</sup> Fourth, some Czech journalists had made conciliatory statements about the Sudeten Germans, which made the Polish leaders nervous.<sup>383</sup> These statements were interpreted as one of the signs of warming relations between West Germany and Czechoslovakia, together with the visits of Walter Scheel and Karl Blessing to Prague, the "open borders" between the two countries, and West German offers of credits to the Czechs. Finally, Prague's renewed ties with Bucharest and Belgrade looked like an attempt to revive the "Little Entente" of the interwar years.

Initially, Hungary (under Janos Kadar) took a lenient position on the Czech reform movement. Kadar had launched his own reform program (the New Economic Mechanism) earlier on January 1, 1968, which was similar to the one in Czechoslovakia, although it was more gradual and avoided the radical changes advocated by Ota Sik, the Czech economist. The Hungarians also wanted to expand their ties with Western economies and to reform COMECON policies. Since Kadar was already sympathetic with the Prague Spring, he was probably less apprehensive than Gomulka and Ulbricht that the reforms would undermine his own authority. He is reputed to have

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<sup>382</sup> Prace [Labor], March 29, 1968.

<sup>383</sup> Reporter, July 10-17, 1968. See the Polish attack on Czech journalist Hradecky in Trybuna Ludu, July 24 and Dziennik Ludowy, July 26; FBIS, July 29, and August 1, 1968.

told Dubcek and Mlynar during the Bratislava conference in early August that "the success of the Czechoslovak reforms would undoubtedly mean new hope for developments in Hungary."<sup>384</sup>

Kadar's role in the developing crisis can be considered to be that of a go-between. On August 15 he urged Brezhnev to permit him to mediate between Moscow and Prague.<sup>385</sup> He stressed the importance of determining "what is common" to the Soviet and Czechoslovak negotiating parties.<sup>386</sup> At the same time, however, Kadar valued solidarity with the Soviet Union, as illustrated by his assistance in planning for the world communist conference and his participation in all the negotiations concerning Czechoslovakia. Aided by the memory of the 1956 Soviet invasion, he probably knew that if the Prague reforms went too far, his own reform program would be jeopardized. For this reason he eventually decided to take part in the invasion on August 20, 1968.

Of the other East European countries, both Rumania and Yugoslavia (the latter was not a Warsaw Pact member) had more or less supportive attitudes toward Dubcek's reform efforts.<sup>387</sup>

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<sup>384</sup> Zdenek Mlynar, Nightfrost in Prague: The End of Humane Socialism (New York: Karz Publishers, 1980), p. 199.

<sup>385</sup> Dawisha, op. cit., p. 286.

<sup>386</sup> Z. Komocsin, Secretary of the Hungarian Party, speech on Radio Budapest, August 9, 1968 in FBIS, August 11, 1968.

<sup>387</sup> Valenta, op. cit., p. 27.

There were no representatives from either country at the most important meetings between Soviet and East European officials and Dubcek and his colleagues in the latter stages of the crisis.<sup>388</sup> Bulgaria, on the other hand, sided with the Soviet Union and supplied a token number of troops into Czechoslovakia on August 20. Hungary supported the Prague Spring initially, but later joined the other four Warsaw Pact armies on the fateful night. Albania, in its usual Shakespearean "plague on both your houses" manner, damned both the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia as ultra-revisionist states, in which the dictatorship of the proletariat was being crushed, and capitalism restored. Dubcek's Czechoslovakia, it claimed, was openly returning to the capitalist forms, methods, and contents of the bourgeois capitalist Czechoslovakia of Masaryk and Benes."<sup>389</sup>

#### Asia

China at this time was absorbed in its own Cultural Revolution (launched in August 1966, at the 11th Plenary Session of the CC CCP) and therefore conveniently took the Albanian view that both states were to blame. The only official Chinese reference to the situation in Czechoslovakia before the August 20 invasion was a

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<sup>388</sup> Ibid.

<sup>389</sup> Zeri i Popullit, April 21 (B.B.C., II, April 25).

rehash (published on August 10) of the Albanian editorial in Zeri i Popullit of July 24.<sup>390</sup> Of course the Chinese reaction was scathing: the Soviet "act of naked armed intervention" ... exposed the "grisly fascist features of the ...renegade clique" and "total bankruptcy of Soviet modern revisionism."<sup>391</sup> Since the Sino-Soviet rift was at its height (clashes at the Ussuri River were to follow one year later), Soviet leaders no doubt assumed the Chinese would condemn any decision they made regarding Czechoslovakia.

The other Asian Communist countries, such as North Vietnam, predictably defended the intervention ideologically.

#### Middle East

Despite Israel's successful surprise attack against Egypt (June 5-10, 1967), the Soviet Union continued to pour weapons and advisors into Syria and Egypt. The leaders in the Kremlin intended to rearm the Arabs to their pre-war military potential.<sup>392</sup> From 1967 to 1969 the USSR invested \$3 to \$4 billion in Egyptian forces

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<sup>390</sup> Radio Free Europe (RFE) China, Foreign Relations, August 27, 1968.

<sup>391</sup> Jen-min Jin-pao, "Total Bankruptcy of Soviet Modern Revisionism," Peking Review, vol. II, no. 34; cited in Remington, op. cit., p. 326.

<sup>392</sup> New York Times, June 27, 1968, p. 13.

alone.<sup>393</sup> It is not surprising, then, given the level of this aid, that Soviet leaders viewed with annoyance the Czechoslovak people's pro-Israeli position. On June 22, Czech students petitioned the government to restore diplomatic ties with Israel. The Czech writer, L. Mnacko, wrote a book entitled The Aggressors, which gave a sympathetic account of Israel's fight for existence. Having earlier lost his citizenship for criticizing Novotny's anti-Israel stand, Mnacko returned to Czechoslovakia when Dubcek came to power.<sup>394</sup> A few days later, a Czech student journal published an interview with Israeli Foreign Ministry aide A. Dagan, who urged that diplomatic ties between the two countries be renewed.<sup>395</sup> Czech students saw the renewal of diplomatic ties as symbolic of their intentions to follow national interests, regardless of Moscow's general line. They drew an analogy between Israel and the larger, more powerful Arab world, and Czechoslovakia and superior Nazi Germany.<sup>396</sup>

#### Soviet Uses of Deception

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<sup>393</sup> Alfred Z. Rubenstein, Soviet Foreign Policy Since World War II (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1985), p. 202.

<sup>394</sup> New York Times, June 22, 1968, pp. 24, 33.

<sup>395</sup> New York Times, June 30, 1968, p. 8.

<sup>396</sup> Francois Fejto, "Moscow and its Allies," Problems of Communism, vol. 17 (November/December 1968), p. 35.

Soviet leaders employed deception in more creative ways in 1968 than in 1956, through military maneuvers, conferences, and disinformation campaigns. These forms of deception had a dual purpose of both avoiding the use of force and, later, of achieving a surprise attack. Four separate military maneuvers took place in early May, June, and July. The first, Sever' ("North") took place in the Baltic Sea area before the Cierna conference on July 29. The second, Nemen, began on July 23 (the day the Politburo decided to negotiate at Cierna) and ended August 10. Under the command of General S. Mariakhin, Commander-in-Chief of the Rear Services, the exercise was carried out in the western part of the Soviet Union, from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea, and later extended to East Germany and Poland. The third exercises were air defense maneuvers code-named Sky Shield, which began immediately after Nemen. Finally, an exercise of "communications troops" took place in the Western Ukraine, Poland, and East Germany.<sup>397</sup>

As a rule, the East European countries' participation in military maneuvers was claimed by the Russians to signify loyalty to the Warsaw Pact. Thus, the Czech leaders felt obliged to allow the Soviet troops on their soil; they did not want to offend the Soviet leaders in any way. They were attempting to learn from the

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<sup>397</sup> Jiri Valenta, "Soviet Use of Surprise and Deception," Survival 24 (March/April 1982), p. 54.

Hungarians' mistake in 1956, namely the mistake of challenging the Soviet Union in foreign policy (by declaring neutrality, withdrawing from the Warsaw Pact, etc.). By agreeing to the exercises, the Czechs felt they would prevent a Soviet intervention. The Russians hoped to make an intervention unnecessary by sufficiently intimidating the Czech leadership.

Yet this strategy of the Czechs was flawed at the outset, for it addressed the wrong problem. The Soviet leaders were not worried that Czechoslovakia would leave the Warsaw Pact, but that it would--consciously or unconsciously--"infect" or change the Warsaw Pact from within. As discussed earlier, one Czech military figure (General Vaclav Prchlik) had already disclosed to the public the fact that local military leaders had no real decision making power concerning Warsaw Pact policies. A more effective strategy would have been one akin to Gomulka's in 1956: to make it clear that the Czech people would actively resist a Soviet invasion.

The maneuvers served two main purposes for the Soviet Union. First, they initially intimidated the Czech leaders and population, paralyzing their will to plan constructively. They were not sure whether the Warsaw Pact forces would intervene or not. Since they could not rule out the possibility entirely, they remained in a state of constant tension. As Thomas Schelling and

other strategists have postulated, withheld force is more influential than applied force; deterrent threats are more effective than compellent ones. At the same time, what Moscow hoped the maneuvers would do--influence them to discontinue the reform program--did not occur.

Second, after a time, when the maneuvers continued and no invasion ensued, the Czechoslovaks learned to tolerate them. Here the Soviet leaders applied the "repetitive process" principle of deception. The maneuvers conditioned the Czechoslovaks to accept the presence of foreign tanks on their territory as harmless. When the maneuvers became the intervention itself, the Czechoslovaks were confused and passive. In sum, the military maneuvers were initially meant to intimidate the Czechs so the Russians would not have to use force, and later to deceive them so they and four other Warsaw Pact countries could achieve a surprise attack. The option of using the forces for an intervention was always kept open.

The second form of deception was the conference at Cierna nad Tisou, held in a railroad car on the border of the two countries. By the time of this conference (July 29), the Soviet leaders had already planned both militarily and politically for an invasion, in case the Cierna talks were unsuccessful. In this sense, Soviet leaders were psychologically predisposed to intervene. This

conclusion is supported both by the manner in which they conducted the talks, and the timing of the tactical decision to intervene unless the Czechs showed clear adherence to the Soviet interpretation of the Bratislava statement (August 6, three days after the Bratislava meeting). Employing the deception principles of preparation and credibility, the entire Soviet Poliburo arrived at Cierna nad Tisou with a large staff of "experts" who read from thick piles of newspaper clippings collected from Czech newspapers, radio, and television. The Soviet side spent the entire first day simply reading aloud to the Czech leaders from these clippings, as if at a prosecution.<sup>398</sup> This could hardly be called negotiating, since one side was monopolizing the discussion.

The Czech leaders, by comparison, were caught unprepared. They had brought no documentation with them, and could only contest the theoretical grounds upon which the Soviet accusations were based. But the Soviet side acted as if the very existence of the articles constituted proof of the Czechs' guilt, and no reasons the Czechs gave for their long-term reform policies were considered to be valid or relevant. One will recall the comment made by Jozef Smrkovsky, member of the C.P.Cz. Presidium and participant in the

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<sup>398</sup> Josef Maxa, A Year is Eight Months (New York: Anchor Books, 1971), p. 190.

talks.

Everything they said there were pretexts; hence the difficulty in coming to an agreement...These were details which could not give reasons for a conflict of any kind, because we were solving or had resolved them.<sup>399</sup>

Moreover, the Soviet side was more prepared than the Czech side because they had six specific demands with which they presented the Czechs. They wanted Frantisek Kriegel removed from the National Front chairmanship; Cestmir Cisar removed from his post as Secretary; the entire Social Democratic Party banned; the political clubs of KAN and K231 banned; and the "communications media" shut down (i.e. press censorship restored).<sup>400</sup> These were demands that could not be obeyed without jeopardizing the reform program, and they could not be obeyed in a short amount of time. Nevertheless, the Soviet leaders gave them a mere fourteen-day (two week) "testing period" and then made the final decision to invade on August 17.<sup>401</sup> During the two-week period, General Secretary Brezhnev sent warning letters on August 13 and 16 respectively. Since the Czechs had not presented the Soviet side with any concrete demands of their own, they had no bargaining

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<sup>399</sup> Smrkovsky, op. cit., p. 882.

<sup>400</sup> Ibid., p. 882.

<sup>401</sup> For the exact timing of each Soviet decision, see Karen Dawisha, The Kremlin and the Prague Spring (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 297-8.

power.

It would not be accurate to state that the Cierna and Bratislava talks were wholly deceptive ploys, however. Instead, the Cierna conference was, to use Richard Lowenthal's phrase, a "stay of execution." (The Bratislava meeting was not a negotiation, but merely an "editorial council" which elaborated the Cierna declaration.) At the Cierna talks, the Soviet leaders neither withdrew, nor implemented the ultimatum originally presented in the "Warsaw letter" sent to the CPCz by the five Warsaw Pact countries. What they intended to do was link the CPCz leaders to a formula that legitimized not only the Soviet and East Europeans' demands, but also those of Dubcek's conservative opponents. Then, in the following days, one of two things would happen: Dubcek would adhere to the formula and clamp down on the liberal members, or he would ignore the formula, thus giving the Kremlin a reason to intervene, hopefully with the help of the Czech conservatives (Vasil Bilak, Oldrich Svestka, Drahomir Kolder, and Alois Indra).<sup>402</sup> In this way, the Cierna conference served the dual deception purpose of avoiding the use of force (initially) and facilitating a surprise invasion (by creating a justification for it, and finding quislings whom they thought would "invite" Soviet troops in and would head a new pro-Soviet

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<sup>402</sup> Lowenthal, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

regime).

On a smaller scale a disinformation campaign was conducted to intimidate prominent Czech figures, demoralize the public, and generally to legitimize an invasion. Before 1968 the Czechoslovak intelligence service was probably the most adroit satellite service.<sup>403</sup> But just as Czech military figures had no decision making authority in relation to the Warsaw Pact, so Czech intelligence authorities reported straight to Moscow. One of the several Czech intelligence officers who defected to the West after the invasion, Ladislav Bittman, told two American scholars: "During the 1960s we received guidance and objectives from the Moscow center, articulated through KGB advisors who were present at all important Czech intelligence service staff levels....This staff oversight took place on a daily basis."<sup>404</sup>

According to Bittman, Moscow needed "pressing arguments both for propaganda and for the pending meeting of Warsaw Pact representatives." With the help of the Stalinists in the Czech Ministry of the Interior, and other East European agents, Soviet intelligence agents launched a series of special operations

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<sup>403</sup> Ladislav Bittman, The Deception Game: Czechoslovak Intelligence in Soviet Political Warfare (Syracuse: Syracuse University Research Corporation, 1972), p. 144.

<sup>404</sup> Richard H. Shultz and Roy Godson, Dezinformatsiya: Active Measures in Soviet Strategy (McLean, Va.: Pergamon-Brassey's, 1984), p. 172-3.

against the Czech democratization movement. The special operations included: attempts to prove the US was helping the "counterrevolutionaries," attacks on World Jewry, and accusatory letters to prominent Czech reformists.

On May 9 the East German journal Berliner Zeitung published an article claiming that eight American tanks and American troops had arrived in Prague and were meeting with Bundeswehr troops and three West German tanks. (In fact, an American movie "Remagen Bridge" was being filmed in Prague, using only Czech tanks.)<sup>405</sup>

On July 12, two security officers in Sokolovsko were informed anonymously of a cache of twenty submachine guns, thirty pistols, and cartridges packed in five American knapsacks in a canal under a bridge between the towns of Mytina and Arnoldov, near the West German border.<sup>406</sup> The disinformation effort was a failure, since many remembered that Soviet armed forces had just conducted maneuvers there.

On July 20, Pravda published a report of a "top secret" U.S. document outlining "subversive tactics" to be used in cooperation with "insurgent elements" in Czechoslovakia and other East

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<sup>405</sup> Berliner Zeitung, May 9, 1968. Also Bittman, op. cit., p. 193.

<sup>406</sup> Bittman, op. cit., p.194.

European nations.<sup>407</sup> The document was claimed to be an operations plan of the U.S. Army ground forces in Europe.

World Jewry was also blamed by the Soviet disinformation experts as a cause of the counterrevolution. A forged letter, dated May 21, 1968, in the name of Simon Wiesenthal (head of the Jewish Documentation Center in Vienna) was mailed to several hundred people in Czechoslovakia, to establish a link between Czechoslovak Jews and anti-socialist forces abroad.<sup>408</sup>

Finally, in addition to pamphlets distributed at the doors of private houses, telephone poles and booths, threatening letters were sent to individuals. On June, 1968, Edward Goldstuecker, head of the Czechoslovak Writers' Union, received a vulgar letter reminiscent of the years (1950s) he spent in prison. He published the letter in Rude Pravo on June 23 and thus gained the public's support.<sup>409</sup> In addition to Goldstuecker, leading journalists and writers, such as Ludvik Vaculik (author of the "Two Thousand Words"), Pavel Kohout, Ladislav Plubar, and Jiri Hanzelka received scathing letters.

The disinformation campaign, due to its crude execution, probably worked against the Russians' original purpose of

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<sup>407</sup> Pravda, July 20, 1968.

<sup>408</sup> Bittman, op. cit., p. 195.

<sup>409</sup> Ibid., p. 191.

intimidation. The Czechoslovak journalists realized the campaign's purpose and merely fought back with scathing articles of their own. But the campaign helped the Russians in another way. The Russians simply clipped these articles and confronted Dubcek with them at Cierna. Could Dubcek not see that the situation in Czechoslovakia threatened the foundations of socialism and jeopardized the common vital interests of other socialist countries? Again, like the military maneuvers and the Cierna conference, the disinformation both avoided the use of force by initially intimidating the people, and helped justify the invasion later.

In conclusion, Brezhnev's leadership in 1968 wavered before finally deciding to intervene in Czechoslovakia. Unlike Khrushchev and his colleagues, Brezhnev and the other Politburo members probably considered many more options for resolving the crisis, including individual meetings with Dubcek, group conferences, disinformation campaigns, and military maneuvers designed to intimidate the Czech leaders. They resorted to more forceful methods only when conciliatory measures failed. By coordinating several fact-finding missions (either by Soviet generals or individual East European leaders) the Soviet leaders collected a great deal of information about the situation in Prague before formulating strategies by which to control it. The final decision

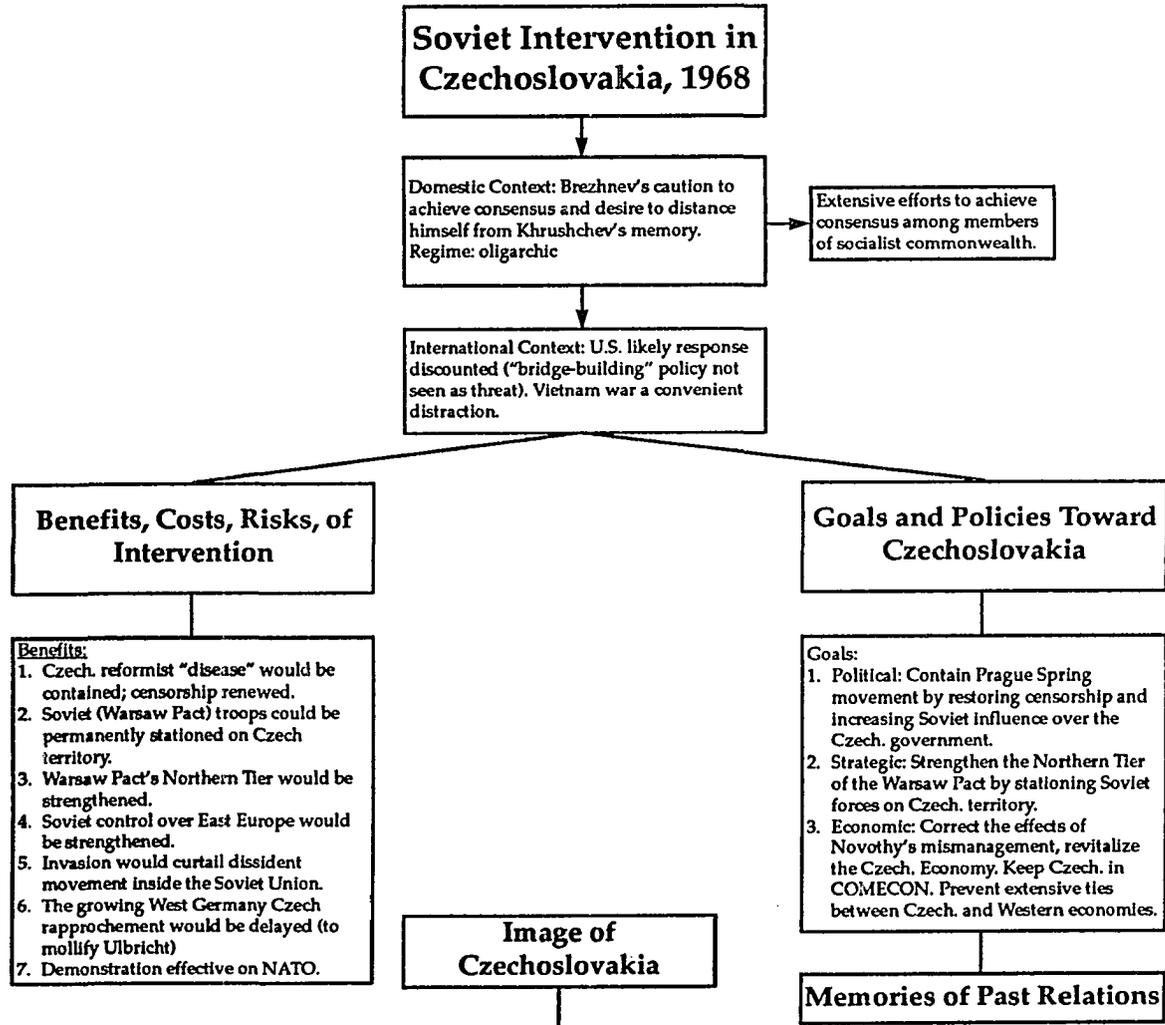
to intervene militarily resulted apparently from rational cost-benefit calculations and a careful assessment of long-range goals and commitments. Less influential as factors in the decision making process, perhaps, were Soviet images and memories of Czechoslovakia. (See the chart on the following page.)

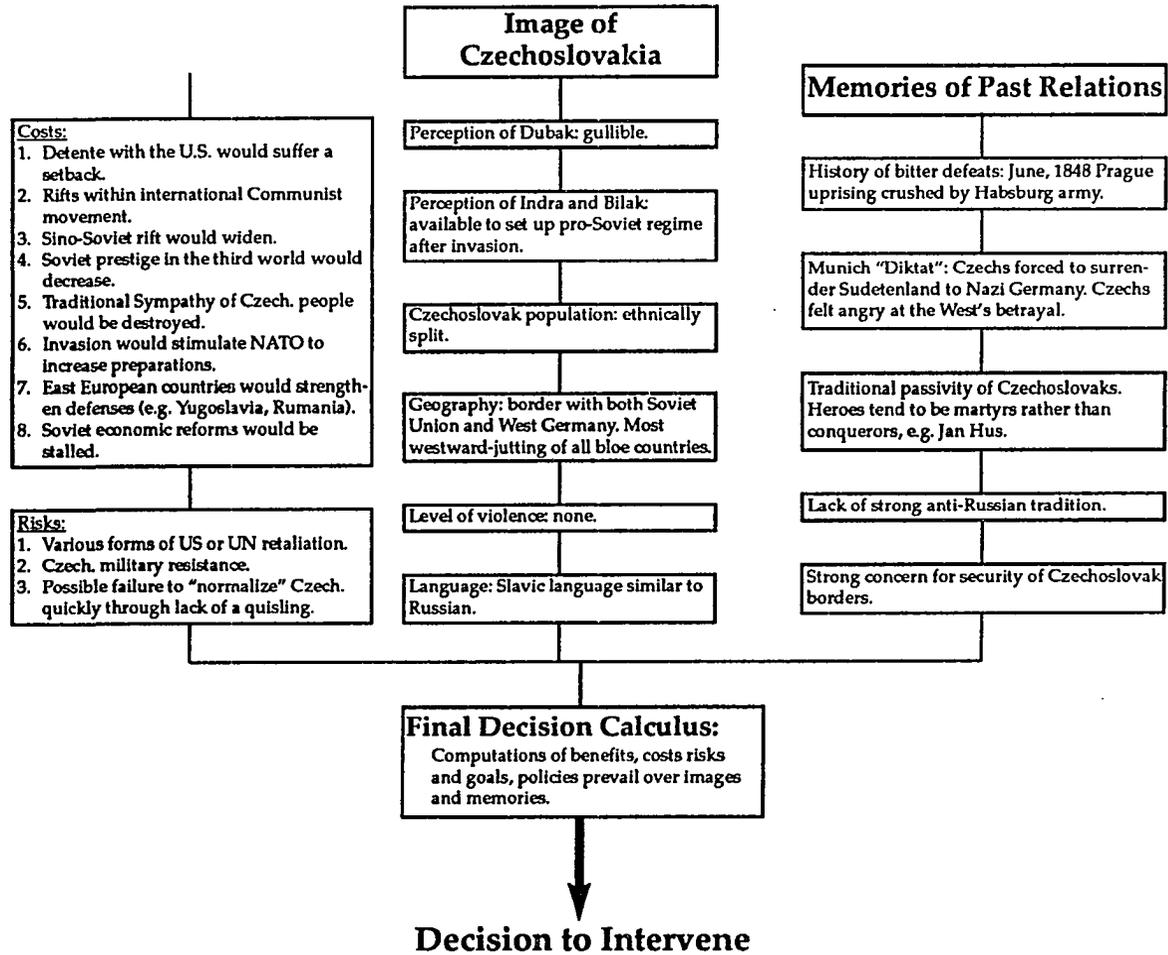
### The Soviet Leadership as Analytic

#### Decision Making, Discontinuous Learning Unit

This section will analyze the behavior of the Brezhnev leadership before and during the 1968 Czechoslovak crisis with respect to three main criteria of analytic decision making and discontinuous learning, to which the behavior closely adheres: 1) the conscious generating and weighing of options or alternatives, 2) the extensive search for information, and 3) the predominance of objective calculations of benefits, costs, and risks, and long-term goals and policies, over the influence of images and memories in the decision making process.

It should be explained at the outset that one of the attributes of discontinuous learning (viz. "willingness to reevaluate past knowledge in the light of new facts in the present") applies to the Brezhnev leadership in 1968 only in the respect that its tactics were flexible. It would not be correct to assert that the leadership reassessed their views about Soviet hegemony over East Europe in general, or about the validity and





practically of the communist system itself.

The fact that the Soviet leadership abstained from intervening militarily for at least seven months after Dubcek was elected (on January 5) suggests that Brezhnev and his colleagues considered options short of the use of force by which to contain the reform movement. The option of sending in tanks apparently was chosen after other peaceful solutions failed. In contrast to their methods of conflict resolution in October, 1956, the Soviet leaders in 1968 were more imaginative. As mentioned above, a large range of alternatives by which to persuade Dubcek were considered and attempted, including press polemics (in East European, as well as Soviet, newspapers), one-on-one dialogues between Dubcek and one other East European leader, economic bribes and sanctions, military maneuvers, disinformation campaigns, multilateral bloc negotiations, personal letters and phone calls from Brezhnev to Dubcek, and so on.

Second, the option of military intervention (specifically the capacity to justify one ideologically) was kept scrupulously open. At the Bratislava meeting on August 3, for example, Brezhnev insisted on retaining the following two sentences:

It is the common international duty of all socialist countries to support, defend, and consolidate these achievements, which have been made through the heroic efforts and dedicated labor of each country's people.

This is the unanimous opinion of all participants in the meeting...<sup>410</sup>

One of the Czech officials present, Zdenek Mlynar, suspected that the Soviet leaders would point to this later as a binding agreement, so he suggested adding the clause (connected to the sentence by a dash), "While respecting the sovereignty and national independence of each country." Brezhnev immediately objected, saying, "The dash in this sentence would go against the spirit of the Russian language!"<sup>411</sup> This rather trivial objection would suggest that the real reason Brezhnev insisted on these sentences was that they would give the Soviet leadership an ideological justification for a military intervention, if no other options were successful before August 26 (the date of the Slovak party congress).

In fact, had it not been for the scheduled party congresses (the Slovak congress on August 26, and the Czech congress on September 9, the Brezhnev leadership probably would have continued to exercise options short of invasion. Brezhnev is reputed to have said that some advised him to wait longer before intervening: "From this point of view it would have been more favorable to wait until an open counterrevolution broke out in Czechoslovakia with

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<sup>410</sup> Mlynar, op. cit., p. 154.

<sup>411</sup> Ibid.

all its consequences and only to interfere afterwards."<sup>412</sup>

Even after the invasion, the Soviet leaders were highly conscious of their options. For example, they retained the option of keeping troops permanently stationed. In the Moscow Protocol, which was signed after the intervention, a section reads:

As soon as the threat to socialism in the CSSR and to the security of the countries in the socialist community has passed, allied troops will be removed from the territory of the CSSR in stages. The command of the allied troops and the command of the Czechoslovak Army will immediately begin discussions concerning the removal and change in position of military units...<sup>413</sup>

Despite these promises, it soon became clear that the withdrawal of Soviet and Warsaw Pact troops depended upon Moscow's appraisal of the "normalization" process in Czechoslovakia. Another agreement was signed at a subsequent meeting in mid-October, 1968, which legitimized the "temporary" presence of troops without specifying an exact date for withdrawal or the number of forces to remain.<sup>414</sup>

The Brezhnev leadership also collected a great deal of information. When Brezhnev, Kosygin, and others realized that they

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<sup>412</sup> Reported by a Czechoslovak leader, J. Piller, Radio Prague, September 17, 1969; cited in Valenta, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

<sup>413</sup> "The Moscow Protocol," See Document 58 in Remington, ed., Winter in Prague, pp. 379-82.

<sup>414</sup> See Rude Pravo and Pravda, October 19, 1968, for the Moscow Communique and treaty on withdrawing troops. Also printed in Remington, op. cit., pp. 417-24.

were receiving distorted information from the Soviet Ambassador to Czechoslovakia, Chervonenko and his deputy Udaltsov, they took active steps to obtain first-hand, objective information. Since they could not rely on Soviet officials--such as S. V. Chervonenko--in Czechoslovakia, the next best solution was to travel there themselves. Another reason for making their methods of gathering information more efficient was the fact that the new Czech officials elected by Dubcek (such as Hajek, Pavel, and Prchlik to head the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of the Interior, and the eighth department of the Central Committee respectively) were disinclined to provide the Soviet leaders with detailed information.<sup>415</sup> Old contacts upon which Moscow had relied for years were suddenly out of power and thus no longer useful.

Rather than sending mere two-member fact-finding missions to the capital of the satellite country for two or three-day sojourns, as Khrushchev did in 1956, the entire Politburo travelled to Cierna nad Tisou to negotiate with the Czechoslovak Presidium.<sup>416</sup> In this way, more members of the Soviet leadership would receive first-hand information and be able to contribute more intelligently in the decision-making process. With more

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<sup>415</sup> Dawisha, *op. cit.*, p. 352.

<sup>416</sup> Ulam, *op. cit.*, p. 742. Also Lowenthal, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

perspectives on the problem, there was a greater likelihood that the problem would be viewed more comprehensively, rather than constructed as an either-or proposition. Thus more options could be generated and weighed. Not only did Brezhnev seek advice from well-informed Soviet colleagues, but also from other East European leaders. As pointed out earlier, the urgency of the Czechoslovak problem was first impressed upon the Brezhnev leadership by Ulbricht and Gomulka, who both felt personally threatened by the reform movement. Brezhnev later asked Tito for possible suggestions.<sup>417</sup> Many East European leaders met individually with Dubcek in Prague or elsewhere to gain more information, as well as to persuade him, including Tito (August 9), Ulbricht (August 12), Ceausescu (August 15-6), and Kadar (August 18).<sup>418</sup> The East European leaders met as a collective on five different occasions: in Dresden (March 23), in Moscow (March 8), in Warsaw (in mid-July), in Bratislava (on August 3) and in Moscow again after the invasion (August 23-25).<sup>419</sup>

As one Western analyst discovered, the Kremlin leaders participated in a total of thirty-three negotiations, which would

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<sup>417</sup> Willy Brandt, People and Politics: The Years 1960-1975 (London: Collins, 1978), p. 214.

<sup>418</sup> Tigrid, *op. cit.*, pp. 94-96.

<sup>419</sup> Dawisha, *op. cit.*, p. 333.

have allowed them to observe Czech leaders closely and evaluate the situation up close. The explicitly stated purpose of one of the earliest of these meetings, at Dresden on March 23, was to gather information on Czechoslovakia.<sup>420</sup>

The Soviet leaders evidently read all the major Czechoslovak newspapers voraciously throughout the crisis. On August 1, for example, just after the conference at Cierna nad Tisou, Brezhnev ordered the Czech prime minister Oldrich Cernik to confiscate the latest issue of Reporter because it contained a cartoon that ridiculed him. The newspaper had not even been distributed to the newstands yet.<sup>421</sup> Another sign of the Soviet leaders' voracious newspaper reading is the fact (explained above) that at the Cierna nad Tisou conference Brezhnev and his colleagues read from thick piles of Czechoslovak newspaper clippings for the entire first day.

Not only did the Russians go to great lengths to collect information about the target country, but also to collect data about the Western countries' likely reaction to an intervention. Richard Crossman, the British Secretary of State for Social Services described in his diary how the Soviet Ambassador to Great

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<sup>420</sup> Pravda, March 25, 1968. This meeting was allegedly called by Ulbricht. See Brandt, op. cit., p. 210.

<sup>421</sup> Mlynar, op. cit., p. 113.

Britain asked Michael Stewart (one of Crossman's colleagues) about an "inter-Sputnik organization...of a singularly unimportant kind." Crossman wrote:

...[T]hen, when he was leaving the room, [he] had said, "I want to talk to you about Czechoslovakia." I found out later that the Russians had given their ambassadors in every capital instructions to make an identical approach in order to test Western reactions."<sup>422</sup>

According to Mlynar, during the post-invasion negotiations in Moscow, Brezhnev said he had asked President Johnson if he would honor the Potsdam and Yalta agreements regarding the Soviet sphere of influence, and received an affirmative answer on August 18.<sup>423</sup>

Objective calculations of benefits, costs, and risks associated with the military option seem to have influenced the final decision more than the Brezhnev leadership's image and memories of Czechoslovakia. There is evidence to suggest that Brezhnev carefully considered the costs and risks of intervening. He acknowledged after the invasion that the Politburo "thoroughly considered all aspects of the military intervention in

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<sup>422</sup> Richard Crossman, The Diaries of a Cabinet Minister: Secretary of State for Social Services, 1968-70 (London: Hamish Hamilton Ltd., 1977), p. 167.

<sup>423</sup> See the interview between Zdenek Mlynar and George Urban in G.R. Urban, ed. Communist Reformation: Nationalism, Internationalism, and Change in the World Communist Movement (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979), p. 134.

Czechoslovakia" and hinted that one of the members thought that "this step would threaten the authority of the Soviet Union in the eyes of the people of the world...it would fan national passions and cause a loss of Soviet prestige in Czechoslovakia."<sup>424</sup> As observed earlier, several Soviet officials (e.g. Suslov, Kosygin, Ponomarev) expressed doubts about the necessity and wisdom of an intervention.<sup>425</sup> Presumably in order to lessen the costs of the invasion, in terms of international public opinion, Prime Minister Kosygin sent a note to President Johnson, suggesting that an agreement on a summit meeting be announced on Wednesday morning, August 21, just after the scheduled invasion.<sup>426</sup> Even as late as May, the leaders in the Kremlin articulated their concern about maintaining objectivity. According to an article in Pravda there was still "understanding both for the objective complexity of the situation and for the complexity of the position of the CPCz leadership itself" which motivated them to "abstain from making any public appraisals and statements" about Czechoslovakia that

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<sup>424</sup> Jan Piller, Radio Prague, September 17, 1969. See also speech by another Czech official, B. Chnoupek, Tvorba, January 6, 1971; cited in Valenta, op. cit., p. 142.

<sup>425</sup> Anatole Shub, The New Russian Tragedy (New York: Norton, 1969), p. 102. Also an East European source in East Berlin quoted an official in the Soviet secretariat. See New York Times, March 4, 1969.

<sup>426</sup> Dawisha, op. cit., p. 291.

might sour relations between Moscow and Prague still further.<sup>427</sup>

The Soviet leaders' objective calculations of benefits, costs, and risks and precautions to reduce potential costs and risks apparently outweighed impulses, memories, or ingrained habits. Brezhnev's remark to Czech leader Bohumil Simon in November 1968 reveals the former's emotional restraint. Brezhnev supposedly said:

You thought that when you were in power you could do what you wanted. But that's a basic mistake. Not even I can do what I'd like; I can achieve only about a third of what I would like to do. If I hadn't voted in the politburo for military intervention, what would have happened? You almost certainly would not be sitting here. And I probably wouldn't be sitting here either.<sup>428</sup>

Though perhaps expecting the intervention to occur more or less similarly to the intervention in 1956, the Soviet leaders were surprised by the turn of events and had to improvise. The events in 1968 were unprecedented in a number of ways. First, the Soviet leaders probably consulted with East European leaders more sincerely, rather than simply "informing" them after the Soviet decision had already been made. Second, the Soviet army invaded together with four other Warsaw Pact armies (those of East Germany, Poland, Hungary, and Bulgaria), in order to legitimize the invasion. Third, Soviet plans, both for obtaining an

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<sup>427</sup> Pravda, August 22, 1968.

<sup>428</sup> Mlynar, op. cit., p. 163.

"invitation" to send in troops and for setting up a puppet regime failed because of the timidity of the pro-Soviet Czechoslovak leaders Alois Indra, Vasil Bilak, and others. Moscow had to reverse course and negotiate seriously with the Czech officials they had initially imprisoned, and wait until April 17, 1969 (when Dubcek was forced to resign) before a truly loyal Czechoslovak regime could be established (headed by Gustav Husak). Fourth, the Brezhnev leadership had to work harder to justify the intervention in political and ideological terms, since there was no actual physical threat to the Soviet Union from the Czechoslovak reform movement. For the above reasons, one can conclude that the Brezhnev leadership did not simply repeat past behavior (e.g. the intervention in Hungary).

Moreover, during and after the invasion the Soviet leaders referred to a number of past historical events (e.g. World War II, the excommunication of Tito in 1948, and Poland 1956) from which they drew lessons and analogies, not merely to the 1956 intervention. At the post-invasion negotiations in August, for example, Brezhnev repeatedly referred to the sacrifices that Soviet soldiers had made during World War II in order to gain the security of the Soviet borders. "For us the results of the Second World War are inviolable, and we will defend them even at the cost

of risking a new war."<sup>429</sup> Marshal Konev stated that Hitler might have smashed the Prague uprising (in 1945) and that "only the Soviet army had saved Prague."<sup>430</sup>

Mikhail Suslov, who played a leading role in the Cominform conferences that indicted Tito, is reputed to have remarked at the Cierna nad Tisou negotiations that "this is 1968, not 1948," and that "there can be no more excommunications."<sup>431</sup> Finally, V. V. Zagladin, who was a deputy under Boris Ponomarev in the International Department, allegedly suggested to Mikhail Voslensky that the situation in Prague should be compared to Poland in 1956, rather than to Hungary, 1956, since despite initial "panic" in the former, "nothing had happened."<sup>432</sup> According to Josef Smrkovsky, Brezhnev also mentioned the Polish example, saying that Moscow had not "forced Poland into socialization" in 1956 and could accept a "similar degree of reform in Prague."<sup>433</sup>

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<sup>429</sup> Mlynar, op. cit., p. 241.

<sup>430</sup> Izvestiia, May 6 and 7, 1968.

<sup>431</sup> Edward Goldstueker (chairman of the Writer's Union in 1967-8) recounted this to analyst Karen Dawisha in an interview in Brighton, England, on October 24, 1977. See Dawisha, op. cit., p. 348.

<sup>432</sup> Mikhail Voslensky, Der Spiegel, no. 34 (August 21, 1978): 126. Voslensky was an advisor to the Soviet Central Committee in 1968.

<sup>433</sup> Smrkovsky interview, Lidova demokracie, June 17, 1968.

Some critics might emphasize the fact that the Soviet leaders discounted the possibility that their plan for establishing a new, docile regime headed by a sycophantic Svoboda, Bilak and Indra would fail. This fact, they would argue, indicates a serious failure to consider all costs and to gauge the probabilities of all risks associated with their tentative decision to intervene. This is a valid point, to some extent. However, as explained earlier, rationality does not presuppose infallibility. The type of decision maker and learner described in this study as "analytic" and "discontinuous" is quite capable of making mistakes, but he is also more adept at recognizing the error and taking corrective measures, than is the cybernetic decision maker and reiterative learner.

Moreover, Brezhnev and the other Soviet leaders had every reason to expect that the plan arranged in advance with Indra and Bilak would work. All the external details had been considered; a "rehearsal" was held in Indra's office in the Central Committee building on the morning of August 20, the day of the invasion.<sup>434</sup> Indra and Bilak were to propose that a discussion of the reform movement come first on the agenda at the Czechoslovak presidium meeting, scheduled for two o'clock that day. According to Mlynar:

Had Indra and Kolder's proposals been passed by a slender

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<sup>434</sup> Mlynar, *op. cit.*, p. 201.

majority, it is probable that that majority would immediately have forced a discussion of Brezhnev's letter [rebuking Dubcek for breaking his promise at Bratislava]. They would then have attempted to formulate a reply that would, in effect, be a letter of request for "fraternal assistance" from Moscow.<sup>435</sup>

What Moscow could not have known in advance is their Czechoslovak sympathizers' extreme cowardice in pressured situations. This weakness of character could only become exposed in the crisis itself.

In any case, Brezhnev and his colleagues, once they realized they would not be able to fake an invitation and install a loyal regime, corrected the situation by releasing Dubcek and others from prison and negotiating the so-called Moscow Protocol with them. Essentially, nothing had changed: Dubcek was still under their control. In his memoirs, Mlynar writes that the members of the Dubcek leadership "were treated more like objects of gangster-style blackmail than members of a state delegation attending political negotiations."<sup>436</sup> Thus despite the temporary setback, the Soviet leaders still replaced Dubcek one year later. The military intervention itself still took place. Perhaps it was less successful politically than it otherwise might have been (i.e. with a legitimate "invitation" and available quisling). But in the

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<sup>435</sup> Ibid., p. 202.

<sup>436</sup> Mlynar, op. cit., p. 227.

final analysis, since the ultimate end was achieved (a military intervention to contain the Czechoslovak reform movement), the neglect of one contingency that did not prevent the achievement of that end is, in a sense, of little consequence.

### Analytic Uses of Marxism-Leninism

The Brezhnev leadership in 1968 tended to use Marxism-Leninism to help define its values, set goals and priorities, analyze events, and discern possible courses of action through careful consideration of the "correlation of forces."

One of the values, the unremitting application of the Marxist dialectic (however self-serving), is illustrated in an article written by Sergei Kovalev, which appeared in Pravda a month after the intervention on September 26, 1968. He wrote:

The Marxist dialectic opposes one-sidedness; it requires that every phenomenon be examined in terms of both its specific nature and its overall connection with other phenomena and processes. Just as, in V. I. Lenin's words, someone living in a society cannot be free of that society, so a socialist state that is in a system of other states constituting a socialist commonwealth cannot be free of the common interests of that commonwealth.<sup>437</sup>

Aided by the methodology of the dialectic, the Soviet leadership in 1968 reordered its priorities and restructured the hierarchy of Marxist-Leninist values in accordance with the current situation. This reordering enabled them to risk the loss

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<sup>437</sup> Pravda, September 26, 1968.

of one value (the approbation of foreign communist parties) for the sake of preserving another, more important one (the maintenance of Soviet control over Eastern Europe). This order or hierarchy of values was significantly altered from the formative years of the Soviet Union (1917-1922), when the support of foreign communist parties was needed to strengthen the fledgling Soviet state. The altered hierarchy is illustrated in the following passage:

Guided by our sense of the deepest responsibility to our people, our working class, the peoples of our country, the international working class and the world communist movement, we appeal to you at this grave moment, citizens of the republic, to rally around the realistic-minded nucleus of the party, to whom the cause of socialism, progress and the new post-January path is dear, to whom the cause of friendship with the peoples of the Soviet Union and the socialist countries is dear [emphasis added].<sup>438</sup>

It will be noted that "the world communist movement" is mentioned last as the body of people to whom the Soviet leaders felt a sense of responsibility. Protecting and preserving the Soviet Union's gains from World War II ("the gains of socialism") took precedence over the Soviet Union's desire to lead the world Communist movement. "For us," Brezhnev is reputed to have said, "the results of the Second World War are inviolable, and we will

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<sup>438</sup> "Appeal by Group of Members of CCP Central Committee and CSR Government and National Assembly," Pravda, August 22, 1968. Complete English text in Remington, op. cit., pp. 295-299.

defend them even at the cost of risking a new war."<sup>439</sup> As for the communist movement, Brezhnev orated:

So what do you [Dubcek] think will be done on your behalf? Nothing. There will be no war. Comrade Tito and Comrade Ceaucescu will say their piece, and so will comrade Berlinguer. Well, and what of it? You are counting on the Communist movement in Western Europe, but that won't amount to anything for fifty years[emphasis added].<sup>440</sup>

In one sense, then, Brezhnev and his colleagues exhibited detached, extremely rational behavior (as befits the analytic decision maker) by willingly risking the alienation of foreign communists in order to achieve more valuable and numerous benefits closer to their own borders. In another sense, however, they probably perceived that the two values were not necessarily mutually exclusive, but connected in a dialectical manner. The specific nature of the Czechoslovak crisis demanded that the Kremlin leaders not be "one-sided" by abstaining from military intervention due to a fear of alienating the world communist movement. Instead, the Soviet leaders most likely viewed in a positive way the connection between the intervention (a specific event) and the international communist movement (the larger phenomenon). In time, they reasoned, "comrade Berlinguer" and other prominent foreign communists would understand that the

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<sup>439</sup> Mlynar, op. cit., p. 241.

<sup>440</sup> Ibid., p. 241.

Soviet Union, in eradicating the "liberal" and "counterrevolutionary" virus infecting the Czechoslovak People's Republic, was acting in the best interests of all communists who were, after all, striving to achieve the same goal as the Soviet Union: the construction and preservation of socialism throughout the world.

They might have rationalized, moreover, that Soviet influence over the international communist movement followed directly from Soviet power over East Europe, their sphere of influence. Perhaps they believed that there is always a begrudging respect among weak political parties and states for ruling parties and large states who can act to achieve their values, however immoral those actions may be. From nonruling communist parties around the world, this respect for realpolitik would most likely be even greater, given the symbolic importance of the communist party of the Soviet Union in the international communist movement.

Other values or principles bequeathed by Lenin, such as democratic centralism, greatly influenced the leadership in 1968. In an editorial entitled "Defense of Socialism is the Highest Internationalist Duty" an anonymous writer wrote:

The chief Leninist principles of the organization of party life--the principles of democratic centralism and the party's ideological-organizational unity--have begun, in effect, to be violated in the CCP. The party has found itself on the threshold of legalizing factional groupings and disintegrating into "autonomous," weakly connected

organizations. Everyone who has studied the history of the Communist movement and who is familiar with V.I.Lenin's theoretical legacy knows well that only a Marxist party all of whose organizations and members are guided by the principle of democratic centralism can be viable.<sup>441</sup>

Yet, according to one of the Czechoslovak secretaries, Zdenek Mlynar:

The principal, and really, the only objective of the Prague Spring was the renewal of the existing system--not change in the control of power. Our ambition was to liberalise the Communist Party by subjecting it, through a number of new institutions, to social control and making it accountable for its actions. This meant pluralisation within the existing order...A multi-party system was, therefore, not on the agenda of the Reform Movement.<sup>442</sup>

By making the party accountable for its actions, the communist leaders in Czechoslovakia could only grow stronger as they better served the people, and the latter reciprocated by giving them firm support. Nevertheless, to the Soviet leaders any toleration of a diversity of opinions could only be a sign of weakness and lead to the loss of centralized control. In his post-invasion editorial, Kovalev wrote:

The first and foremost point arousing serious alarm and concern is the position in which the Czechoslovak Communist Party has found itself--especially because without strengthening the Communist Party and without materially ensuring its leadership role in all spheres of public life, any talk of "perfecting" socialism

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<sup>441</sup> Pravda, August 22, 1968.

<sup>442</sup> Mlynar, op. cit., pp. 138-39.

inevitably becomes fraudulent.<sup>443</sup>

At the Cierna nad Tisou meeting, Dubcek's lengthy and eloquent explanations of the Czech Presidium's intentions to renew--not replace--the Czechoslovak Communist Party were construed by the Russians to be merely attempts to disguise counterrevolutionary designs.<sup>444</sup>

The explanation for the discrepancy between the statements by Mlynar and the Soviet editorial writer can be found in the fundamental attitude of the Russians to government and society, and perhaps lies outside the scope of this study. In brief, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union is a misnomer since the word "party" derives from the Latin word "pars" or "half"; Lenin's conceptualization of the ideal Soviet government differed little from the tsarist autocracy it was intended to replace. Since Russia was originally composed largely of illiterate peasants, the small, centralized leadership came to symbolize objective truth. The tsar was God's representative on earth. Anyone who articulated ideas different from the those of the tsar was automatically branded as a heretic. Thus the Soviet leaders' residual attitude toward an East European Communist party that actually published

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<sup>443</sup> "Defense of Socialism is the Highest Internationalist Duty," Pravda, August 22, 1968.

<sup>444</sup> See V.Kudryavtsev, "Counterrevolution Disguised as 'Regeneration,'" Izvestia, August 25, 1968.

and listened seriously to ideas that differed from its own-even if only in nuance--signified that the leader of that party had run out of ideas of his own, and did not understand his duty as a leader to be strong. In short, he was considered both stupid and weak.

Presumably, one purpose of Marxism-Leninism was to ensure that the leaders of all communist parties never run out of ideas and thus be vulnerable to factions who expounded different, perhaps more original, ideas. With an elaborate set of concepts and hierarchy of values, the Soviet leaders usually have had instant reasons upon which to base their goals, and rationalizations for their mistakes. Equipped with unequivocal values, they likewise have been unequivocal about what they will not tolerate, i.e. what they disvalue, such as diversity of opinions as manifested by freedom of the press, a multi-party system, and so on.

In 1968 the Soviet leaders' firm system of values enabled them to set goals, the most important of which was the "defense of the gains of socialism." As leaders of the first socialist state and self-appointed "gatekeepers" of objective truth for the entire world communist movement, Brezhnev and his colleagues portrayed these nationalist goals as "duties" that the Soviet Union was obliged to perform in the name of socialism.

It is the common international duty of all socialist countries to support, strengthen and defend these gains,

which were achieved at the cost of every people's heroic efforts and selfless labor. This is the unanimous opinion of all the conference participants, who expressed unswerving determination to develop the socialist gains in their countries and to achieve new successes in their construction of socialism.<sup>445</sup>

The Kremlin leaders understood "strengthening socialist gains" to mean preventing the establishment of party factions and other parties. To strengthen socialism was to avoid stimulating new ideas and greater coordination between the communist parties in the Soviet bloc and the people; it was, instead, to erect and maintain a barrier between them. It was much easier for the Kremlin to control Czechoslovakia as a satellite if that country had a single communist party tightly linked to the Soviet Union through KGB personnel. Within certain limits, Soviet leaders stood to benefit from the unpopularity of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, since the more detested the Prague leaders were by their own people, the more likely they would depend on Moscow leaders, who could then use them to serve Soviet national interests.

In the selection of their goals, the Soviet leaders and their spokesmen perceived themselves to be realistic, and able to determine the most appropriate and practical means by which to achieve those goals. The building of socialism was, they explained, a "higher sovereign right of the peoples" than the

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<sup>445</sup> "Statement of Communist and Workers' Parties of Socialist Countries," Pravda, August 4, 1968.

strictly logical and "abstract" rights of a sovereign state.<sup>446</sup> Anyone who tried to interpret relations between socialist countries outside the context of the class struggle was out of touch with reality.

In the Marxist conception of the norms of law, including the norms governing relations among socialist countries, cannot be interpreted in a narrowly formal way, outside the general context of the class struggle in the present-day world.<sup>447</sup>

Marxism-Leninism also provided the Brezhnev leadership with a method of analysis, which it used to interpret the Prague reforms and later justify its ultimate solution to the problem. They formed or altered at least three ideological concepts: "creeping counterrevolution,"<sup>448</sup> "limited sovereignty," and "proletarian internationalism."

Despite the supposedly good intentions of the CPCz leaders, they were really "speaking on behalf of the rightist, antisocialist forces" in the country, or so the spokesman I. Alexandrov claimed. These forces were even more dangerous than those in Hungary in 1956 because they were more "subtle" and

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<sup>446</sup> A. Sovetov, "Sovremennyi etap bor'bi mezhdu sotsializmom i imperializmom [The Contemporary Stage of the Struggle between Socialism and Imperialism], Mezhdunarodnaia Zhizn', no. 11 (November 1968): 7.

<sup>447</sup> Pravda, September 26, 1968.

<sup>448</sup> Tigrid, op. cit., p. 124.

"insidious."

Every day brings new facts to confirm that these [rightist] forces are by no means concerned with correcting errors or with further developing Czechoslovakia along the road of socialism, but have taken the course of overthrowing the existing system and restoring capitalism. They do not say this openly; more often than not, they cover up their true objectives with phrases about "democratization" and declare their support for socialism....Such tactics...were resorted to...in Hungary [in 1956]. Now, 12 years later, the tactics of those who would like to undermine the foundations of socialism in Czechoslovakia are even more subtle and insidious.<sup>449</sup>

In viewing the growing crisis in Czechoslovakia, particularly the increasing freedom of expression in the mass media and accompanying lack of any physical violence against Soviet personnel, the Soviet leaders were faced with the need to explain plausibly why the situation was intolerable to them. They needed to describe the situation as "creeping counterrevolution" in order to justify sending in tanks against nonviolent people. In explaining the circumstances in this way, the Kremlin leaders led their own population to believe that a counterrevolution was indeed developing and that they--the Politburo leaders--had sufficient foresight to recognize it and destroy it before it progressed any further.

The concept of "limited sovereignty" was another necessary

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<sup>449</sup> I. Alexandrov, "Attack on the Socialist Foundations of Czechoslovakia," Pravda, July 11, 1968.

ideological formulation to explain and justify a hitherto unprecedented event, namely the intervention of Soviet and Warsaw Pact forces in a bloc country in the absence of military violence. It also solved the problem of finding a half-way solution between all-out relaxation of controls and a violent military crackdown similar to the one in Hungary in 1956. The 1968 intervention answered the question in other East European leaders' minds regarding just how far they could afford to go in their nonviolent reform movements before the Soviet Union took action. The events in late August, 1968 served as a powerful precedent for the other satellite countries, as the Soviet leaders most likely intended for them to serve. Finally, the concept of "limited sovereignty" or the "Brezhnev Doctrine" as it is known in the West, is merely a sophistic argument for the Soviet Union's position above the law. As explained elsewhere, the theory explains that the collective socialist will prevails over the individual will, or sovereignty, of each socialist country in the commonwealth. Yet the final arbiter of what constitutes the interests of the socialist commonwealth is the first and largest socialist state: the Soviet Union.

Third, the term "proletarian internationalism" also took on a slightly new meaning in the midst of the developments of 1968. In the Bratislava Communique the words "fraternal mutual

assistance and solidarity" took the place traditionally reserved for the words "noninterference in each other's internal affairs."<sup>450</sup> The concept of proletarian internationalism, like that of limited sovereignty, represents an attempt to justify violating the rights of an individual country in the name of a larger entity, either the international working class or the collective will of the socialist commonwealth. The substitution of the words "proletarian internationalism" for "noninterference" aroused the anger of many prominent foreign communist leaders, such as the Italian leader Luigi Longo and Spanish leader Santiago Carrillo.<sup>451</sup>

Given the Soviet leaders' genuine belief that they were acting in the name of, and for the sake of the working class, it is perhaps understandable that they valued proletarian internationalism over noninterference in other countries' internal affairs. If they sincerely believed that the Czechoslovak Presidium had lost control of its people and that a counterrevolution was brewing, then the working class of Czechoslovakia needed to be "rescued." If the Czechoslovak

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<sup>450</sup> Pravda, August 4, 1968. This fact was pointed out by Richard Lowenthal. See "The Sparrow in the Cage," Problems of Communism (November/December 1968), p. 19.

<sup>451</sup> L'Unita, September 8, 1968; Santiago Carrillo, Eurocommunism and the State (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1977), p. 132.

leadership could not protect its workers, then it was the Soviet Union's duty to cross Czechoslovakia's borders to offer help in this emergency. The Soviet leaders might have engaged in chains of reasoning similar to the one outlined above, using familiar Marxist-Leninist tenets to link means with ends and to compare options to their scale of preferences.

Finally, the Brezhnev leadership's careful gauging of the correlation of forces in 1968 suggests that it used Marxism-Leninism in an analytical, rational manner. Conscious of the ratio of forces operating inside the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Eastern and Western Europe, and the United States, not to mention in other countries, the Politburo did not immediately choose the military option except as a last resort. Inherent in the correlation of forces concept is the idea that there are many sources of power, and that the most powerful source can be discovered only by determining its relation to other factors. The Soviet leaders' understanding of this concept probably heightened their awareness of other options open to them by which to solve the crisis, for example economic sanctions and bribes, minatory diplomacy, negotiations, military maneuvers, disinformation campaigns, and finally, military intervention.

The concept of the correlation of forces also prompted the leaders to consider the costs and risks of a military intervention

and to take active steps to try to minimize them. It will be recalled that Brezhnev elicited a response from President Johnson on whether or not the latter would respect the Potsdam and Yalta agreements regarding the Soviet sphere of influence.<sup>452</sup> Soviet diplomats in all the Western countries were instructed to float the question of Czechoslovakia and to observe reactions to it.

Moreover, the concept tended to make the leaders more conscious of time itself as a force that could work for or against them, depending on their actions. Many participants and analysts have ventured to guess that had the Slovak party congress not been scheduled for August 26 (at which time many pro-Soviet leaders, including Vasil Bilak would have been deposed) the Kremlin would not have sent in troops that summer, but would have tried still other options, or combinations of ones already used. Once the Soviet leaders did decide to intervene, however, and Dubcek and his colleagues were "prisoners" of the Kremlin, they knew that time would now work for them, regardless of whether Dubcek signed the Moscow Protocol in the last days of August or the next month.<sup>453</sup> And, despite the fact that Brezhnev was unable to find

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<sup>452</sup> Urban, op. cit., p. 132.

<sup>453</sup> Ponomarev is reputed to have said to the Czechoslovak delegation "If you won't sign these documents today, you'll sign them tomorrow, and if not tomorrow, then the day after--we have plenty of time!" Urban, op. cit., p. 132.

a replacement for Dubcek right away, he knew that eventually he would, and that eventually a satisfactory "normalization" would take place in Prague. Dubcek was forced to resign April 17, 1969, and another, more politically ambitious Slovak leader, Gustav Husak, replaced him.

In addition, much like the Marxist dialectic, the correlation of forces concept enabled Brezhnev's leadership to make value trade-offs more easily, particularly with regard to the inevitable negative reaction of foreign Communist parties. Again they most likely reasoned that in time the negativity would dissipate, and that the world communist movement would not disintegrate. This was more or less a correct appraisal, because--although the long-planned World Communist Conference, originally scheduled for November 25, 1968, had to be cancelled--another one eventually met in Moscow on June 5, 1969 and another one in Berlin in June, 1976.<sup>454</sup>

### Conclusion

Contrary to Khrushchev's leadership in 1956, the Brezhnev Politburo in August 1968 conducted itself in a decidedly more analytical manner. The crisis developed gradually over several months (January to August), during which time Brezhnev and his

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<sup>454</sup> Valenta, op. cit., p. 67.

colleagues generated and weighed many options and attempted many possible solutions short of the use of force. The military intervention that finally occurred on August 20-21 was a last resort, in all likelihood. In contrast to Khrushchev's leadership, Brezhnev and others probably collected more information in an attempt to view the crisis objectively and to make the most rational decision possible. He did not merely repeat behaviors that worked well in past Soviet interventions, but experimented with new techniques when the circumstances called for innovation (e.g. the lack of any quislings with which to form a new puppet regime). He attempted carefully to "test the waters" of international opinion to make sure that the costs and risks of an intervention would not outweigh the benefits. His use of Marxist-Leninist concepts such as the correlation of forces facilitated his decision making by helping him to adapt to unexpected circumstances and to remain in close contact with reality.

## CHAPTER 4

### SOVIET INTERVENTION IN AFGHANISTAN

Unlike in 1968, Brezhnev apparently did not consult as many top political and military leaders in the Soviet government before sending troops into Afghanistan. According to Soviet politician Boris Eltsin, the decision was made by only four Politburo members: Brezhnev, Ustinov, Suslov, and Gromyko.<sup>455</sup> Former Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze denies having participated in the decision, which he said was made "behind closed doors" and excluded lower-level officials like himself.<sup>456</sup> Military leaders also claimed that they were never consulted. According to Marshal Kulikov (deputy minister of defense and commander-in-chief of the Warsaw Pact in 1979):

Around midnight, Ustinov arrived and declared that we would cross the border tonight. That was all. Who took the decision? The leadership--that is the one thing I do know. And you know who was leading then.<sup>457</sup>

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<sup>455</sup> Sergei Belitskii, "Authors of USSR's Afghan War Policy," Report on the USSR, April 28, 1989, p. 11. Eltsin made this remark during a preelection meeting of Soviet voters. See also Bruce Porter, "The Military Abroad," in Timothy Colton and Thane Gustafson, eds., Soldiers and the Soviet State: Civil-Military Relations from Brezhnev to Gorbachev (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 306.

<sup>456</sup> Izvestiia, March 23, 1989. Shevardnadze was a candidate member of the Politburo in the fall of 1979.

<sup>457</sup> Krasnaia zvezda, March 4, 1989.

Other members of the General Staff at the time claimed that they were indeed consulted, but that they opposed the intervention. Colonel General Dmitrii Volkogonov averred that Marshal Ogarkov was against the decision, as well as General Epishev (head of the Main Political Administration) and Volkogonov himself (then a senior officer in the Main Political Administration).<sup>458</sup> Army General V. I. Varennikov confirmed that both Ogarkov and Akhromeev opposed the invasion.<sup>459</sup> A caveat should be added that these statements could very well be self-serving, since no one would want to admit having been in favor of a decision that resulted in a foreign policy fiasco. It is perhaps revealing as well that these statements emerged only after the Soviet withdrawal of troops (in February, 1989), and that each of the four men identified with the decision is now dead. In any case, in comparison with the 1968 intervention, the Soviet decision to intervene in Afghanistan occurred without an extensive debate in the media of the bloc countries. In all probability, the crisis in Afghanistan was perceived to threaten the USSR more in a geostrategic, than ideological, sense.

#### Chronology

The crisis in Afghanistan grew out of antagonism between Mohammad Daoud and the Afghan Communists. The Daoud government had

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<sup>458</sup> Sovetskaia Rossiia, March 14, 1989. This discussion draws on Porter's research in Colton, op. cit., pp. 305-333.

<sup>459</sup> Ogonek, no. 12 (1989), cited in Belitskii, "Authors of USSR's Afghan Policy," p. 13 and Colton, p. 307.

signed a series of economic agreements with Moscow. In the 1974-1978 period, Soviet aid reached \$400 million a year. In return for the aid, Daoud allowed some Communists into his cabinet. When his alliance with them unravelled, he expelled them.

This led to Daoud's overthrow on April 27, 1978, when air and ground units controlled by the Parcham ("Banner") and Khalq ("Masses"), factions of the PDPA (Peoples' Democratic Republic of Afghanistan)<sup>460</sup> moved on Kabul. The presidential palace was stormed, and Daoud with his family were killed.

The Khalq and (more pro-Moscow) Parcham factions formed a coalition Marxist government, with Khalq leader Noor Mohammad Taraki as Prime Minister and head of state. Hafizullah Amin (Khalq) and Babrak Karmal (Parcham) became Deputy Prime Ministers. Over the next eighteen months, these three leaders would plot to kill each other. In the summer of 1978, Taraki and Amin managed to send Karmal to Czechoslovakia as Afghan Ambassador. They then instituted extreme Marxist policies, involving harsh economic levelling, taxing the tribes, and establishing atheism to replace the official Islamic faith.

The Afghan rebels began to resist violently. On February 15, they kidnapped American Ambassador Adolph Dubs, who was later killed when Afghan government forces stormed the captors' hiding place. In March the rebels seized Herat, killing hundreds of Afghan Marxists and about twenty Soviet advisors. The Soviet Union

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<sup>460</sup> The PDPA split into the Khalq and Parcham factions in 1967, and then were reunited in 1977 as a result of Soviet coaching.

increased the number of its advisors in Afghanistan to 2,000 by June. In early July an elite combat unit of 400 men from the Soviet division at Ferghana, the 105th Guards Airborne Division, was stationed at the Bagram air base, the key military control center for the Kabul region.<sup>461</sup> Rebel uprisings continued, prompting further increases in the number of Soviet advisors sent to Afghanistan. In mid-August General Ivan Pavlovskii led a military delegation composed of fifty officers to Afghanistan, where it remained for two months.<sup>462</sup>

On September 10, on his return from a conference of the nonaligned countries in Havana, Taraki met with Brezhnev in the Kremlin, where they reputedly discussed a plot to eliminate Amin. The plot later failed when Amin heard about it and escaped. Amin's supporters caught Taraki and later killed him on October 9. A month earlier, on September 16, Amin had named himself President and strengthened controls over Kabul and the countryside. The rebels' resistance intensified. Thousands of Afghan soldiers and officers deserted the Afghan Army of the PDPA and joined the resistance. Soviet advisors were being ambushed at random.

Soviet forces made one last effort to cooperate militarily with Amin's forces in early November, when a combined Afghan-Soviet operation was begun in the Paktia Valley, south of Kabul, against the largest concentration of insurgents. According to U.S.

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<sup>461</sup> Henry S. Bradsher, Afghanistan and the Soviet Union (Durham, NC: Duke Press Policy Studies, 1983), p. 107.

<sup>462</sup> Anthony Arnold, The Soviet Invasion in Perspective (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1985), p.81.

officials, the Soviet leadership tried for the last time on December 24 to persuade Amin to accept Soviet combat forces and to initiate softer domestic policies, but that, in a meeting with the new Soviet Ambassador Fikryat Tabaiev, he refused.<sup>463</sup> Sensing danger, Amin (with his elite guard and eight tanks) moved out of the Arg Palace and settled into the Darulaman Palace, seven miles southwest of the center of Kabul.

From the 11th to 15th of December, 1979, Soviet transport aircraft gathered in the Moscow area and opposite the Afghan border. From December 24 to 27, a massive Soviet airlift took place, with more than 300 transports delivering troops, equipment, and supplies to Kabul. Finally, on December 27, an airlift of roughly 200 flights by AN-12, AN-22, and IL-76 transports delivered 6,000 Soviet troops to both the Kabul international airport and the Soviet air base at Bagram. These troops led an attack on Darulaman Palace and the radio station. Amin was killed, because he refused to surrender. The Soviet advisors and troops disarmed Afghan Army units. Babrak Karmal was flown in from Czechoslovakia three days after the coup, and TASS reported his message on the take-over to the Afghan people. On December 28, TASS quoted Radio Kabul as saying that the Afghan government had appealed to the Soviet Government for aid.

#### Domestic Context

Between 1968 and 1979 General Secretary Brezhnev's power

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<sup>463</sup> New York Times, January 2, 1980, p. 14.

within the Politburo had increased tremendously. Having systematically demoted his main rivals, and cultivated like-minded allies, he was no longer merely "primus inter pares," but a strong personality in the Kremlin. Gradually, throughout the 1970s, political figures sympathetic with the military entered the Politburo, so that by 1979 an oligarchy or cartel of like-minded men resulted. As can be expected, the oligarchy tended to reach decisions without a thorough calculation of costs and risks. Having consolidated his power in the Kremlin, Brezhnev conceivably felt less need to build a consensus painstakingly among the Politburo members on each policy issue than in 1968.

Brezhnev increased his own power by demoting men such as Nikolai Podgornii (president until Brezhnev replaced him in 1977),<sup>464</sup> Aleksandr Shelepin (head of the KGB from 1958 to 1961 and later head of the Party-state Control Committee),<sup>465</sup> and Petr Shelest (Ukrainian Party First Secretary and full member of the Politburo, 1971-73).<sup>466</sup> He demoted Podgornii cautiously, by stages. First, he exiled Podgornii's associate Vitalii Titov to Kazakhstan.<sup>467</sup> Then, after forcibly retiring Mikoyan, Brezhnev assigned Podgornii to the presidential post. Finally, at the Twenty-third Party Congress in April, 1966, Podgornii lost his

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<sup>464</sup> Gelman, op. cit., p. 56.

<sup>465</sup> Michel Tatu, Power in the Kremlin: From Khrushchev to Kosygin, trans. Helen Katel (New York: The Viking Press, 1970), pp. 196-200.

<sup>466</sup> Gelman, op. cit., p. 248n48.

<sup>467</sup> Ibid., p. 78.

position in the Secretariat, while retaining his ceremonial post as president.<sup>468</sup>

Shelepin also lost his position in the Politburo, due to Brezhnev's sequential machinations. In September, 1966, Shelepin's friend Tikonov was demoted from his job as head of the police; in May, 1967, Semichastnii was ousted from his KGB post; Yegorychev was fired as Moscow city party first secretary; Shelepin was appointed head of the trade union organization; and finally, he was removed from the Politburo. He also lost his party post as boss of the Ukraine and then as Politburo member in 1973 apparently because he had protested the May 1972 Soviet-American summit.

In addition to his subtle but effective style of eliminating his rivals, Brezhnev's increased decision making power in the 1970s can be traced to his ties to the military establishment. He had served as political supervisor of the navy and as party secretary for the military industry under Khrushchev in 1959-60.<sup>469</sup> He was on good terms with political and military figures such as Dmitri Ustinov (Central Committee member in charge of the defense industry, although a civilian), Admiral Sergei Gorshkov, General Ivan Pavlovskii (Deputy Minister of Defense and Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Ground Forces), General Aleksei Epishev (political commissar of the Red Army), and especially Marshal Andrei Grechko. When Malinovskii died in 1967, Brezhnev helped Grechko obtain the

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<sup>468</sup> Ibid., p. 79.

<sup>469</sup> Ibid., p. 93.

post as Minister of Defense. From then on, especially after Grechko entered the Politburo in 1973, two men supported each other: in return for Grechko's political backing, Brezhnev deferred to Grechko's policy preferences.<sup>470</sup>

Brezhnev's dual membership in the Defense Council and the Secretariat also enhanced his authority. Since the Defense Council was a special body created to deal with defense policy, Brezhnev's position as chairman added to his prestige as a military leader. His chairmanship had political significance as well. Most of the Politburo members were not admitted to the Defense Council. Thus Brezhnev had an edge over them. He was able to draw on two sources of information.<sup>471</sup>

Adopting a martial persona had other, psychological advantages. By adorning himself with medals and acquiring the title of marshal, Brezhnev created an image of stability, rationality and respect, not only for himself as a leader, but for the Soviet Union as seen from the outside world. In this way, Brezhnev clearly distinguished his own behavior from Khrushchev's impulsive, "adventurist" behavior.

In addition to internal personnel changes and Brezhnev's intimate ties to the military, external circumstances and changes between 1968 and 1979 caused the military instrument to emerge as an important factor in Soviet foreign policy decision making (at least in the information-gathering process). First, ever since the

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<sup>470</sup> Ibid., p. 95.

<sup>471</sup> Ibid., p. 78.

decision was made in 1965 to increase military spending in all the services, the military-industrial establishment grew with a momentum of its own. Those who were connected in some way to it automatically became more influential. Brezhnev's power derived in part from his ability to capitalize on this trend.

Second, the four crises (Arab-Israeli conflict in 1967, Prague Spring in 1968, border clashes with the Chinese on the Ussuri River in 1969, and the confrontation with the United States during the October war in 1973) united military and political decision makers in an unprecedented way. These crises forced Politburo members to lay aside their traditional fears of "Bonapartism" and coordinate policy and military strategy more closely.

Finally, the SALT II negotiations in the 1970s also contributed to an increase in cooperation between policymakers and military figures. As one Western analyst observed, "The military leadership has exerted a strong, conservative influence on the negotiations, and...the political leadership--whatever its own bent may have been--has tended to eschew agreements that, in the judgement of the military professionals, might adversely affect the Soviet military posture."<sup>472</sup> Because arms control was an integral part of U.S.-Soviet relations, military leaders--in playing an important role in the negotiations--gained slightly

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<sup>472</sup> Thomas W. Wolfe, The SALT Experience (Cambridge: Ballinger, 1979), pp. 75-76.

more influence in foreign policy decision making as a whole.<sup>473</sup>

Some might argue that because the succession crisis was already under way, Brezhnev's power and decision making influence was waning. While this may be partly true, one might counter that the very existence of a succession crisis, i.e. a state of instability, further increased the power of the military elite, with whom Brezhnev was intimately associated. Moreover, in late November and December, just as the final decision to intervene was made, Brezhnev's health had deteriorated considerably. It is known that he could not work more than two hours a day.<sup>474</sup> Kosygin, too, was very sick, having had a heart attack in mid-November.

Who were the key decision makers concerning the intervention in Afghanistan? Several scholars have formed educated guesses. Barnett Rubin, who interviewed a former official of the International Department of the CPSU Central Committee who was working on Afghanistan at the time, reports that the Russian told him "the decision was made by Brezhnev, Ustinov, Andropov, and 'two people who are still alive,' presumably meaning Gromyko and Shcherbitsky (alive at the time).<sup>475</sup> Harry Gelman suggests that the members of the Defense Council were certainly responsible for

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<sup>473</sup> The increased influence of the military during arms control negotiations is not an inevitable development, however; in the 1980s Gorbachev tended to rely on civilian advisors rather than professional military leaders.

<sup>474</sup> Jiri Valenta, "From Prague to Kabul," International Security, vol. 5, no. 2 (Fall 1980): 123.

<sup>475</sup> Barnett R. Rubin, "Afghanistan: the Next Round," Orbis (Winter 1989): 69n.

the decision. He believes the members of the Defense Council in 1979 might have included Brezhnev, the premier Tikhonov, defense minister Ustinov, and KGB chief Andropov.<sup>476</sup> Other influential decision makers were probably the senior Politburo members Andrei Gromyko (Foreign Minister), Mikhail Suslov (Central Committee secretary and chief ideologue), possibly Boris Ponomarev (head of the International Department), and Konstantin Chernenko (chief of the Central Committee's General Department and full Politburo member since November 1978).

One can only speculate about each individual's specific motives for deciding za (for), rather than protiv (against) military intervention. Brezhnev asserted that a "hotbed" (ochag) of serious danger to the security of the Soviet state was created on our southern border."<sup>477</sup> He said later, however, that the decision to intervene was "no simple decision."<sup>478</sup> Of course, this statement may have been directed at US officials, especially to those involved in the SALT negotiations, in order to promote the notion that there were "hawks and "doves" in the Politburo. This idea had proved useful to the Soviet leadership in wresting concessions from American arms control negotiators. Brezhnev's assertion might also have been geared toward the Third World nations, especially South Asian nations like India and Pakistan, to improve the Soviet Union's newly tarnished image as an

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<sup>476</sup> Ibid., p. 66-7.

<sup>477</sup> Pravda, January 13, 1980.

<sup>478</sup> New York Times, January 3, 1980.

"imperialist," as well as toward communist parties around the world.

Mikhail Suslov accused the United States of "using Afghanistan's territory for provocations against the Soviet Union."<sup>479</sup> Andrei Gromyko also alluded to "those who wanted to turn Afghanistan into an American military bridgehead."<sup>480</sup> Some have speculated that Gromyko felt apprehensive about problems that could arise in relations with neutral countries, but one senior diplomat stationed in Moscow at the time said Gromyko personally favored showing neutral countries (especially pro-Soviet neutrals like India) that the Soviet Union honored its treaty commitments.<sup>481</sup> Victor Grishin, Politburo member and Moscow city party boss, gave a more ideological justification: "Socialist internationalism obliged us to help the Afghan people defend the April ("Saur") revolution's gains."<sup>482</sup>

Yuri Andropov merely said it was "necessary to protect the interests of our homeland," and omitted any reference to outside

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<sup>479</sup> Pravda, February 21, 1980.

<sup>480</sup> Pravda, February 19, 1980. A whole series of articles in the Soviet press charged that the United States was sending large batches of weapons, ammunition, and war material to Afghanistan. See, for instance: Y. Glukhov, "Proiski protiv Afganistana," Pravda, May 23, 1979, p. 3; A. Petrov, "Otpor vragam revoliutsii," Pravda, April 10, 1979, p. 4; A. Petrov, "Provokatsii prodolzhaiutsia," Pravda, April 10, 1979, p. 4.

<sup>481</sup> Interview cited in Bradsher, op. cit. p. 167.

<sup>482</sup> Moskovskaia Pravda, February 6, 1980, p. 2; cited in FBIS, Soviet Union, February 14, 1980, p. R22.

interference.<sup>483</sup> Some have found some esoteric meaning in this omission. Amy Knight, a specialist on the KGB, suggested that Andropov might have opposed or at least hesitated to advocate an intervention because of the obstacles it would create in implementing the campaign against NATO intermediate-range nuclear force (INF) deployment.<sup>484</sup> KGB defector Vladimir Kuzichkin confirmed that the KGB had serious reservations about intervening.<sup>485</sup> Zhores Medvedev objects, however, claiming that Andropov would have been asked to resign from his post as KGB chairman had he balked too strenuously.<sup>486</sup>

Other influential individuals in the decision making process were, of course, those who provided the Soviet leaders with information. Most of the men who provided information were military figures. In fact, as Marshal Shulman, advisor to Secretary of State Vance, posited, the "Soviet military chiefs" had "probably played the dominant role in the decision to intervene on such a large scale."<sup>487</sup> He said the chiefs of the

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<sup>483</sup> Pravda, February 12, 1980.

<sup>484</sup> Amy Knight, "The Party, the KGB, and Soviet Policy-Making," The Washington Quarterly (Spring 1988), p. 127.

<sup>485</sup> Time, November 22, 1982, pp. 25-6.

<sup>486</sup> Zhores A. Medvedev, Andropov: An Insider's Account of Power and Politics Within the Kremlin (New York: Penguin Books, 1983), p. 168-9.

<sup>487</sup> New York Times, January 16, 1980, p. 13. Jiri Valenta also asserts that military figures "played the main role in the crisis," unlike in Czechoslovakia in 1968 "where senior Soviet policymakers and key military figures alike were intensively engaged in management of the crisis." Valenta, "From Prague to Kabul," International Security 5 (Fall 1980) p. 125.

Soviet armed forces and the police were "likely to exercise even greater influence over government decisions than usual at a time of uncertainty over the country's leadership."<sup>488</sup> The prevalent role of the military chiefs seems plausible in the light of Brezhnev's close ties to the military, as explained above.

There were four prominent military figures involved in the early information-gathering process. In response to the massacre in March of 20 Soviet citizens at Herat, General Alexei A. Epishev, chief of the Main Political Administration of the Soviet Army and Navy, arrived in Kabul on April 6, 1979. (He had also visited Czechoslovakia in 1968 on a similar fact-finding tour.) Epishev was no doubt considered the ideal man to assess the military and political consequences of a deeper involvement in Afghanistan because of his prominent position with both the Military Council of the USSR Ministry of Defense and the Central Committee of the Communist Party.<sup>489</sup>

Four months later (August-October) another, more extensive fact-finding and planning mission was conducted from August to October by General Ivan Pavlovskii, Deputy Minister of Defense and Commander-in-Chief of Soviet Ground Forces. Pavlovskii had been Brezhnev's World War II associate and had commanded the Soviet troops who had occupied Czechoslovakia in 1968.<sup>490</sup> Pavlovskii and

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<sup>488</sup> Ibid.

<sup>489</sup> Mark Urban, War in Afghanistan (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), p. 31.

<sup>490</sup> Thomas T. Hammond, Red Flag Over Afghanistan (Boulder: Westview Press, 1984), p. 142.

sixty officers travelled throughout the country, deciding--in the event of an intervention--where to deploy which units.<sup>491</sup>

Later, perhaps when military intervention had become a probable, rather than a possible, option, Marshal Sergei Sokolov, First Deputy Defense Minister, was sent by the General Staff to Afghanistan to take control of all the resources that would be involved in an intervention. He provided and received (together with the Main Operations Directorate) increasing amounts of intelligence.<sup>492</sup>

Major-General Gorelov headed an advisory team that provided a ready flow of information.<sup>493</sup> In addition to these key information-gathering generals, military advisors were steadily increasing, so that by September, there were about 2,000 men in Afghanistan.<sup>494</sup> The Soviet advisory presence had become so all-pervasive, that in some Afghan ministries signatures by Soviet officials were necessary before decisions could be implemented.

Three other Soviet officials played important roles in the events leading up to the Soviet intervention: the diplomats Puzanov and Safronchuk, and lieutenant general in the internal police, Paputin. Aleksandr M. Puzanov, a 72-year-old exile from political struggles in Moscow in the 1950s and an alcoholic, had been the Soviet Ambassador to Afghanistan for at least a year

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<sup>491</sup> Urban, op. cit., p. 39.

<sup>492</sup> Ibid.

<sup>493</sup> Ibid., p. 40.

<sup>494</sup> Ibid.

before the crisis began.<sup>495</sup> He persuaded Amin over the telephone on September 14 that it was safe to accept Taraki's invitation to discuss Amin's desire to fire four key officials. Already suspicious of the invitation, Amin might not have even gone to the presidential palace, had it not been for Puzanov. Taraki, instead of Amin, was fatally shot by accident. Later Amin and his trusted associate Shah Wali accused Puzanov of complicity in the attempt to murder Amin, and of giving refuge to the four Afghan officials that Amin wanted to dismiss.<sup>496</sup> As foreign minister, Wali formally requested that Puzanov be recalled (on November 8) and a new Soviet Ambassador sent.<sup>497</sup> According to one source, the Soviet decision to intervene was made after the Politburo listened to a report Puzanov gave five days after he returned to Moscow from Kabul.<sup>498</sup>

Vasilii Safronchuk, a career diplomat, was sent to Kabul soon after the Herat uprising to give political reinforcement to the

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<sup>495</sup> Henry S. Bradsher, Afghanistan and the Soviet Union (Durham: Duke University Press, 1983), p. 83.

<sup>496</sup> These officials were: Mohammed A. Watanjar (Minister of Communications), Sher Jan Mazdooriar (Minister of Transportation and Tourism), Sayed Mohammed Gulabzoy (Minister of the Interior), and Asadullah Sarwari (Secret Police Chief under Taraki). Although all four were Khalqis, Amin grew suspicious of them when they sought asylum in the Soviet Embassy just after he seized power from Taraki in September. J. Bruce Amstutz, Afghanistan: the First Five Years of Soviet Occupation (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University, 1986), pp. 66-9.

<sup>497</sup> Bradsher, op. cit., p. 117.

<sup>498</sup> F.B.I.S., Soviet Union, January 11, 1980, pp. D9-11.

PDPA.<sup>499</sup> Some changes for which he was reportedly responsible include (1) Taraki's and Amin's attendance at mosques for prayers; (2) frequent meetings with tribal and religious leaders, explaining the PDPA's purpose; (3) cessation of the ineffectual land reform program; and (4) official admissions of past excesses.<sup>500</sup> From his close contact with the Afghan government officials, Safronchuk seems to have concluded that, if the Russians were to intervene, the whole Afghan nation would fight against them.<sup>501</sup>

Victor Paputin, first deputy minister of internal affairs, was an "apparatchik" known for his lack of education and stolid dependability. According to circumstantial, but unconfirmed evidence, he was ordered to remove Amin from power quietly. He seemed the perfect type to commit a political murder, since he also had an Afghan connection: in 1978 his ministry had trained the PDPA's security police. All that was reported about Paputin in official Soviet sources was that, beginning on November 30, Paputin--accompanied by a Soviet delegation--met with the Afghan deputy minister of the interior "on bilateral cooperation and matters of mutual interest." Paputin met with Amin on December 2 in Tajbeg Palace, and on December 13, he left for the Soviet Union

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<sup>499</sup> Bradsher, op. cit., p. 103.

<sup>500</sup> Washington Post, May 10, 1979, p. A43.

<sup>501</sup> Foreign Relations of the United States, U.S. Department of State, June 25, 1979, telegram, pp. 130-1, vol. 29; cited in David Gibbs, "Does the USSR Have a 'Grand Strategy?'" Journal of Peace Research vol. 24, no. 4 (1987): 374.

"after a series of friendly talks."<sup>502</sup> On January 3, however, Pravda reported that Paputin had died on December 28. One can infer that he died in Afghanistan. His obituary was on the back page, did not specify the cause of death, was not signed by any senior politburo members, and had no accompanying photograph.<sup>503</sup> Analysts believe that, either he was killed in the same shootout that resulted in Amin's death, or that he committed suicide, having failed in his assignment to get rid of Amin quietly, without implicating the Soviet Union. A third version might be that the Soviet leaders wanted to keep Amin alive in order to obtain an official invitation from him, and Paputin felt responsible for Amin's death.

When was the decision to intervene made? There are three main views among analysts concerning the timing of the final political decision to intervene: several weeks after Taraki died, in October; at the November 26 Politburo meeting in Moscow; and in the first week of December.

Grinter claims the decision was "probably in early October 1979, several weeks after Taraki died in the fouled-up coup sponsored by the Soviets." Yet he fails to provide any concrete evidence for this assertion, stating simply that "throughout October and November, President Amin and Soviet officials held

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<sup>502</sup> Bradsher, op. cit., p. 178.

<sup>503</sup> Ibid., p. 183.

heated discussions on the state of affairs in the country."<sup>504</sup> Zhores Medvedev also believes the decision was made in October. He writes, "When the President, Mohammed Taraki, who enjoyed Brezhnev's support, was assassinated [on October 8], Soviet intervention could have been forecast. In fact, the army had been demanding an invasion for some time."<sup>505</sup> David Gibbs asserts that "by August the Soviet Union was prepared to intervene, despite the potential costs." Finally, Nancy and Richard Newell assert that "Soviet logistical arrangements suggest that [the Russians] had decided to replace President Amin through military force not long after Taraki died."<sup>506</sup>

Most analysts who have examined the Afghanistan intervention subscribe to the second view, that the decision was reached on November 26 during the Soviet Central Committee meeting. Henry Bradsher believes that the "call-up and supplying of full military equipment...did not reach full preparedness until early December. The Soviet Union apparently decided on November 26 that Amin had to be eliminated and the Soviet army sent in."<sup>507</sup> Jiri Valenta, who conducted interviews with former officials of the Afghan

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<sup>504</sup> Lawrence E. Grinter, "The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan," Parameters, Journal of the US Army War College 12 (December, 1982): 58.

<sup>505</sup> Zhores Medvedev, Andropov (New York: Penguin Books, 1983): 169.

<sup>506</sup> Nancy P. Newell and Richard S. Newell, The Struggle for Afghanistan (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), p. 108.

<sup>507</sup> Bradsher, op. cit., p. 175.

government, concurs,<sup>508</sup> as well as Dev Murarka.<sup>509</sup>

Others believe the decision was reached on, or soon after December 19. U.S. Charge D'Affaires J. Bruce Amstutz writes, "The decision to invade militarily likely was taken only after the Soviets bungled three attempts between September 14 and December 19, 1979 to eliminate Amin by assassination."<sup>510</sup> Victor Paputin was sent to Kabul on November 28, after the Central Committee meeting. Since it is not known exactly what his purpose was, the possibility cannot be ruled out that he was sent to find a political solution to the Afghan government's problems, and only after all nonviolent means had failed, to kill Amin. Former intelligence analyst Anthony Arnold also believes the decision could have been reached after November 26, since the fact "that military preparations were going forward on a massive scale does not prove that the Soviet Union had abandoned the idea of persuading Amin to sanction the intervention; they merely reflect the Soviet determination to ensure military success whether Amin concurred or not."<sup>511</sup>

The writer's own conclusion is that the decision was made sometime between the November 26 Central Committee meeting and the

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<sup>508</sup> Valenta, op. cit., p. 126.

<sup>509</sup> See Valenta, "From Prague to Kabul," p. 130; Dev Murarka, "Afghanistan: the Russian Intervention: A Moscow Analysis," The Round Table, no. 282 (April 1981), p. 126.

<sup>510</sup> Amstutz, op. cit., p. 43.

<sup>511</sup> Anthony Arnold, Afghanistan: the Soviet Invasion in Perspective (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1981), p. 92.

December 19 attempt on Hafizullah Amin's life. Given the nature of Brezhnev's decision making institutions, it is unlikely that the decision was made at the Central Committee meeting, because of the large number of its members. A more convincing version is that the decision was reached either by the Secretariat of the Central Committee or by the Defense Council, but sometime after the November 26 meeting. Some Soviet officials who were present at the meeting said they do not remember any mention of a possible military intervention. Defense Minister Dmitri Ustinov was in Europe and did not return to Moscow until December 6. A key member of the Soviet decision making unit, Ustinov would not have been absent while a decision concerning a military intervention was being reached. Georgii Arbatov said he only heard about the decision to intervene from a Radio Liberty broadcast, but this might have been because he had had a heart attack and did not attend the Central Committee meeting.<sup>512</sup> Soviet Ambassador to the United States Anatolii Dobrynin was suddenly recalled to Moscow on December 10, possibly to brief the Kremlin on the likely costs and risks of an intervention where Soviet-American relations were concerned.<sup>513</sup>

Moreover, it is unlikely that the decision was made before November 26, because of the December 19 attempt of Amin's life. If the Soviet leadership had decided before November 26 to intervene

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<sup>512</sup> Joseph J. Collins, The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1985), p. 103.

<sup>513</sup> Valenta, "From Prague to Kabul," p. 129.

militarily, it would not have made sense to attempt to assassinate Amin on December 19. They would not have wanted him dead before they invaded. When this assassination attempt failed, the Soviet leaders must have decided that military intervention was now imperative, because now Amin was intensely suspicious of them, and could only be removed from power by force. They also probably decided to time the invasion for Christmas eve, when Western observers would be caught off-guard.

Finally, one cannot gauge the timing of the Kremlin's political decision simply by observing military preparations, since these had been taking place since late September.<sup>514</sup> It is difficult to ascertain the purpose of such preparations, i.e. whether they were to help the Afghan army to put down the rebellion, restore discipline in the Afghan army, protect Soviet personnel already there, or prepare for a full-scale invasion.

#### Image of the Opponent

The Soviet decision makers were largely ignorant about Afghanistan. To them it was a backward country populated by illiterate and religious tribesmen not ready for socialism. This image led the Russians to equate the Afghans' backwardness and lack of political sophistication with a lack of will to resist Soviet infiltration. Other stimuli, or perceptions of reality,

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<sup>514</sup> On September 20, U.S. intelligence sources detected "increased activity" by Soviet units near the Afghan border. New York Times, September 20, 1979, p. 10. According to defense correspondent Mark Urban, the 105th Guards Air Assault went on modified alert. Urban, op. cit., p. 39.

such as the Afghans' hatred of foreign invaders or their sincere adherence to Islam, were filtered out of the Russians' general image of the Afghan opponent. They may have forgotten that, although the British defeated them in three wars (1839-42, 1878-79, and May-June 1919) the Afghans fought them with fierce determination, despite their lack of modern weapons. In fact, in January 1842 the Afghans compelled the British to beat a humiliating retreat; the British lost an entire army.<sup>515</sup> (The British eventually regained control in the autumn of that year.) After defeating the Afghans in the second war (1878-79), British Prime Minister Disraeli's Viceroy of India, Lord Lytton, hesitated to assume de facto responsibility for the entire country, perhaps realizing that defeating the rugged Afghan tribesmen and governing them were two different things.<sup>516</sup> Finally, after the third brief war the courageous twenty-year-old Afghan king, Amanullah, pressured the British to accord full independence to Afghanistan.<sup>517</sup>

For analytical purposes, the Soviet leaders' image of Afghanistan can be divided into three parts: the perception of Afghanistan as a country, the perception of the Afghan population,

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<sup>515</sup> John C. Griffiths, Afghanistan: Key to a Continent (London: Andre Deutsch Ltd., 1981), p. 34.

<sup>516</sup> Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>517</sup> By the Treaty of Gandamak (1879), signed after the second Anglo-Afghan war, the British had gained two important concessions: the Viceroy of India would control Afghanistan's foreign affairs, and some Afghan territory (e.g. the Khyber Pass) would become part of India. See Amstutz, op. cit., p. 8.

and the perception of individual Afghan leaders.

The Russians' general perception of Afghanistan can be summed up by one official's exclamation: "If there is one country in the developing world where we should like not to try scientific socialism at this point in time, it is Afghanistan!"<sup>518</sup> Ever since the 1907 Anglo-Russian Treaty, Afghanistan has been understood to be a nonaligned country, although Soviet influence in Afghanistan did steadily increase in the 1953-1963 period as a result of Soviet economic aid.<sup>519</sup> As an Asian country, Afghanistan did not qualify to be a member of the "socialist commonwealth," and thus the Brezhnev Doctrine did not apply to this country. Moreover, to justify the invasion, the Soviet Ambassador at the UN Security Council cited article 4 of the Soviet-Afghan Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation of December 5, 1978, rather than the "limited sovereignty" principle.<sup>520</sup>

Soviet strategic planners perceived Afghanistan to be a traditional buffer state among the traditionally pro-West countries nearby--Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey (a NATO member). They perceived the Afghan people as humble and therefore malleable, in large part because they were devout Muslims. One unidentified Soviet diplomat in Washington described them as harmless:

The threat by Islamic fundamentalism has been very much

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<sup>518</sup> Cited in Louis Dupree, "Afghanistan Under the Khalq," Problems of Communism 28 (July-August 1979): 50.

<sup>519</sup> Amstutz, op. cit., pp. 23-24.

<sup>520</sup> Alex P. Schmid, Soviet Military Interventions Since 1945 (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1985), p. 131.

exaggerated. The Muslims, these are humble people. We have 40 million of them in our country, and we do not have any trouble with them....Nor will we be getting any trouble with them in Afghanistan. What do the Muslims want except a little freedom for their cult?<sup>521</sup>

This view of Islam as a mere "cult" indicates the extent of Soviet ignorance about the Afghan people. Since the entire region of Afghanistan, Soviet Central Asia, Iran and Pakistan is peopled by many separate ethnic groups (Tadjiks, Turkmen, Uzbek, Hazarars, Iranians, Pushtuns, Baluchis, etc.), it should have been obvious that religion was the only truly unifying factor. But only experience could show Soviet decision makers the folly of downplaying religion as a factor. Their treatment of Soviet Muslims lends insight into their perception of the Afghan people.

At first Soviet authorities tried simply to exterminate Islam in the Central Asian republics. They converted mosques into Leninist museums, reducing the number of "working" mosques to two hundred in all of Soviet Central Asia. But while this policy was generally effective where the Muslim masses were concerned,<sup>522</sup> the Muslim elites grew more fervent and conservative. Unofficial Islam today in the Soviet Union is as pure and unadulterated as it was before 1917, and [Soviet] Muslims living in the Soviet Union have never been accused of heresy (shirq), infidelity (kufr), or even of innovation (bida).<sup>523</sup> They are today intensely interested

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<sup>521</sup> Die Welt in FBIS, Soviet Union, January 15, 1980, p. A4.

<sup>522</sup> There is still hostility between Central Asian and Russian masses, however. In 1978, for example, a Tadjik riot against Russians erupted in Dushanbe. See Bradsher, op. cit., p. 156.

<sup>523</sup> Ibid., p. 39.

and well-informed about the Moslem world beyond Soviet borders, whereas the Middle Eastern elites know little about their northern coreligionists.<sup>524</sup>

When Soviet authorities failed to destroy this "cult" they decided, soon after Khrushchev's ouster in 1964, to try to use Soviet Islam as a tool to win favor from the conservative pro-Western states, such as Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Morocco, and Egypt. Now selected Soviet Muslims were encouraged to study Arabic and the Koran and were sent abroad to advertise the "freedom" of Islam in the Soviet Union. Foreign Muslims, too, were invited to numerous conferences in Soviet Central Asia organized by the Tashkent Spiritual Board, presided over by the Grand Mufti of Tashkent Ziautdin Babakhanov.<sup>525</sup> Two such conferences were held in the months before the invasion of Afghanistan: one on July 3, and the other in September, 1979.<sup>526</sup>

Official Islamic representatives were also used to pacify the Afghan people. Babakhanov, for example, broadcasted the following on Radio Moscow in Pashto:

The Muslims of Afghanistan for centuries have suffered the oppression of the foul order of feudalism, and now they have chosen the independent path of growth and progress. All peace-loving forces, first and foremost the friendly people of the Soviet Union support them...But the counterrevolutionary elements in Afghanistan who were deprived of their privileges as a result of the April revolution are trying to restore the regime of injustice

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<sup>524</sup> Alexandre Bennigsen, "Soviet Muslims and the World of Islam," Problems of Communism vol. 29 (March-April, 1980): 43.

<sup>525</sup> Ibid.

<sup>526</sup> Ibid., p. 44.

condemned by Islam itself. The glorious Koran says: 'God orders justice and decency.' U.S. imperialism has embarked on activities against Afghanistan and tries to distort the ideas of the revolution and to cast aspersions on friendship and mutual assistance between Afghanistan and the USSR. American imperialism is arming the rebels, interfering in the internal affairs of a sovereign state and causing bloodshed which is condemned by God.<sup>527</sup>

Yet this policy of using Islam as a tool backfired in a number of ways. First, officials such as Babakhanov expected favors in return for their "service," namely such measures as slowing down antireligious propaganda, opening new mosques, and publishing more religious literature. Soviet authorities knew that this would only revive and spread the fundamentalist movement they had discovered to be much more than a "cult." Given the demographic explosion of Soviet Muslims and the fanaticism of Khomeini's fundamentalist movement, they began to realize the riskiness of this policy.

Second, Soviet planners discovered how ineffective the policy was of using Islam as a tool when they sent their Central Asian soldiers into Afghanistan.<sup>528</sup> True, the non-Pushtun peoples (Tadjiks, Turks, and Hazaras) welcomed their northern Muslim

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<sup>527</sup> Radio Moscow in Pashto, January 29, 1980 (Ziauddin Babakhanov's talk at the Tashkent Central Mosque on the occasion of Mawlad--the Prophet's birthday); cited in Bennigsen, op. cit., p. 46.

<sup>528</sup> It should be pointed out that the Soviet armed forces are composed of men from all the republics, and that regardless of where they are stationed, units and formations are multinational. Soviet military leaders abandoned the practice of manning the armed forces on a purely territorial basis as far back as 1939. In the case of Afghanistan, however, it appears that a disproportionately large number of the Soviet troops came from the republics closest to Afghanistan. See Sovetskaia voennaia entsiklopediia, vol. 4, 1977, p. 290.

brothers. A "black market" for the sale of Korans was set up; some Soviet Muslims deserted and joined the Afghan resistance; and others became demoralized when they saw that "liberating" their southern brothers from "imperialists" meant shooting them. However, the Pushtun peoples (those living south of the Hindu Kush) detested the Soviet Central Asians, preferring to be occupied by Slavs than by the Turk and Uzbek "Untermenschen." They slaughtered the latter with relish.<sup>529</sup> It is believed that by February 1980, Soviet authorities replaced Central Asian soldiers systematically by Slavic troops, who were to serve for two years.<sup>530</sup>

Soviet planners had another reason for sending Central Asian soldiers, apart from winning the "hearts and minds" of the Afghan Muslims. There were so few Russians who knew anything about Afghan culture, history, or languages (Dari or Pashto), that Soviet planners were forced to rely on men from the Central Asian republics.<sup>531</sup> Also, the early preparations for an invasion could be kept secret if Soviet military planners could call up local reservists from nearby ethnic regions (Turkmens, Uzbeks, Tadjiks, and Kirghiz), than if they had to draft in too many personnel from other districts farther away.<sup>532</sup>

The Soviet leaders' ignorance of Afghanistan and its people

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<sup>529</sup> Bennigsen, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

<sup>530</sup> Kaplan, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

<sup>531</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>532</sup> Urban, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

is evident in their relations with individual Afghan leaders. Despite their view of the country as "unripe" for socialism, they seemed to think they could keep local Communist leaders in power by steadily pouring in more and more advisors and funds, thereby eventually running the country themselves. There were 3,500 to 4,000 military advisors and technicians attached to the military, and 1,500 to 3,500 Soviet civilians working in various ministries.<sup>533</sup>

The Soviet leaders initially perceived Mohammed Daoud, King Zahir Shah's first cousin, as the ideal client. His policy of accepting Soviet aid fit the Russians' long-term policy of establishing an Afghan client-state relationship, with Kabul dependent on Moscow for modernizing its economy, supplying its military forces, supporting its international political claims (especially regarding Pashtunistan), and marketing its exports.<sup>534</sup> In return for helping him regain power in 1973, Daoud appointed some Parchamites (the pro-Soviet faction of the Afghan Communist Party) in his new government.

But the Soviet leaders underestimated Daoud's determination to remain fully in control. He soon became alarmed at the dangerous concentration of these Parchamites in the Ministry of Interior. Once assured of his own power, he sent 160 Parchamites into the Afghan countryside to promote communism among the

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<sup>533</sup> Amstutz, op. cit., p. 387.

<sup>534</sup> Anthony Arnold, Afghanistan: the Soviet Invasion in Perspective (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1985), p. 42.

peasants (an enterprise reminiscent of the 19th century Russian narodniki). Daoud also tried to strengthen economic ties with Iran and Saudi Arabia, as well as improve political relations with Pakistan (ally of the US and PRC). From these actions, the Russians could see that Daoud's patriotism outweighed his apparent loyalty to the Soviet Union; he was no stooge.

Nur Mohammed Taraki was more to their liking: at least he was a Marxist. He was also willing to sign the twenty-year Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with the Soviet Union on December 5, 1978, which ended Afghanistan's traditional nonalignment status. (Article 4 of this treaty would later be cited by the Russians as the legitimate basis of its "fraternal assistance" in December, 1979.) But again, the Russians underestimated Taraki. They grew increasingly exasperated with him when they saw how disastrous were the effects of his policies on the Afghan population. He changed the national flag to a blood-red replica of their own, replete with hammer and sickle. He purged all the members of the Parcham ("Banner") faction, including Babrak Karmal, who was exiled as Afghan Ambassador to Czechoslovakia. He inaugurated land reforms that enraged the people, such as Decree 7, which granted legal rights to women and banned forced marriages and dowries; and Decree 8, which restricted each peasant's land holdings to 30 jerib (six hectares).<sup>535</sup> Meanwhile, large numbers of soldiers and officers were deserting the Afghan Army between April and August,

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<sup>535</sup> Gerard Chaliand, Report From Afghanistan (New York: Penguin Books, 1980), p. 46.

1979.

These actions strengthened the Soviet image of Taraki as a practitioner of what Lenin had termed "left-wing infantilism." Soviet diplomat Vasilii Safronchuk lamented, "We have been urging the PDPA to broaden its base...but [the PDPA leaders] will neither allow any opposition, [n]or do they wish to share power. Their idea about broadening the political base is solely to organize youth, women, and workers organizations, but those are all a part of the same political party. This is not broadening the political base...They are stubborn people."<sup>536</sup> The Russians blamed these extreme policies on Hafizullah Amin, who was serving as Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of the Interior under Taraki. The Russians still felt they could work through Taraki and persuade him to broaden the PDPA's political base, if only Amin were out of the way.

The fact that Hafizullah Amin was not only able to survive the assassination attempt on September 15, but profit by it, naming himself President of the Republic and Secretary General of the PDPA finally convinced the Soviet leaders that he was a dangerous risk to their designs. Not only could they not control him, but now he would in all likelihood actively resist their influence out of sheer mistrust. Yet sooner or later they knew he had to go, for he was worse than Tito: he had no popular support. Responsible for

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<sup>536</sup> United States Dept. of State, June 25, 1979, telegram, pp. 127-9, vol. 29; cited in David Gibbs, "Does the USSR Have a Grand Strategy? Reinterpreting the Invasion of Afghanistan," Journal of Peace Research 24 (1987): 373.

more than 6,000 deaths,<sup>537</sup> he resembled Pol Pot of Cambodia more than Tito. Their most serious concern was that he would betray the USSR, turn to the West, thereby undoing all their efforts to bind Afghanistan to the Soviet Union in the past thirty years.

The Soviet leaders' apprehensions were not completely unwarranted. Amin had studied in the United States for three years, in 1957-8 and 1963-5, in Wisconsin and New York. According to KGB defector Vladimir Kuzichkin, "The KGB had doubts about him from the beginning. Our investigations showed him to be a smooth-talking fascist who was secretly pro-Western...we also suspected that he had links with the CIA, but we had no proof."<sup>538</sup> While fluent in English, Amin spoke no Russian. He had visited the Soviet Union once, in May, 1978.<sup>539</sup> After ordering Taraki's murder (October 8), Amin tried to improve relations with the United States to a certain extent.<sup>540</sup> However, Amin had an authoritarian disposition; he had never approved of the American

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<sup>537</sup> U.S. Charge d'Affaires Bruce Amstutz wrote in a telegram, "It is hard to realize in talking with this friendly fellow that it was he [who] has been directly responsible for the execution of probably 6,000 political opponents." Telegram no. 7218, U.S. Embassy, Kabul, September 27, 1979; cited in Bradsher, op. cit., p. 121. Amnesty International charged that at least 12,000 political prisoners were being held in a single Kabul prison and that torture, including electric shock devices, was used systematically. New York Times, September 23, 1979, sec. 4, p. 2.

<sup>538</sup> Time, November 22, 1982, pp. 25-6.

<sup>539</sup> Kabul Times, May 20, 1978; Mohammad Amin Wakman, Afghanistan, Non-alignment, and the Super Powers (Kalkaji, New Delhi, 1985), p. 111.

<sup>540</sup> U.S. Dept. of State, "The Kidnapping and Death of Ambassador Dubs," February 14, 1979 (Washington, D.C.), pp. 42-3.

form of government. He grew embittered with the United States, especially after having failed his doctoral exams at Columbia University.<sup>541</sup>

Soviet leaders still had reason to doubt Amin's loyalty. If he could so easily kill his political associate Taraki, he could conceivably betray the Soviet Union and expel all Soviet advisors as Sadat had in the summer of 1972. As one commentator wrote, "Amin and his group, taking advantage of Taraki's credulity, weaved behind his back a conspiracy inimical to the people and hounded honest patriots and revolutionaries."<sup>542</sup> Amin would sooner commit suicide than betray Afghanistan, and he would sooner betray the Soviet Union than Afghanistan. He told American charge d'affaires Archer Blood that if Brezhnev himself should ask him to take any action against Afghan independence...he (Amin) would not hesitate "to sacrifice even one second of his life" in opposition to such a request.<sup>543</sup> The events of December 27 proved him correct, since he chose to fight his Soviet captors and die, rather than to capitulate to them. Despite their massive amounts of economic and advisory assistance, and despite Amin's lack of political sophistication, the Soviet leaders discovered that they could not make Amin yield to Soviet domination.

Babrak Karmal, of course, was altogether different. According

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<sup>541</sup> Amstutz, op. cit., p. 43.

<sup>542</sup> Oleg Golovin, "Of Friends and the Enemies of Independent Revolutionary Afghanistan," New Times (Moscow), no. 12 (March, 1980), pp. 7-9.

<sup>543</sup> Reported in Bradsher, op. cit., p. 118.

to Kuzichkin, he had collaborated with the KGB for years. Andropov had advised support for him rather than Taraki back in 1978.<sup>544</sup> The son of a high-ranking army officer, he believed the Afghan Communists should embrace any alliance available in the interest of the revolution. As a Parchamite he favored a tight alliance to the Soviet Union.

In sum, the Soviet image of the Afghan opponent greatly influenced the decision to intervene on December 24, 1979, because Soviet leaders had perceived selectively, screening out objective facts about the Afghans, such as their fighting spirit, their intense faith in Islam, and their innate suspicion of communism. This flawed image led Brezhnev and others readily to compare the Afghan crisis to the Czechoslovak crisis in 1968. It is significant that the Kremlin sent two military officers (Epishev and Pavlovskii) to assess the Afghan case who had also assessed the Czechoslovak case, suggesting that Soviet leaders generally assumed the two crises to be similar, i.e. that there were few unique characteristics about Afghanistan necessary or worth studying. Moreover, no Politburo members visited Afghanistan in the fall of 1979, suggesting nonchalance. All fact-finding missions were delegated to lesser military, diplomatic, and internal police officials. Finally, the flawed image is evident, too, in Soviet tactics and doctrine. The Soviet Union initially employed the same type of heavy weapons (large airborne and tank-heavy mechanized units) in Afghanistan as in Czechoslovakia in

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<sup>544</sup> Medvedev, op. cit., p. 173.

1968, which suggests that they overlooked crucial topographical details about Afghanistan. This employment may also suggest that the Soviet commanders thought the invasion would be quick, and that the sheer superiority in firepower would outweigh the lack of mobility of Soviet tanks.<sup>545</sup> Later, of course, Soviet military commanders were forced to change their tactics; they initiated attack helicopter operations and convoy missions, realizing a guerrilla war was likely.

#### Benefits/Costs/Risks

The benefits of an intervention were, essentially, those conditions that Soviet decision makers felt fairly certain would result from an intervention. The conditions that they felt the most confident about were the same benefits that accrued from past interventions, namely Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968. The most obvious benefit would be the extinction of the Afghan resistance and installation of a pro-Soviet puppet regime.

A second, more immediate benefit of deciding to intervene in December, 1979 (rather than continuing to send in military

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<sup>545</sup> Some might argue that the use of these heavy weapons suggests that the Soviet commanders thought they might be risking a confrontation with the Afghan armed forces. It will be recalled, however, that 200,000 to 500,000 Warsaw Pact troops and thousands of tanks were deployed in Czechoslovakia, despite the Soviet leaders' belief that the Czechoslovaks probably would not resist militarily. Thus it is more likely that the massive quantity of tanks and weapons were deployed in order to overwhelm the Afghans and cow them into submission. Soviet leaders had probably learned a lesson from the October 24 intervention in Hungary (1956) that two or three divisions were not sufficient for a successful intervention.

advisors for another few months) was that the timing was auspicious. The United States was distracted by the problem of rescuing the hostages in Iran. If the Soviet leaders waited, the hostage problem might be solved, and more attention directed to their own problem in Afghanistan. As Andrei Sakharov said, "The Soviet policymakers may have decided that it was now or never" to influence the situation in Afghanistan.<sup>546</sup>

A third benefit was the combat experience that Soviet troops would receive. With the exception of the border clashes at the Ussuri river in 1969, Soviet soldiers had not fought in a "real war" since World War II. They would also be able to test new weapons and concepts. As V. Matsulenko wrote in Voенно-istoricheskii zhurnal:

Flying in the mountains and above the desert, plus the real possibility of coming under fire by anti-aircraft weapons which are making their way from Pakistan to the bandits operating on DRA territory--this is a real training school....No wonder they say that after a month in Afghanistan helicopter pilots can be awarded the top proficiency rating without testing their piloting ability.<sup>547</sup>

The new weapons that could be tested included: the assault rifle (AKS), automatic mortars, self-propelled artillery, shells with needlelike projectiles, new types of cluster bombs, mine-laying and mine-clearing equipment, modified infantry combat vehicles, multiple rocket launchers, helicopters, a new tactical

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<sup>546</sup> New York Times, January 3, 1980, p. A13.

<sup>547</sup> V. Matsulenko, "On Surprise in Local Wars," Voенно-istoricheskii Zhurnal, no. 4, 1979 (J.P.R.S. 73677, January 13, 1980, pp. 49-50.

fighter (FU-25), and battle-management computers.<sup>548</sup>

A fourth, strategic benefit would be the new position of Soviet forces, which would enable the Soviet Union to pressure Iran and Pakistan, and perhaps create a pro-Soviet state in Baluchistan.<sup>549</sup> Moreover, by placing Soviet fighter-bombers or even Backfire bombers at key Afghan airfields (e.g. at Shindand and Quandahar), the Soviet Union would threaten the U.S. naval force in the Indian Ocean.<sup>550</sup> The mere location of Soviet forces closer to the Strait of Hormuz, through which the West's oil shipments flow, would greatly improve the Russians' geostrategic position. A fifth and final benefit of a successful intervention would be an increase in Soviet credibility vis-a-vis the other countries in the Soviet sphere of interest, strengthening its deterrent. Other Third World countries (e.g. Iran and Pakistan) would be more fearful and less likely to provoke the Kremlin.

There were many costs of a military intervention, the most obvious of which was the economic cost. Ever since March 1965, Brezhnev had repeatedly dealt with production disasters (due to bad weather, inefficiency of the centralized system of agricultural management, etc.) by throwing money at the problem. But by the late 1970s, not only was there no money to throw at

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<sup>548</sup> Professor John Erickson in Great Britain, House of Commons, Foreign Affairs Committee, Afghanistan: The Soviet Invasion and its Consequences for British Policy; cited in Hammond, op. cit., p. 178

<sup>549</sup> Stephen T. Hosmer and Thomas W. Wolfe, Soviet Policy and Practice toward Third World Conflicts (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1983), p. 160.

<sup>550</sup> Hammond, op. cit., p. 177.

production problems, but even military spending had to be curtailed.<sup>551</sup>

Secondly, there were political costs. Since U.S.-Soviet relations were already at a low point, the invasion would certainly put an end to detente. Specific consequences of the decline of detente (the details of which, of course, Russians could not predict) would include: the failure of SALT II to be ratified; reticence of Western (especially American) businessmen to trade with the Russians; the introduction by NATO planners of new measures to strengthen defenses; the strengthening of public opinion in both the United States and Europe in favor of the recent NATO "two-track" decision to deploy Pershing II and cruise missiles in Europe; and justification for the new Rapid Deployment Force (RDF).

Third, the Soviet image in the Third World would be tarnished. The Islamic countries would certainly construe the invasion as an "imperialist" act indistinguishable from Western "imperialist" acts. Perhaps as atheists, the communist imperialists would appear even worse than the latter. India, on the other hand, while taking an officially neutral position after the invasion, grew apprehensive about U.S. arms supplies to Pakistan. One spokesman for the Indian Foreign Ministry said, "We are concerned at the arms supplies to Pakistan because we know how they will be used (implying that they would be used against India).<sup>552</sup> If the

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<sup>551</sup> Gelman, op. cit., p. 87.

<sup>552</sup> New York Times, January 2, 1980, p. 14.

Russians had not invaded Aghanistan, the Indians would have had no cause for worry, since the U.S. Congress had placed a legal ban on any kinds of economic and military assistance to Pakistan, and had not supplied any aid since the Indo-Pakistani war of 1971.<sup>553</sup> During an emergency session of the U.N. General Assembly, 17 Third World countries in a draft resolution called for the "immediate, unconditional, and total withdrawal" of Soviet troops. This demand was repeated each successive year until the eventual withdrawal.<sup>554</sup>

The risks, or possibilities of danger or loss resulting from a military intervention, were roughly sixfold. First, the Russians could fail to put down the resistance and be forced to make a humiliating retreat, like the Americans after the Vietnam war. This possibility probably seemed terrifying to Soviet decision makers, after having gained international recognition and prestige from the steady stream of "successes" in the Third World. Moreover, if a state with a socialist orientation was allowed to collapse, other pro-Soviet neutrals in the Third World would lose faith in the Soviet Union. Second, as a result of a failure to pacify the Afghan population, the Russians could end up with an anti-Soviet, fanatic Islamic state on their southern border.

Third, a failure or less than heroic performance in Afghanistan could trigger the revival of a Muslim movement inside the USSR. This had happened before, in 1905. The tsarist armies'

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<sup>553</sup> Ibid.

<sup>554</sup> Schmid, op. cit., p. 131.

defeat in Manchuria spurred the growth of a Muslim national movement. Many Muslim political parties appeared after the Russian defeat in the war with the Japanese, including Ittifak al-Muslimin, Tangchylar, and Uralchylar in the Tartar country and Hummet and Musawat in Transcaucasia.<sup>555</sup>

A fourth risk involved the abundant poppy crops in Afghanistan. As Zhores Medvedev pointed out in 1983, "It was dangerous for the Soviet army to enter well-established centers of drug production and traffic. The war may continue for years in such places."<sup>556</sup>

The unpopularity of the Afghanistan invasion among Soviet citizens at home constituted another (fifth) risk that was probably downplayed. Finally, the risk that the United States and other countries would aid the Afghan resistance was probably not seriously considered. As argued earlier, Brezhnev and the other senior members of the oligarchy in all likelihood did not thoroughly calculate all possible costs and risks, i.e. "trouble shoot" their tentative decision in the late fall of 1979. They failed to anticipate risks that had not materialized after earlier interventions, namely the interventions in Hungary and Czechoslovakia. As confident risk-takers, they probably tended to review only their previous successes.

#### Goals/Policies/Commitments

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<sup>555</sup> Bennigsen, op. cit., p. 49.

<sup>556</sup> Medvedev, op. cit., p. 169.

The Soviet Union had two main economic goals in relation to Afghanistan: to gain political and military control through the use of economic aid, and to use Afghan natural resources to bolster the weakening Soviet economy.

Soviet economic influence increased in the 1953-1963 period, when Mohammed Daoud became prime minister on September 20, 1953. Four months later, he accepted \$3.5 million in credit for the construction of two grain silos, a flour mill, and a bakery. The Soviet Union reaped significant political benefits from the agreement, due to the project's high visibility, quick results, and humanitarian purpose. The two silos were the tallest structures in Kabul and Pul-e-Khumri; they were built within two years; and they increased the supply and lowered the price of wheat.<sup>557</sup> A year later, following the Americans' refusal, the Russians offered to pave Kabul's streets. Then, in late December 1955, First Secretary Khrushchev and Marshal Bulganin traveled to Kabul, offering a \$100 million loan for Afghan development.<sup>558</sup>

The Afghans began to lower their traditional distrust of the Russians, because of these and other aid projects, especially as the United States became the close ally of their enemy, Pakistan. In 1954, the United States committed \$21 million in arms aid to Pakistan, and in September of that year, Pakistan joined SEATO (South East Asia Treaty), and in 1955, the Baghdad Pact (later

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<sup>557</sup> Arnold, op. cit., p. 34.

<sup>558</sup> V. M. Vinogradov, eds. Sovetsko-afganskie otnosheniia, 1919-1969 (Moscow: Politizdat, 1971), p. 122.

CENTO).

But the acceptance of Soviet aid had repercussions King Zahir and the Afghan people did not like. Soviet specialists and advisors set up, maintained, and repaired equipment, and also supervised Afghan construction workers. After August, 1956, Soviet military advisors trained Afghan soldiers in the use of sophisticated weapons, both at Afghan bases and at military schools inside the USSR. The Afghans knew the Russians would take advantage of this opportunity to recruit officers for the KGB.<sup>559</sup> The all-pervasive presence of these "advisors" irritated the Afghans, who had always prided themselves on their policy of nonalignment. Thus, in 1963, King Zahir Shah asked Daoud to resign, and the latter obeyed. So ended the first phase of Soviet economic involvement in Afghanistan.

During most of the 1960s Soviet economic aid was cut back gradually, from \$44.7 million in 1967-8, to \$30.5 million in 1968-69, to \$28.4 million in 1969-70.<sup>560</sup> American aid fell even faster, as a result of growing involvement in Vietnam. The Soviet Union continued to provide aid to the PDPA.

The coup d'etat on July 17, 1973 brought Mohammed Daoud back to power, and although he tried to improve political and economic relations with Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan, the Russians maintained their own economic influence in the country. In 1977 Daoud travelled to Moscow and signed a thirty-year commercial

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<sup>559</sup> Arnold, op. cit. p. 38.

<sup>560</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

agreement. Earlier Soviet aid projects continued or were completed. The political and military implications of these projects were obvious, even to the Afghans. First, two north-south highways connected the Soviet Union to Afghanistan: one from Heyretan (on the border river) to Kabul; the other from Torghundi (also on the border) to Kandahar.<sup>561</sup>

Second, roads and bridges were made especially strong to hold Soviet tanks. The most important road ran from the Soviet border, through the Hindu Kush mountains, under the Salang Pass, at 11,000 feet elevation.<sup>562</sup> As one Afghan refugee in Pakistan remarked soon after the invasion, "We used to joke that the road seemed strong enough for tanks and troops carriers...We talked about the Russians rumbling down that road all the way to Kabul. But today it's really happening, and I cannot believe it."<sup>563</sup>

Third, Afghan airports were expanded, including those at Kabul and Bagram. Finally, in late October, 1979, a contract was signed for an 816-mile highway and railway bridge to be constructed across the Amu Darya River at Hairatan, near Sher Khan. The bridge would be the first direct connection between the Soviet Union and Afghanistan. This last project was completed ahead of schedule after the intervention, whereas other Soviet development projects with no apparent military significance fell behind schedule or

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<sup>561</sup> Amstutz, op. cit., p. 256.

<sup>562</sup> Ibid., p. 256.

<sup>563</sup> William Borders, "Road to Kabul: Tanks Rolling; Moscow's Aid Becomes a Symbol of Repression," New York Times, December 31, p. 6.

were abandoned.<sup>564</sup> In 1979 the Soviet Union was committed to \$500 million in economic aid, according to the CIA, and contracts worth \$200 million for programs that had been formulated.<sup>565</sup>

Soviet authorities also exploited Afghanistan's natural resources to bolster the weakening Soviet economy. By mid-1979, vital sectors of the Soviet economy were faring badly. There was a sharp fall in the grain harvest,<sup>566</sup> very little growth in livestock output, and a steep drop in the most valuable cash crop, cotton.<sup>567</sup> Industrial production in January and March, 1979 increased by less than 1 percent over the same period in 1978.<sup>568</sup> Moreover, the severe winter of 1978-9 brought economic growth to a virtual standstill, while the energy demand increased. Production and distribution of energy and raw materials, however, decreased. In the summer of 1979 U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union Malcolm Toom even asserted that detente was made possible by the faltering growth of the Soviet economy, now below 3% a

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<sup>564</sup> Amstutz, op. cit., p. 257.

<sup>565</sup> New York Times, October 30, 1979, p. 6.

<sup>566</sup> The grain harvest was so poor that the Russians had to buy most of their grain from the United States. The Soviet Union bought about 25 million metric tons of grain from the U.S. in the 1979-80 year, and approximately 16 million metric tons the previous year. New York Times, January 2, 1979, p. 14.

<sup>567</sup> See appeal to salvage the cotton crop in Pravda Vostoka, June 26, 1979; cited in Radio Liberty Research, "Soviet Economic Performance at Mid-1979," RL 224/79, July 21, 1979.

<sup>568</sup> Seweryn Bialer, "The Politics of Stringency in the USSR," Problems of Communism (May-June, 1980), p. 20.

year.<sup>569</sup>

There are at least three ways in which Soviet authorities exploited Afghanistan's natural resources in order to postpone solving their own internal economic problems. First, the Russians decided to rely in part on Afghan sources of oil, while allowing their own oil production problems in Siberia to fester. After many years of operating above the maximum efficiency recovery rate, the Samotlor field of West Siberia (which accounted for more than half of West Siberian and one fourth of total Soviet oil output) showed signs of levelling off in oil production by 1980. Other, smaller fields were not yielding much oil, due to transportation bottlenecks, soaring drilling requirements, and lack of equipment and infrastructure (e.g. roads, pipelines, electric power, housing).<sup>570</sup> In 1979, the Russians developed three of the five major sedentary basins (with hydrocarbon possibilities of 12 million tons or 90 million barrels of petroleum) in the Jowzjan and Herat provinces in Afghanistan.<sup>571</sup> Military intervention was likely to appear an enticing option to Soviet decision makers; it would allow full development and exploitation of all five basins. Since manpower is abundant in Central Asia, it would be much easier to transport them southward, rather than northward to Siberia. Since the Central Asians were already accustomed to the climate of the southern USSR-Afghan region, less monetary

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<sup>569</sup> New York Times, June 5, 1979, p. 5.

<sup>570</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>571</sup> Amstutz, *op. cit.*, p. 260.

incentives would have to be offered, than if they were to resettle in Siberia.

Second, because of the worsening energy crisis, Soviet planners were looking for methods of fuel substitution. For the Russians to use more of their natural gas they would have to shift the structure of their investment program. Also, supplies of natural gas from Iran had become shaky. In the fall of 1978 natural gas shipments from the first Iranian Natural Gas trunkline (IGAT-1) had been disrupted, then resumed in April, 1979 but at a higher price; construction of the second trunk line (IGAT-2) was cancelled by Khomeini on July 18, 1979.<sup>572</sup> Meanwhile, in Afghanistan, the Russians were buying Afghan gas for a third of what they were paying for Iranian gas.<sup>573</sup> In 1967 they had signed a protocol with the Afghans calling for the export of 2.5 million cubic meters annually up to 1985. The Russians had exceeded this amount at least twice since the intervention.<sup>574</sup>

Third, Soviet easy access to Afghanistan's rich mineral resources allowed them to procrastinate in building the infrastructure and industrial facilities necessary to develop their own mineral resources. Allegedly for security reasons, Soviet authorities induced the Afghans to prohibit Western geologists from exploring the northern regions of Afghanistan rich

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<sup>572</sup> Alvin Z. Rubenstein, Soviet Policy Toward Turkey, Iran, and Afghanistan: the Dynamics of Influence (New York: Praeger, 1982), p. 112.

<sup>573</sup> Amstutz, op. cit., p. 259.

<sup>574</sup> Ibid.

in mineral deposits, giving the Russians monopoly rights to explore, drill, and mine there.<sup>575</sup> Prior to the December 1979 intervention, Soviet geologists had downplayed the quantities of iron, coal, oil, chrome, copper, and uranium deposits located in Afghanistan, in all likelihood to keep them a secret. (The iron ore deposits at Hajigak, for example, are now known to be the third largest in the world, surpassing even the Mesabi Range in Minnesota.)<sup>576</sup> There have also been secret reports of Soviet mining of uranium in the Helmand province and areas near Kabul.<sup>577</sup> Moreover the Russians refused to buy Afghan products for convertible foreign exchange and insisted that everything be bought on a barter basis. In exchange for natural gas, fruits, carpets, fur, and minerals, Afghanistan received vehicles, heavy materials, consumer goods, oil products, and financial aid.<sup>578</sup> Ironically, much of the materiel "sold" to the Afghans was actually used by Soviet military personnel to fight the Afghans. In the 1979-1984 period, for example, the Russians "sold" more than \$718 million in trucks and aircraft--the same trucks that rumbled down the long road through the Hindu Kush mountains to Kabul, carrying Soviet supplies, and the same aircraft that bombed

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<sup>575</sup> Ibid., p. 258.

<sup>576</sup> Ibid., p. 260.

<sup>577</sup> M. Siddieq Noorzoy, "Soviet Economic Interests in Afghanistan," Problems of Communism (May-June, 1987): 53.

<sup>578</sup> Schmid, op. cit., p. 130.

and strafed Afghan villages.<sup>579</sup>

In sum, these preexisting economic objectives, it would seem, made the political risks and costs of military intervention in Afghanistan appear to be acceptable, since it would permit the Soviet Union to gain almost complete control over the Afghan economy.

The Soviet Union's main stated strategic objective was to prevent "encirclement" by hostile forces. For this reason, the intervention was generally portrayed as being defensive in nature, despite some of its inherently offensive elements. In the first authoritative account of the invasion, Alexei Petrov (a pseudonym for the Soviet leadership) referred to a "strategic arc" that the Americans had been building "for decades" with which to entrap the Soviet Union. "In order to mend...cracks [in the arc made by the Shah of Iran]" the United States sought to bring Afghanistan under its control, Petrov wrote, "but our country made no secret that it will not allow Afghanistan's being turned into a bridgehead for preparation of imperialist aggression against the Soviet Union."<sup>580</sup>

In Western Europe, unless the Soviet ideological campaign was successful, Pershing II and cruise missiles were to be deployed (beginning in December, 1983) which were capable of reaching the Soviet Union. China, having normalized its relations with the United States, made known its determination to modernize its

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<sup>579</sup> Noorzoy, op. cit., p. 60.

<sup>580</sup> Pravda, December 31, 1979.

military forces. Iran was openly hostile to the Soviet Union, and posed the threat of reviving Islamic fundamentalism among Soviet Muslims.

Furthermore, the United States exhibited a nascent assertiveness. Evgenii Primakov, former director of the Institute of Oriental Studies, and Genrikh Trofimenko ticked off several reasons for "the atmosphere under which the decision of rendering Soviet assistance to Afghanistan was taken": (1) Presidential Directive No. 18 of August, 1977, advocating the creation of the Rapid Deployment Force; (2) the intention of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization countries, made explicit in May, 1978, to increase their military budgets; (3) the United States' failure to ratify the SALT II agreement; (4) the intensified buildup of the US naval presence near the USSR's southern borders; (5) an active drive to modernize American strategic weapons; and (6) the refusal of Congress to authorize large loans or to grant most-favored-nation status to the USSR.<sup>581</sup>

If the Soviet decision makers' truly perceived a growing assertiveness in US foreign policy (despite the indecisiveness they discerned in President Carter), then it stands to reason that this perception further reinforced in their minds the urgency of the need to prevent the Communist government in Afghanistan from collapsing. If they did not prevent such an event, the West might

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<sup>581</sup> See Evgenii Primakov, FBIS, Soviet Union, January 22, 1981, p. A5; and Genrikh Trofimenko, "The Third World and the U.S.-Third World Competition: A Soviet View," Foreign Affairs, vol. 59, no. 5 (Summer 1981), p. 1031.

perceive the "loss of Afghanistan" as part of a larger trend in which the Soviet Union was losing its capacity to achieve and preserve its national interests in its own sphere of influence. This perception would then encourage American decision makers even more in their current endeavors, so their reasoning may have continued, and thus be extremely dangerous for the Soviet Union in a long-term strategic sense. Despite the general observation of an increasing assertiveness in American foreign policy, however, it is highly doubtful that the Kremlin leaders thought Washington would assist the Afghans in the event of a Soviet invasion.

There are other reasons why it would be incorrect to classify the intervention as part of a "master plan" or "grand strategy." According to Alvin Rubinstein, the Soviet objective was to neutralize the countries on its southern border in a region seething with tensions that the energy crisis had aroused.<sup>582</sup> Jiri Valenta believes the US deployment off the coast of Iran in November, 1979, was a contributory factor in the Soviet decision to intervene. The use of surprise, and the increased power projection capabilities do not indicate an offensive element in the intervention per se.<sup>583</sup> In fact, the surprise factor (in the actual timing of the invasion), according to Douglas Hart, was directed against the West where Christmas is celebrated, more than

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<sup>582</sup> Alvin Rubinstein, "Soviet Imperialism in Afghanistan," Current History, vol. 79, pp. 80-3.

<sup>583</sup> Valenta, "From Prague to Kabul," op. cit., p. 120.

against the Afghans.<sup>584</sup> David Gibbs and Mark Urban claim the primary reason for the intervention was to prevent the PDPA from collapse.<sup>585</sup> Henry Bradsher points to the "slowness of the Soviet move, not surging across the Amu Darya as soon as the 1978 treaty provided a justification, but waiting until Amin's regime was falling apart" as a sign that the Soviet Union intervened as a last resort, rather than as part of a master plan to acquire strategic assets.<sup>586</sup> Fred Halliday, too, implies that the Soviet armed forces invaded only to bolster the Kabul government, and that if they had invaded for offensive reasons, they would have withdrawn in the face of sharp international criticism. "If it is false to argue that the Russians entered Afghanistan because of marginal strategic benefits, it must also be false to expect them to leave in order to improve the international climate. They will only leave when the Kabul government itself is strong enough to cope with the rural opposition that remains."<sup>587</sup>

A few analysts have emphasized the offensive nature of the intervention. According to David Rees, the move was a part of the Soviet "rimlands strategy" or strategy of denying the West its oil

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<sup>584</sup> Douglas M. Hart, "Low-Intensity Conflict in Afghanistan: the Soviet View," Survival (March-April, 1982): 61.

<sup>585</sup> Gibbs, op. cit., p. 375; Urban, op. cit., 42.

<sup>586</sup> Bradsher, op. cit., p. 159.

<sup>587</sup> Fred Halliday, Threat from the East? Soviet Policy from Afghanistan and Iran to the Horn of Africa (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1982), p. 116.

sources from the Middle East oil-producing countries.<sup>588</sup> Bruce Amstutz stresses the strategic benefits, including the fact that the Russians "now occupied a huge salient of territory 400 miles from the Arabian Sea."<sup>589</sup>

While it is true that Afghanistan is the first country outside the Eastern bloc in which Soviet troop units have fought since World War II, the writer agrees with the first school, namely that the Soviet leaders did not act according to a "grand strategy." The reasons for this view will become more apparent in the following chapter.

#### Memories of Past Events

The Soviet leaders' memories of past Soviet-Afghan relations led them to believe in 1979 that they could easily defeat the Afghan "dushmani." Past Soviet-Afghan encounters had proven that the Afghans could be defeated, and that they would abandon their policy of nonalignment if no other major power except the Soviet Union would supply them with technical and military aid.

First, the Russians had fought and defeated Afghans or related peoples in earlier times, and on each occasion, they won easily. On March 30, 1885, in a major boundary dispute known as the Panjdeh Crisis, the Russians under Colonel Alikhanov defeated Afghans commanded by General Ghausuddin Khan. This dispute, which cost Abdur Rahman Khan several thousand square miles north of

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<sup>588</sup> David Rees, "Afghanistan's Role in Soviet Strategy," Conflict Studies, no. 118 (May, 1980), p. 5.

<sup>589</sup> Amstutz, op. cit., p. 45.

Herat, brought tsarist Russia and Great Britain to the brink of war. In 1884 tsarist armies had captured the Merv Oasis, which completed their conquest of the Turkoman. The Merv Oasis formed the boundary between Russian and British territory, and since it consisted of mere grazing grounds for the independent, nomadic Merv Turkomans, it served as a "safe" buffer zone. When the Russians announced that they had "decided to accept" the Turkomans' "request to become a Russian people," the British politicians naturally developed what the wits called "Mervousness."<sup>590</sup> Earl Granville wrote to Sir Peter Lumsden (British Commander of the joint Russo-Afghan-British boundary commission), opining that the Panjdeh did belong to the Afghans and that the Afghans ought to fight the Russians.<sup>591</sup> Although the Afghans fought courageously, they were poorly equipped.

The Bolsheviks had also discovered through experience that the "basmachis" could be defeated.<sup>592</sup> While fighting for their own supremacy in 1917, the Bolsheviks ruthlessly suppressed the Uzbeks and Tadjiks who were trying to exercise the very rights to the sovereignty which Lenin had proclaimed they possessed. In late 1917, a group of Russian railway workers, skilled laborers, and

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<sup>590</sup> Louis Dupree, Afghanistan, 2d ed. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978), p. 421.

<sup>591</sup> Lt. General Sir George MacMunn, Afghanistan: From Darius to Amanullah (n.p., 1919; repr., Quetta, Pakistan: Gosha-E-Adab, 1977), p. 213.

<sup>592</sup> "Basmaji" is the Turkish word for "bandit," but was adopted here as a synonym for a protester against unjust power, similar to the arabic "mujahid," the holy warrior who makes "jihad."

soldiers formed the Tashkent Soviet. Enraged Muslim leaders withdrew to Kokand in the Ferghana Valley, and on December 10, 1917 founded the Kokand Autonomous Government. The Russians of the Tashkent Soviet quickly attacked in February, 1918 and killed between 5,000 and 14,000 people.<sup>593</sup> The trouble was just beginning. In 1919, shortly after a Soviet mission reached Kabul, a revolution erupted in Bukhara, a state formerly under Russian control, but which resembled the states in India. In 1921 an anti-Soviet Pan-Turkish revolt started in Eastern Bukhara and spread all over Russian Central Asia. The revolt is believed to have been supported by Afghanistan, where the Amir of Bukhara had taken refuge.<sup>594</sup>

Meanwhile, Enver Pasha, the Turkish nationalist who was attending the Moslem congress at Baku, heard about the revolt and rushed back to Bukhara. Pasha perceived this revolt as an opportunity to create a Tatar republic. He planned to start a movement in which all the Turk, Turkoman, and Tatar races (of Mongol descent) would combine in one federation on former tsarist territory. While in Bukhara, Pasha was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Basmach Forces by the fugitive Amir in November,

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<sup>593</sup> Bradsher, op. cit., p. 14.

<sup>594</sup> Lt. General Sir George MacMunn, Afghanistan: From Darius to Amanullah (n.p., 1919; repr., Quetta, Pakistan: Gosha-E-Adab, 1977), p. 287.

1921. Directed by Turkish officers and allegedly supported by Afghan money and munitions, the movement became a grave menace to the Bolsheviki. But they learned through experience that they (as their Afghan brothers to the south had in 1885) could be conquered. In January, 1922, the Red Army was sent to Bukhara to crush the Basmach forces. Enver Pasha was killed in this battle.

The Soviet leaders in 1979 might also have been bolstered by the memory that Soviet Russia had successfully intervened in Afghanistan on three earlier occasions. By 1928, with the exception of a few skirmishes which continued in isolated areas until 1936, most of the basmachis in the Soviet Union had been crushed.<sup>595</sup> Those still alive took refuge in Afghanistan. The first Russian intervention into Afghanistan occurred in 1925, when the Russians seized an island by the name of Urta Tagai<sup>596</sup> and declared it to be part of Soviet Russia. The Amu Darya (formerly called the Oxus River) shifted course at the end of the 19th century, now lying south-rather than north-of the main channel. Most of the island's inhabitants were Afghans, but 1,000 Soviet Uzbeks had settled on it, including some basmachi, who used Urta Tagai as a base from which to attack the Soviet Union.<sup>597</sup> Just as in the 1980s Soviet pilots attacked areas in Pakistan, the base

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<sup>595</sup> Bennigsen, op. cit., p. 49.

<sup>596</sup> Also known as Yangi Qala, the island of 160 square miles is surrounded by branches of the Oxus (Amu Darya) River, which formed the boundary of Afghanistan as defined by the Granville-Gorchakov agreement of 1872 between Russia and Britain.

<sup>597</sup> Hammond, op. cit., p. 12.

for mujahideen, so in 1925 the Red Army attacked and claimed the island. Later, in 1926, the Soviet leaders decided to return the insignificant island to the Afghans.

The second invasion took place in 1929, when Soviet forces attempted to support the present Amir, Amanullah (who, like Hafizullah Amin fifty years later, had tried to impose liberal reforms on the traditional Afghan people too quickly and who was intensely hated as a result). Ghulam Nabi, the Afghan minister to Moscow had "pleaded earnestly with the Soviet government to give energetic support" to Amanullah.<sup>598</sup> According to Grigorii Agabekov, who worked for the O.G.P.U. (Unified State Political Directorate) in Afghanistan from 1924 to 1926, "it was decided to form an expeditionary force of Red soldiers disguised as Afghans" to "secretly cross the frontier and march against Kabul."<sup>599</sup> Thus, an invading force of about 1,000 Soviet soldiers marched south and captured the towns of Mazar-e-Sharif and Khulm. The campaign was called off when news reached the troops that Amanullah had fled in his Rolls-Royce to India.

The third Soviet intervention in Afghanistan occurred in June, 1930, and resulted from the Russians' pursuit of an Uzbek named Ibrahim Beg. Beg had repeatedly attacked Russians inside the Soviet Union and then escaped to Afghanistan, his sanctuary. He no doubt irritated both the Russians and Afghans, because eventually

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<sup>598</sup> Grigorii Agabekov, OGPU: The Russian Secret Terror (New York: Brentano, 1931), p. 69.

<sup>599</sup> Ibid., p. 70; also cited in Hammond, op. cit., p. 15.

the latter drove him north, into the Soviet Union, where the Russians killed him.

Thus, in almost every military encounter with Afghans or Central Asian basmachis, the Russians prevailed, and in three interventions into Afghanistan, the Russians experienced no negative repercussions. A victor tends to remember only his military conquests, and to forget the nature of the struggles which preceded them. The Russians, it would seem, were no exception. The Bolsheviks also learned the importance of propaganda to deceive the Muslims of Soviet Russia's true aims. Before coming to power, the Bolsheviks had recognized "the right of all the nations forming part of Russia freely to secede and form independent states." Yet, as explained above, they proceeded to suppress all forms of resistance among the Central Asian Muslims, despite their lofty pronouncements. (As early as 1916 the Muslims had revolted at least twice).

Another memory the Russian leaders had of the Afghans which encouraged them to think they could defeat the latter involved their perception of the Islamic faith. To the founders of the Soviet Union, Islam was nothing but a reactionary and weakening force. By paying lip service to it, they could subvert and divide the Afghans, who were already disunited by tribes and ethnic origins.

Lenin, for example, immediately recognized the advantages of paying lip service to the Islamic religion. In his "Theses on the National and Colonial Questions," he wrote that the Islamic states

(i.e. Afghanistan) "strive to combine the liberation movement against European and American imperialism with an attempt to strengthen the position of the khans."<sup>600</sup> Lenin thus acknowledged the fact that the khans were guided by self-interest and probably wished to remain nonaligned. The greatest inroads could be made by posing as the enemy of the Afghans' enemy, Britain. (Many devoutly religious Afghans were convinced that British imperialism accounted for the destruction of the Turkish Caliphate in March, 1924.)

One agitator in Soviet Turkestan, Kazim Bey, combined Pan-Islamic propaganda and cooperation with Bolshevism:

We are gradually winning over American opinion, the recent Anglo-Persian treaty (1919) has alienated American and French governments who regard it as typical British Imperialism and treachery to Allies. I give you my strongest personal assurance that Bolsheviks are real friends of Mahometans. I can tell you privately, but with authority, that Bolsheviks are getting ready several fleets of aeroplanes and much heavy artillery for presentation to the heroic Amir Amanullah.<sup>601</sup>

Another Central Asian propagandist wrote a pamphlet entitled Bolshevism in Islam. In it he equated communism to the common treasury, or "bayt al-mal" in the Islamic community, claiming that when Muawiya, the first Umayyad caliph, began to hoard money, he became a tyrant.<sup>602</sup>

Leon Trotsky compared Islam to a "piece of cloth which has

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<sup>600</sup> Vladimir I. Lenin, "Theses on the National and Colonial Questions," in Robert C. Tucker, ed. The Lenin Anthology, p. 623.

<sup>601</sup> Adamec, op. cit., p. 67.

<sup>602</sup> Ibid., p. 68.

perished." In a speech delivered in 1924, on the occasion of the third anniversary of the Communist University of the Toilers of the East (in Moscow) he said:

We can liken the present state of the East to a piece of cloth which has perished. When you look at it at a distance, its texture and design seems to be perfect and its folds are as graceful as before. But a slight touch, a zephyr breeze is enough to make this beautiful material fall to pieces. Thus we have in the East old creeds which seem to be deeply-rooted, but which are in reality only a shadow of the past.<sup>603</sup>

Because Islam was about to "fall to pieces," the Afghans needed the more civilized Russians' assistance and protection. This attitude of superiority (perhaps a Russian version of the White Man's Burden) prevailed as early as 1864, when the Russian Imperial Chancellor, Prince Alexander Gorchakov wrote in a memorandum at St. Petersburg:

The position of Russia is that of all civilized states which are brought into contact with half-savage, nomad populations possessing no fixed social organization. In such cases it always happens that the more civilized state is forced, in the interests of security of its frontiers and its commercial relations, to exercise a certain ascendancy over those whom their turbulent and unsettled character makes undesirable neighbors....<sup>604</sup>

Overtones of this superiority complex were later present in the first article to appear in the Soviet press following the 1979

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<sup>603</sup> See text in English in Isaac Deutscher, ed. The Age of Permanent Revolution: A Trotsky Anthology (New York: Dell, 1972), p. 238.

<sup>604</sup> See full text of the November 21, 1864 Gorchakov memorandum in Sir William Kerr Fraser-Tyler, Afghanistan: A Study of Political Developments in Central and Southern Asia, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 321. Also cited in John C. Griffiths, Afghanistan: Key to a Continent (Boulder, Co.: Westview Press, 1981), p. 38.

invasion. A. Petrov (the authoritative pseudonym) claimed that the Soviet Union was "guided by its international duty" in deciding to "satisfy" the Afghans' "request" and send a "limited contingent" into their country.<sup>605</sup>

Moreover, if the Islamic faith had been the Afghans source of strength for so long, and was now about to "fall to pieces," the early Russian leaders (and the Soviet leaders in 1979 as well) probably concluded that the Afghan basmachis could be easily defeated. Given the Afghans' natural divisiveness, the Islamic faith was the only unifying force, and with its absence would come a loss of any sense of patriotism, hence less chance of fierce resistance to a Russian attack. Not only would the use of force be effective in subduing them, but--it was reasoned--physical force was the only thing the Afghans would understand or respect. In a later portion of his memorandum, Prince Gorchakov continued:

If we content ourselves with chastizing the freebooters and then retire, the lesson is soon forgotten. Retreat is ascribed to weakness, for Asiatics respect only visible and palpable force; that arising from the exercise of reason and a regard for the interests of civilization has as yet no hold on them.<sup>606</sup>

The Kremlin leaders also thought the Soviet Army could defeat the Afghans because they did not think the latter would receive significant outside aid, at least not sophisticated weapons such

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<sup>605</sup> A. Petrov, "K Sobytiyam v Afganistane," Pravda, December 31, 1979, p. 4.

<sup>606</sup> Ibid.

as the heat-seeking Stingers from the United States.<sup>607</sup> This was possible to conclude, judging from Afghan leaders' traditional aloofness from powerful nations and hesitancy to accept excessive aid from any one strong nation. Soviet leaders observed that Afghan leaders would not allow their country to be deeply influenced by the Soviet Union until there was no other major power--preferably located far from Afghanistan--that would help them, or at least sufficiently threaten the Soviet Union. First, as a buffer state, it managed to keep both Britain and Russia at bay, while they played the "Great Game." Afghan leaders learned that this policy of bi-tarafi ("without sides") allowed them to receive aid from both countries.<sup>608</sup> While Britain was certainly not an ally, it provided a valuable service as a deterrent to Soviet encroachment.

Abdur Rahman Khan, who ruled from 1880 to 1901, was intensely suspicious of the Russians, and advised his son and successor, "Never trust the Russians."<sup>609</sup> Amanullah, who ruled from 1919 to 1929, was dazzled after a trip to Europe, and decided to accept Russian aid to modernize his country. But even then he turned to

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<sup>607</sup> A strong argument can be made, of course, that without the Stingers the Afghans would indeed have been defeated.

<sup>608</sup> Rudyard Kipling expressed this policy nicely in his "Ballad of the King's Mercy":

Abdur Rahman, the Durani Chief,  
of him is the story told.  
He has opened his mouth to the North  
and the South, and they have  
stuffed his mouth with gold.

<sup>609</sup> Hammond, op. cit., p. 1.

the Russians only when he knew that both Germany and Britain would not supply the personnel and equipment he needed to build up an air force.<sup>610</sup> He grew quickly disillusioned by the Russians' suppression of Central Asian Muslims. Muhammad Nadir (1929-1933) and Muhammad Zahir (1933-1973) allowed the Germans--who called the Afghans "original Aryans"--to become the most influential foreign group in Afghanistan prior to, and during, World War II.<sup>611</sup> But the younger, up-and-coming Afghan politicians lost confidence in the Germans when they concluded, in the autumn of 1942, that the Axis would probably lose the war. Mohammed Daud, King Zahir's cousin, especially hated the Nazis for their murder of his father, Abdul Aziz, in Berlin.<sup>612</sup>

Immediately after the war, the United States began to send economic aid to Afghanistan, and once again the Afghans practiced bi-tarafi. But they were angered in 1954, when the United States' signed the Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement with their enemy, Pakistan, and supported a Turkish-Pakistani military alliance. Furthermore, while the United States did provide economic assistance, it was not nearly as substantial as the aid provided by the Soviet Union, which was conducting a vigorous foreign aid

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<sup>610</sup> Adamec, op. cit., p. 111.

<sup>611</sup> Dupree, op. cit., p. 478. German foreign minister Herbert Schworbel boasted that "in the entire country there is not a single English merchant nor an English specialist--just as there is not a single Soviet merchant or specialist--Germany is represented in education and dominates in the technical field, in construction, and agriculture..." Adamec. op. cit., p. 219.

<sup>612</sup> U.S. State Dept. telegram by Cornelius Engert, as quoted in Adamec, op. cit., p. 259.

program with India, Burma, and Indonesia as well as with Afghanistan. In 1953, Mohammed Daoud, as prime minister, inaugurated programs involving Soviet assistance; Soviet aid increased steadily after he became leader of Afghanistan in 1973, and especially after the Saur ("April") Revolution in 1978.

By the late 1950s, there were no other major powers with which the Soviet leaders had to vie for power and influence in Afghanistan, which was now universally recognized as a country in the Soviet sphere of influence. With the advent of nuclear weapons, the "rules of the game" could not be broken without disastrous consequences. Afghanistan could not play one power off another, or shun all foreign influence, as easily as before. It was a player in the Soviet game whether it acknowledged that fact or not. Abdur Rahman Khan was prophetic when he said Russia was "like an elephant who examines a spot thoroughly before he once places his foot down upon it, and when he once places his foot there, there is no going back."<sup>613</sup>

In sum, the Soviet leaders based their conclusions about the likelihood of Afghans receiving outside assistance upon observations of past trends in Afghanistan's history. What they discounted, however, was the Afghans' intense hatred of military invasions. If foreigners were going to interfere in Afghanistan's internal affairs, it was preferable--in the Afghans' view--that the interference take the form of excessive economic aid or

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<sup>613</sup> quoted in Arnold Fletcher, Afghanistan: Highway of Conquest (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1965), p. 157.

weapons by which to repel invaders (e.g. heat-seeking missiles or Stingers), rather than of foreign troops. The Russians also discounted the ability of U.S. decision makers to observe--and learn from--trends in Soviet foreign policy. The latter concluded that the Russians had not been given any "taps on the wrist" for their military interventions between 1956 and 1979, and were determined to do something about it.

### International Politics

In the months preceding the Soviet decision to intervene militarily in Afghanistan, Soviet relations with other major countries had been steadily worsening. This fact might have encouraged Soviet leaders to think that they had nothing to lose by invading.

### United States

The Kremlin's relations with the Carter Administration, for example, were already strained. Soviet leaders perceived Jimmy Carter as a vacillating leader because of his inconsistency in dealing with them, as well as his inability to control his own subordinates. Given the importance Kremlin leaders have always placed on "democratic centralism," the perception of a divided White House must have been immensely reassuring for them. Moreover, their perception of the United States' traditional lack of interest in Afghanistan led them to discount--in their pre-invasion calculations--the Americans' likely reactions to their decision.

Signs of the American president's vacillation were plentiful. Kremlin leaders must have been amused, for example, when Carter told reporters in the White House's Briefing Room on September 7 that he "considered the presence of a Soviet combat brigade in Cuba to be a very serious matter" and that "the status quo is not acceptable."<sup>614</sup> Carter also broached the subject during his talks with Brezhnev in Vienna.<sup>615</sup> (Actually, this combat unit had been in Cuba since 1976.<sup>616</sup> ) But two months earlier, upon receipt of a letter from Senator Richard Stone, who first brought up the matter, Carter had Secretary of State Vance reply:

There is no evidence of any substantial increase of the Soviet military presence in Cuba over the past several years or of the presence of a Soviet military base. Apart from a military group that has been advising the Cuban Armed Forces for fifteen years or more, our intelligence does not warrant the conclusion that there are any other significant Soviet forces in Cuba.<sup>617</sup>

The President about-faced again on October 1 when he accepted the brigade's presence.

Secondly, the Soviet leadership was dubious about Carter's leadership abilities because he was failing miserably to rally support for the SALT II treaty. It was difficult for them to

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<sup>614</sup> Department of State Bulletin, October 1979, vol. 79, no. 2031, p. 63; President Carter's remarks of September 7, 1979; text from Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents of September 10, 1979.

<sup>615</sup> Ibid., p. 63, Secretary of State Vance's letter of July 27, 1979.

<sup>616</sup> Ibid., p. 63. Department statement of August 31, 1979, read to news correspondents by spokesman Hodding Carter III.

<sup>617</sup> Ibid., p. 63.

believe the American President could not easily get a treaty approved. (One Soviet leader told a visiting congressional delegation in the winter of 1978-79 he was sure that President Carter would have decisive influence over the Democratic senators' SALT votes, since he and the Democratic party leadership had control of party campaign funds!)<sup>618</sup> In the beginning of the year 1979, opposition to the treaty was not particularly strong, but the president's unwillingness or inability to exercise political leadership allowed some oppositionists to fill the press with anti-SALT arguments. Arguments in support of the treaty were not reaching the public.<sup>619</sup> Thus the opposition, led by Republican senators, grew steadily stronger and more vehement over the spring and fall of 1979, softened only temporarily by the Iranian hostage crisis. On January 19 three Republican senators joined the Senate Foreign Relations Committee: conservatives Jesse Helms and Richard Lugar and moderate S. I. Hayakawa.<sup>620</sup> A few days later former SALT delegation member Paul Nitze's disapproval of the treaty became known.<sup>621</sup> On February 4 Republican leaders met in Easton, Maryland and agreed that the party should abandon its traditional bipartisanship in foreign policy and make the overall Soviet

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<sup>618</sup> Gelman book, op. cit., p. 136.

<sup>619</sup> See analysis by Fred Warner Neal, New York Times, January 22, 1979, p. 21.

<sup>620</sup> New York Times, January 19, 1979, p. 6.

<sup>621</sup> New York Times, January 21, 1979, sec. 4, p. 21.

conduct the key to negotiating on arms control.<sup>622</sup> A free-for-all ensued, vaguely reminiscent of Wilson's struggle with Republicans over ratification of the Treaty of Versailles. In general, the treaty was criticized for not going far enough in limiting nuclear arsenals, and as being impossible to verify because of the loss of American listening posts in Iran.<sup>623</sup>

The seizure of U.S. embassy officials in Teheran on November 4 further reinforced Soviet perceptions of an American crisis of leadership. Comments in the Soviet press regarding the crisis were at first cautious. Pravda on November 6 simply reported that hostages had been taken.<sup>624</sup> Later, on November 23 in Bonn, Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko said:

We support the international convention requiring respect for diplomatic immunity for those who represent their governments abroad. This is the stand we have adopted, and when the matter was brought before the Security Council we made it known to the governments of the United States and Iran. I would like to express the hope that this affair will be resolved to the mutual satisfaction of both parties. But the parties, including the United States, must display restraint and clear-headedness so as not to allow emotions to spill across borders.<sup>625</sup>

Once it became clear, however, that Washington would not retaliate immediately, and that the Iranian government would not release the hostages, Soviet commentators criticized the U.S. position more harshly. One reporter in Pravda accused the U.S. of

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<sup>622</sup> New York Times, February 4, 1979, p. 1.

<sup>623</sup> New York Times, March 9, 1979, p. 5.

<sup>624</sup> Pravda, November 6, 1979, p. 5.

<sup>625</sup> Izvestiia, November 25, 1979.

intensifying its military pressure on Iran in preparation for an invasion.<sup>626</sup> A military official scored the Pentagon for considering several "military variants" in dealing with Iran.<sup>627</sup> Moscow permitted Iranian exiles in Baku to broadcast anti-Shah and anti-CIA polemics.<sup>628</sup> Finally, an authoritative editorial in Pravda (signed by the imaginary A. Petrov) on December 5 stated:

It is indisputable that, taken by itself, the seizure of the American Embassy cannot be justified in view of the international convention concerning diplomatic immunities and privileges. One must not, however, judge this act in isolation from the general context of American-Iranian relations, or forget about those activities of the U.S. vis-a-vis Iran that in no sense can be reconciled with (international) law and morals.<sup>629</sup>

In short, Soviet leaders observed Washington's timidity and clumsiness in managing the Iranian hostage crisis, epitomized by the abortive rescue attempt on April 25, 1980. (The crisis finally ended 444 days later, on January 20, 1981.) They probably reasoned that, if the United States was hesitant to use force even to rescue its own diplomats, chances were almost nil that the Carter Administration would retaliate forcefully or decisively against the Soviet Union for invading Afghanistan.

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<sup>626</sup> Arkady Maslennikov, "Opasnaia aktivnost'" [Dangerous Activity] Pravda, November 28, 1979, p. 5.

<sup>627</sup> Captain V. Pustov, "Politika kanonerok v sovremennom oblich'e," [Gunboat Politics in a Contemporary Context] Krasnaia Zvezda, December 2, 1979.

<sup>628</sup> Bernard Gwertzman, "In Kabul Coup and Teheran, Soviets Pursue Old Ambitions," New York Times, December 30, 1989, sec. 4, p. 1.

<sup>629</sup> A. Petrov, "Proiavliat' blagorazumie i sderzhannost'," [Display wisdom and restraint] Pravda, December 5, 1979.

Besides, the United States had never had particularly intimate relations with Afghanistan, a nation so obviously in the Russians' "backyard." In the 1950s the US declined to involve itself heavily in Afghanistan for fear of antagonizing the Soviet Union.<sup>630</sup> During the 1960s the U.S. officials-disillusioned by the Vietnam debacle-recoiled at the thought of becoming involved in South Asia. In 1979, trade between the two countries was rather mundane: dried fruits, wool, carpets, and semi-precious stones were exported by Afghanistan to the U.S.(worth \$14 million), while cigarettes, used clothing, and fertilizer reached Afghanistan from the U.S. (\$18 million).<sup>631</sup> Washington never perceived Taraki or Amin as "Asian Titos," since they lacked solid popular support, and-while avowedly nonaligned-were accepting Soviet aid readily.

After the April 1978 coup the U.S. government continued to provide aid, since it was not officially clear whether, or to what extent, the Russians had influenced the coup.<sup>632</sup> The real watershed in U.S.-Afghan relations occurred on February 4, 1979, when Ambassador Adolph Dubs was kidnapped by four armed terrorists

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<sup>630</sup> Stephen T. Hosmer and Thomas W. Wolfe, Soviet Policy and Practice Toward Third World Conflicts (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1983), p. 157.

<sup>631</sup> New York Times, January 30, 1980, sec. A, p. 12.

<sup>632</sup> Of course, indirect signs of Soviet influence abounded. Afghan military personnel had received training in the Soviet Union. The Soviet leadership had encouraged the union of the Khalq and Parcham factions, without which a coup would have been impossible. Soviet officers had been observed working with the Afghan armored units who seized Kabul airport early in the coup. Also, Soviet advisors helped launch MiG-21s and SU-7s from Bagram air base. See Henry S. Bradsher, Afghanistan and the Soviet Union (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1983), p. 83.

from the ultra-left Setem-i-Meli, who merely hoped to coerce the Afghan government to release four of their comrades. A rash rescue attempt by Afghan police, assisted by Soviet advisers, resulted in Dubs' death. The following July, 100 U.S. Embassy employees and dependents were evacuated from the country, leaving behind a staff of 48 people.<sup>633</sup>

Soviet leaders and commentators perceived President Carter's vacillation as one concrete application of broader phenomena, i.e. "Vietnam Syndrome" and the decline of detente. Detente, formulated in the spring of 1969, was meant to extricate the United States from Vietnam with Soviet help-or at least acquiescence. (Of course, the United States eventually lost in Vietnam in 1975.) The Soviet Union's interventions via proxies in Angola (1975), Ethiopia (1978), and South Yemen (1978-9) disillusioned U.S. policymakers, both in regard to the Russians' trustworthiness and to their own decision making abilities in foreign policy. The Russians also knew that American decision makers were themselves aware of their recent weakness, and were beginning to do something about it. National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski's enunciation of the "arc of crisis" theory was, as Yevgenii Primakov wrote, "a factor in the intensification of the military element in U.S. policy toward the region adjacent to the Soviet Union's frontiers."<sup>634</sup> The Carter Administration's ongoing

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<sup>633</sup> Louis Dupree, "Afghanistan Under the Khalq," Problems of Communism (July-August, 1979): 50.

<sup>634</sup> Yevgenii M. Primakov, "The U.S.S.R. and the Developing Countries," Journal of International Affairs 34 (1981/2): 274.

commitments to developing a mobile ICBM system (the MX missile), upgrading Trident submarines and missiles, and increasing defense spending by 3% were well-known.

Since US-Soviet relations were already so tense, Kremlin leaders in all likelihood concluded that one more crisis could not do much harm. They were wrong. While not devastating, US retaliatory measures and general reactions were stronger than the Russians expected.<sup>635</sup> The Soviet invasion had given Carter one last chance to show his resolve before leaving the Oval Office.

#### Western Europe

An invasion of Afghanistan would certainly taint the Soviet propaganda campaign to turn West Europeans against the United States and NATO's decision to deploy 572 Pershing II MRBMs and GLCMs on Western European territory. Soviet commentators had been portraying NATO "bosses" as warmongers, intent on speeding up the arms race. As TASS reported in English:

NATO is stepping up implementation of the dangerous plans for a further escalation of the arms race in Europe...[I]n trying to avoid responsibility for such a dangerous turn of events, the NATO ministers are again repeating the thesis about the so-called "parallel process" of control over armaments and deployment of new

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<sup>635</sup> These measures include: restrictions on grain shipments; sales of high technology; encouragement of European and Japanese allies to limit export credits to Moscow; inaction in the Senate on the SALT II treaty; promulgation of the "Carter Doctrine" on January 23, 1980 (viz. U.S. will regard any attempt by an outside force to control the Persian Gulf as an assault on U.S. vital interests); military aid to Pakistan; positioning of U.S. aircraft carriers in the Indian Ocean; and the decision to boycott the Olympic Games, originally to be held in Moscow. See Robert McGeehan, "Carter's Crises: Iran, Afghanistan, and Presidential Politics," The World Today 36 (May 1980), pp. 167-8.

missile-nuclear weapons. In actual fact, however, ...NATO bosses are actually plotting a rearmament of the bloc by introducing into the European Continent qualitatively new armaments alongside with a quantitative increase in Western Europe of U.S. nuclear weapons.<sup>636</sup>

At a press conference in Bonn in late November, 1979, Andrei Gromyko tried to sow doubt in the West Germans' minds by convincing them the Americans were hypocrites, trying to "circumvent" the SALT II limitations. He said: "But now representatives of Western countries, including the US, suddenly claim that there is no equality, and that it will be achieved only after the NATO plans we have been talking about are implemented. One asks: when did the American president state the United States' true position? Today, or in Vienna?"<sup>637</sup>

The Soviet decision makers could not have failed to realize that, by intervening in Afghanistan, they would harm their credibility in the West Europeans' eyes, but they probably hoped that by intensifying their propaganda ex post facto, the West Europeans would eventually discount the invasion in their worry about the upcoming missile installations.

#### Eastern Europe

There was a delay of roughly one week before the East European countries started to comment on the Soviet invasion.<sup>638</sup> Some have

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<sup>636</sup> Moscow TASS in English, December 12, 1979; cited in F.B.I.S., Soviet Union, p. AA1.

<sup>637</sup> A. A. Gromyko, Pravda, November 25, 1979, p. 4.

<sup>638</sup> Bertil Duner, The Bear, the Cubs, and the Eagle: Soviet Bloc Interventionism in the Third World and the U.S. Response (Aldershot, Hants [U.K.]: Gower, 1987), p. 60.

concluded from this fact that the East European leaders were surprised by the event and that the Russians did not consult with them prior to the invasion.<sup>639</sup> The indications, for which there is no hard evidence, are therefore that the Russians perceived Poland and Hungary, for example, as being intent on trading with the West. They would not have condoned an invasion, because of the repercussions on East-West trade. (Of course, the West European governments--in a period of economic recession--were not eager to restrict their trade with the East bloc, with or without a Soviet intervention, but the East Europeans could not be sure of this.) Thus, the Kremlin reasoned, the Russians should not waste time in talking with their socialist neighbors, but instead opt for a fait accompli in Afghanistan. The Polish and Hungarian comments on the invasion were especially lukewarm. At the 12th Party Congress in Poland, for example, Edward Gierek did not break from the ranks but reaffirmed the benefits of detente and reemphasized his proposal for a conference on disarmament in Warsaw.<sup>640</sup>

#### Middle East

Two factors in Middle East politics disturbed Soviet leaders in particular, and in all likelihood influenced to some degree their decision to intervene in Afghanistan: Ayatollah Khomeini's

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<sup>639</sup> Peter Summerscale, "Eastern Europe in the Wake of Afghanistan," The World Today 36 (May 1980), p. 172.

<sup>640</sup> Ibid., p. 172. It should be pointed out that later in the war (December, 1980) a few East European countries did in fact assist the Russians in Afghanistan, namely the East Germans in security and intelligence work.

Islamic fundamentalism and the developing reconciliation between Egypt and Israel.

When the Iranian revolution first took place in 1978, the Soviet press praised it as a revolution against "imperialism" and as a gain for progressive forces. Brezhnev congratulated Khomeini on the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran.<sup>641</sup> Put simply, because Iran had suddenly become the enemy of their enemy, the Russians perceived Iran to be their friend. Khomeini had expelled U.S. multinational corporations; shut down two U.S. intelligence collection stations (one near the Soviet border by the Caspian Sea); reduced arms purchases and withdrew from the role of the American "gendarme for the Persian Gulf;" and finally, he declared a policy of nonalignment and withdrew from CENTO, thus depriving the U.S. of a link in the chain of containment.<sup>642</sup> Moscow also learned a great deal about the advanced weapons the United States had sold to the Shah over the years, for example the F-14 Tomcat fighter aircraft, AIM-54A Phoenix air-to-air missile, and improved version of the Hawk antiaircraft missiles.<sup>643</sup>

But Soviet affections for the octogenarian waned when he began to encourage the Afghan "mujahideen" to fight against the Soviet-backed PDPA regime and charged the Russians of aggression in Afghanistan. M. Sidorov wrote in Pravda:

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<sup>641</sup> Pravda, April 4, 1979.

<sup>642</sup> Alvin Z. Rubenstein, Soviet Policy Toward Turkey, Iran, and Afghanistan: the Dynamics of Influence (New York: Praeger, 1982), p. 100.

<sup>643</sup> Ibid., p. 101.

In the last few days the Iranian newspapers have been filled with all sorts of fabrications and insinuations concerning events in Afghanistan and the USSR's relations with that country. With or without quoting Western propoganda services, the Iranian mass media are giving their own versions of slanderous arguments about "Taraki's godless regime," which supposedly has set itself no more and no less a goal than "the elimination of Islam in Afghanistan." There are claims that the present government of democratic Afghanistan is being supported "solely by Soviet bayonets." The press is full of other fables, too, including some about the CPSU's nationalities policy in the Soviet Union itself.<sup>644</sup>

It was bad enough that Khomeini had officially closed the offices of the People's Party of Iran (Tudeh) as well as its newspaper Mardom,<sup>645</sup> but when Khomeini also started supporting the Afghans, the Soviet leadership became genuinely alarmed. Although Iran shared a border with the Soviet Union, the Kremlin knew it could not invade the country--even if it had wanted to--since it lies in the seam where traditional American and Soviet spheres of interest intersect, and experience had shown that international crises tend to occur in such geostrategic East-West intersections. But Afghanistan was indeed within the Soviet sphere, and an Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, aligned with Khomeini's Iran, simply could not be tolerated.

In October and November of 1979, the violence in both Iran and Afghanistan was escalating simultaneously, increasing the Kremlin's feeling of urgency. By October at least two major

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<sup>644</sup> M. Sidorov, "Vopreki pravdy" [Contrary to the Truth], Pravda, August 22, 1979, p. 5. For further details about Khomeini's accusations of suppressing the Islamic movement in Afghanistan, see New York Times, June 13, 1979, p. 11.

<sup>645</sup> Pravda, August 29, 1979, p. 5.

mutinies against the Soviet-backed PDPA government had occurred, and more than twenty Russians were mercilessly slaughtered by hot-headed Afghan tribesmen (in Herat in March). Then on November 4, the entire U.S. Embassy was taken hostage by hot-headed Iranian teenagers. What better way to show the Soviet will at this moment, when the U.S. government was figuratively wringing its hands, afraid to use force to free its own people? Moreover, if Soviet troops could not invade Iran in order to stop Khomeini from spreading Islamic fundamentalism among the Muslims in Soviet Central Asia, the next best way to teach him a lesson, was to invade next door.

The Egyptian-Israeli talks also made the Russians wary. An article signed by A. Petrov, a pseudonym indicating an authoritative opinion, pointed out that there was growing resistance among the Arab peoples to Washington's "peace settlement."<sup>646</sup> Yuri Glukhov argued that the agreement would "give new impetus to the arms race in the Middle East."<sup>647</sup> A major part of the Soviet strategy vis-a-vis regional conflicts, ever since Khrushchev articulated it, involved propaganda accentuating the themes of anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism, anti-Zionism, and "socialism broad enough to evade definition."<sup>648</sup> As Alvin Rubinstein wrote, "continued close

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<sup>646</sup> A. Petrov, "Mir, stil Kemp Davida" [Peace, Camp David Style], Pravda, April 12, 1979.

<sup>647</sup> Yuri Glukhov, "Toropiatsia" [They are Hurrying], Pravda, March 17, 1979.

<sup>648</sup> See Chapter Six on the "old theory of regional conflicts."

relations with its Arab clients, whoever they may be, are more important to Moscow's long-term aims in the area than is an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict."<sup>649</sup> One way to maintain close relations with these Arab countries was to print propaganda that harped on grievances against the West, rather than on interests that the Arab countries held in common with Israel. One can argue even further: an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict (including the settlement of the Palestinian problem) would worsen Soviet relations with Arab nations, since they would not need to rely on the Soviet Union for arms or for legitimacy (e.g. PLO). When the treaty was signed at Camp David on March 26, 1979, the Russians probably felt that Washington had now played the "Arab card" against them, just as it had played the "China card" in December, 1978.

The Kremlin leaders in all likelihood felt that, since the Arab states were always fighting among themselves anyway, they would soon forget their outrage over the Russians' latest act of force. Thus they felt they had nothing to lose by invading Afghanistan; (indeed, the Iran-Iraq War erupted nine months later, followed by Israel's invasion of Lebanon, and so on.). Opportunities would always exist, so Brezhnev and others must have reasoned, for playing on "inter-Arab contradictions."

#### Asia

By the end of the 1970s the Chinese concluded that the Soviet

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<sup>649</sup> Rubinstein, op. cit., p. 229.

Union had become much too "hegemonistic."<sup>650</sup> As a result of the spectacular growth of the Soviet-Cuban military role in Africa since 1975, Chinese influence there had waned because China was unable to compete on the new scale. In addition to the loss of influence abroad, however, the Chinese felt a real sense of military "encirclement." This was due to the presence of Soviet troops on their border, Soviet advisors in Afghanistan (and, in September, 1979, troops near the Soviet-Afghan border), Soviet-funded Vietnamese troops in Cambodia, and Soviet naval ships in the South China Sea. Thus, after Mao Zedong died in September, 1976 and he consolidated his own power, Deng Xiaoping launched the more energetic "Open Door" foreign policy.

The Soviet leaders, meanwhile, perceived the Chinese "Maoist clique" as aggressive, "revisionist," and stubbornly hostile. In the space of five months (August-December, 1978), the PRC had signed a friendship treaty with Japan, sent Chairman Hua Guofeng to Rumania and Yugoslavia, and normalized relations with the United States. In January, 1979, Deng Xiaoping visited Washington. One month later, on February 17, the PRC invaded Soviet-backed Vietnam to "punish" it for invading Cambodia in late December, 1978. On April 3 Deng Xiaoping announced that his country would not renew the thirty-year Sino-Soviet treaty that had been signed in 1950 and would expire in April, 1980. Meanwhile, the Chinese

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<sup>650</sup> The Third Plenum of the 11th C.C.P. termed the events in 1978 "important successes" in developing the "international front against hegemonism." Peking Review, December 29, 1978; cited in Harry Gelman, "Outlook for Sino-Soviet Relations," Problems of Communism (September-December, 1979): 53.

government was aiding both the Pol Pot regime in Cambodia and the Afghan rebels in their struggle against the Taraki regime.

Two factors in particular motivated the Soviet leaders to invade Afghanistan: their perception of Sino-American collusion against them, and the futility in negotiating with the PRC because of the latter's intransigence. First, Deng's visit to Washington was construed (correctly) as a "green light" for the subsequent invasion of Vietnam. A February 19 commentary on Radio Moscow ran: "A number of facts prove that the aggression against Vietnam was planned and decided upon as early as when Brzezinski, U.S. presidential national security advisor, visited China (in May of 1978). Details were finalized when Deng Xiaoping visited Washington."<sup>651</sup> Although Carter himself was unaware of U.S. involvement,<sup>652</sup> Brzezinski made it clear in his memoirs that he did not even try to dissuade the Chinese.<sup>653</sup>

A second sign of Sino-American collusion was the discovery of a secret U.S. Defense Department study prepared in April for

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<sup>651</sup> Glebov, commentary on Radio Moscow, quoted in F.B.I.S., Soviet Union, February 21, 1979, p. L5.

<sup>652</sup> President Carter wrote in his memoirs, "When the Chinese military forces crossed the northern Vietnam border in February, 1979, the Soviet leaders immediately accused us of complicity in the act--although this was, of course, untrue; we had actually tried to dissuade the Chinese." Jimmy Carter, Keeping Faith, Memoirs of a President (New York: Bantam Books, 1982): 237.

<sup>653</sup> Brzezinski recalled that, in a separate talk with Foreign Minister Huang Hua, he "shared with him my concern that China might be forced to withdraw." He wrote, "I hoped that my warning would encourage the Chinese to concentrate on a swift and decisive move." Zbigniew Brzezinski, Power and Principle: Memoirs of the National Security Advisor, 1977-1981 (New York: Farrar, Strauss, Giroux, 1983): 410.

Defense Secretary Harold Brown, who had announced in October, 1979, his intention to visit the PRC from January 6-13, 1980. The study concluded that the United States should bolster China's military potential so that Beijing could assist the West in war with the Soviet Union.<sup>654</sup> Later Secretary of State Cyrus Vance assured the Russians that the United States had no plans to sell arms to China, but the Russians remained highly skeptical.<sup>655</sup> Articles abounded in the Soviet press throughout the fall of 1979 and winter of 1980 lambasting Sino-American "military cooperation." Yuri Zhukov in Pravda, for example, discussed the visits of Senator Henry Jackson and Vice-President Walter Mondale to Beijing, and quoted the latter as saying that "the U.S. is prepared to use its military-engineer corps to help the Chinese in building installations." Zhukov queried rhetorically, "Weren't the lessons of World War II enough to show the potential consequences of attempts to exploit 'parallel strategic interests' with a state that openly expresses hegemonistic claims [China], and, for this purpose, to give it such energetic aid in building up its might?"<sup>656</sup> Shortly after the invasion, on January 7, 1980, Aleksandr Bovin, political observer of Izvestia, pointed to Brown's visit to Beijing as proof that

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<sup>654</sup> The study recommended specific steps including the provision of advanced technology and intelligence to China; sales of advanced arms; Chinese production of American weapons and joint military exercises. New York Times, October 4, 1979, p. 1.

<sup>655</sup> Pravda, October 6, 1979.

<sup>656</sup> Yuri Zhukov, "Rech' aplodirovana v Pekin" [The Speech that was Applauded in Peking], Pravda, September 2, 1989, p. 4.

in the Pentagon's global strategic plans there is an obvious shift of accents towards intensifying Sino-American cooperation, including military cooperation, and a striving to turn China into a sort of 'counterbalance' to the Soviet Union."<sup>657</sup>

Talks with the Chinese, both those to normalize relations and those to resolve the border grievances, floundered. The normalization talks, begun on September 27, ended inconclusively on November 30. The Soviet delegation, headed by Deputy Foreign Minister Leonid Ilyichev, had a document prepared in advance (as at the Cierna conference in 1968) which they expected the Chinese to sign before the talks commenced. The Chinese refused.

The Chinese delegation, in turn, led by the former ambassador to the Soviet Union, Wang Yuping, put forth three demands and would not budge an inch from its position. They were: the withdrawal of the Soviet army from Mongolia, the reduction of Soviet forces along the Chinese border to the level they were at in 1964, and the discontinuation of Soviet support to Vietnam.<sup>658</sup>

As for the border talks, the Chinese were also not about to withdraw from the position they have held since October, 1969, namely that all Soviet forces in the disputed areas be withdrawn before substantive negotiations began. There are two pieces of territory in dispute: one is a tract of 10,000 square kilometers in the Pamirs in Soviet Central Asia, and the other is in the east, consisting of several hundred islands in the Ussuri and Amur

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<sup>657</sup> TASS, January 7, 1980; Izvestia, January 8, 1980.

<sup>658</sup> Politika (Yugoslavia), October 21, 1979; cited in Radio Liberty Research, R.L. 368/79, December 10, 1979.

border rivers.<sup>659</sup> The first piece of land is located near the trijunction with Afghanistan. By late September there was already increased activity by Soviet military units near the Afghan border; Taraki had been replaced by Amin; a mutiny by Afghan soldiers (the Bala Hissar garrison) had barely been crushed in Kabul; and Afghan refugees were pouring into Pakistan. In such a sensitive region, presenting the Russians with so many problems, the Chinese had no intention of making any major concessions to lighten their load.

In light of their political stalemate with the Chinese, the Soviet leaders probably concluded, again, that they had nothing to lose, as far as their relations with China were concerned, and the worst thing that the Chinese could do was to continue what they were already doing: aiding the Afghan "bandits" and cooperating with the United States, Japan, and Western Europe. One thing was fairly certain: the People's Liberation Army was not about to invade Afghanistan to "punish" the Russians. They had already discovered they could not hold out for more than a month against the Vietnamese.

#### Soviet Uses of Deception

As in 1956 and 1968, the Soviet planners employed the deception principles of preparation, secrecy, and credibility to achieve surprise in December 1979. Preparation, it will be recalled, involves ensuring that all means necessary for the

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<sup>659</sup> Gelman, op. cit., p. 58.

successful execution of the deception plan are available and ready in advance. There are two types of preparation: logistical and psychological. Logistical preparation involves (1) cutting off communication between the local leader and his subordinates, and between the government and the general population of the target country; (2) timing of the attack to achieve surprise; (3) mobilizing one's armed forces with the least amount of publicity; (4) practicing for the actual invasion; (5) immobilizing the target's loyal officials and armed forces; and (6) abducting key officials of the target country to prevent forceful resistance. Psychological preparation involves misleading both the victim and other countries regarding the attacker's intentions.

The Russians cut off Amin's means of communications in a number of ways. First, on December 27, Minister Talyzin and the Uzbek republic's minister of water resources cohosted at the Intercontinental Hotel a large reception, having invited the most prominent Afghan officials. At the end of the gala event, all were arrested. Abdul Halim Shams, one of the officials who was present, recalled, "Everyone was jovial and in good spirits and the food and drink were good. But precisely at 7:10 p.m. all the Soviets present drew their guns and aimed them at the heads of the Afghan leaders."<sup>660</sup> Without communications, Amin had no way of knowing that at least five thousand Soviet troops had already landed at the Kabul airport. At the garrisons of the 7th Division at

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<sup>660</sup> Abdul Halim Shams, In Cold Blood: the Communist Conquest of Afghanistan (Boston: Western Islands Publishers, 1987), p. 31.

Rishkoor and the 8th Division at Kargha as well, Soviet personnel had locked up officers loyal to Amin. Secondly, it is said that Soviet advisors suggested that Amin move to the Tajbeg Palace located behind the Darulaman complex (built by Amanullah) seven miles southwest of the center of Kabul "for his safety." In this way the Russians isolated Amin from loyal forces. (Other analysts, however, claim that Amin made this decision independently.)

The timing of the airlift, on December 24, enabled the Soviet Union to intervene while major Western governments were on vacation. The timing also minimized the chances of Afghan resistance fighters mounting an attack, Western governments retaliating by force, or foreign governments promptly rebuking the Soviet transgression. The timing of the airlift, during the worst possible weather, suggests the deception practice of "exploiting the impossible," just as General Douglas MacArthur had by invading at Inchon, or the Allied Forces by invading at Normandy on June 6, 1944 (D-Day).

As for troop mobilization and military preparations, the Uzbeks and Tadjiks were mobilized first so as to minimize the publicity. Located near Afghanistan, there would be less military personnel to transport over long distances (which would alert Western intelligence analysts). Practice for the December 24 airlift took place in late August, when roughly 10,000 troops plus military supplies were transported from the USSR to South Yemen and Ethiopia and back to the USSR.<sup>661</sup> Early in November a

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<sup>661</sup> Valenta, "From Prague to Kabul," op. cit., p. 130.

satellite communications ground station appeared at Termez when a military headquarters was also established there.<sup>662</sup>

Afghan armored forces were immobilized when Soviet advisors persuaded the Afghans to turn in their tank batteries for cold-resistant ones. The armed forces also turned in ammunition stocks for "inventory" and accepted blanks for exercise purposes.<sup>663</sup> The December 17 shooting of Hafizullah Amin and his nephew Assadullah Amin (head of the intelligence service KAM) resulted in the immobilization of Assadullah, who was more seriously injured than his uncle. He was flown to the Soviet Union for "medical treatment," and in this way Soviet authorities removed a key figure from the scene.<sup>664</sup>

Psychologically, the USSR misled the West by the familiar technique of controlling its press coverage: first blatant accusations of U.S. involvement in Afghanistan were printed in the summer of 1979, then absolute silence was kept in response to U.S. reports of Soviet activity on the Afghan border, and finally outright denials of involvement in Afghan affairs were published a mere 24 hours before the airlift (December 24).

On June 2, a commentary in Pravda had noted the possibility of a war between Pakistan and Afghanistan and warned that "Moscow will not stand by indifferently."<sup>665</sup> Then, on June 12, TASS

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<sup>662</sup> Bradsher, op. cit., p. 124.

<sup>663</sup> Hosmer and Wolfe, op. cit., p. 158.

<sup>664</sup> Bradsher, op. cit., p. 178.

<sup>665</sup> Pravda, June 2, 1979.

charged that American instructors were teaching Afghan rebels in special camps how to use weapons against the Afghan government.<sup>666</sup> In the wake of the TASS report, Leonid Brezhnev condemned "covert and overt attempts at interference" in Afghanistan.<sup>667</sup>

On September 20, as noted earlier, U.S. intelligence analysts reported "increased activity" by Soviet military units near the Afghan border.<sup>668</sup> We now know that the 105th Guards Air Assault, commanded by Major-General Moussa Yevanov, had gone on modified alert on that day. It was Yevanov's task force that first crossed Afghan borders for invasion purposes on December 6 and 7; one regiment flew into Bagram.<sup>669</sup>

Still, despite numerous articles in major Western newspapers<sup>670</sup> reporting increased Soviet military involvement, there was no Soviet response to the reports until December 18, when a Radio Moscow broadcast called the reports "hostile propaganda."<sup>671</sup> On December 23, just before the airlift, an article appeared in Pravda by A. Maslennikov. "Recently, the

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<sup>666</sup> TASS, June 12, 1979; New York Times, June 12, p. 5.

<sup>667</sup> TASS, June 12, 1979.

<sup>668</sup> New York Times, September 20, 1979, p. 10.

<sup>669</sup> Urban, op. cit., pp. 39, 42.

<sup>670</sup> See, for instance, The Washington Star, November 30; The Baltimore Sun, December 5; the New York Times, December 3, 9, 11, 13; The Daily Telegraph, December 7.

<sup>671</sup> Radio Moscow in Dari to Afghanistan, December 18, 1979; Radio Liberty Report, RL 62/80.

Western and especially the American media have been deliberately spreading rumors of a certain Soviet "intervention" (vmeshatel'stvo) in the internal affairs of Afghanistan," he wrote. "They even go so far as to assert that, as it were, Soviet 'combat units' have been brought onto Afghan territory."<sup>672</sup> He went on to dismiss the claims, pointing out that Soviet-Afghan relations were based on mutual cooperation and noninterference in each other's internal affairs. Finally, two articles appeared in the official press soon after the intervention. One, on December 29, merely quoted from the telegram congratulating Babrak Karmal; the other, on December 31, stressed the defensive nature of the intervention. As described earlier, the article by A. Petrov asserted that the Soviet Union was guided by its "international duty" and had sent only a "limited contingent" into Afghanistan.<sup>673</sup>

The deception principle of secrecy was also employed by the Soviet planners, as shown by the fact that Soviet combat troops did not know they were invading Afghanistan. They believed the operation was just another exercise.<sup>674</sup> The security principle dictates that only individuals who need to know, should be informed of the master deception plan.

The credibility principle (i.e. the credibility of the

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<sup>672</sup> A. Maslennikov, "Naprasnye Potugi" [Vain Attempts] Pravda, December 23, 1979, p. 5.

<sup>673</sup> Pravda, December 29, 1979; Pravda, December 31, 1979.

<sup>674</sup> Bradsher, op. cit., p. 179.

deception scheme from the victim's point of view) was practiced in at least two ways. First, Victor Paputin was sent to Kabul ostensibly to discuss Soviet aid for the Afghan security police. As deputy minister of internal affairs, he was convincing in his overt role. In all likelihood, however, he was instructed to try for the last time to persuade Amin to broaden his political base, or coerce him to sign a document inviting Soviet forces in, to legitimize a Soviet invasion. It is doubtful that Soviet leaders authorized Paputin to kill Amin, because, first, the Moscow propaganda chiefs would be severely challenged in explaining why Amin would have invited the Russians in if they were going to kill him. Second, they could not claim that Karmal invited them in, if they themselves flew him in four days after the invasion. But, of course, Amin was killed, and the theory that Paputin committed suicide for having failed in his assignment seems credible. Amin's death resulted in several conflicting versions of why the Soviet Union intervened.

A second attempt to create credibility involved the "courtesy call" on Amin by Nikolai Talyzin (Soviet minister of communications) on Thursday, December 27 at 2:30 p.m. (the day of the takeover and Amin's death).

Finally, the presence of Soviet units in Afghanistan seemed natural to the Afghans because it had been building up gradually for a period of months. Afghan government officials loyal to Amin initially believed the Russian troops were in Afghanistan to help them fight the "rebels." Of course, this was their purpose in the

very beginning. A deception story is most effective when it contains an element of truth. It was hard to distinguish when the "assistance" ended and the intervention began. The psychology of the "repetitive process" was also at work; the sight of Soviet military personnel desensitized the Afghans to accept as harmless the ostensibly routine activities of Soviet military personnel in Kabul, which actually provided cover for the subsequent invasion. (See the chart on the following page.)

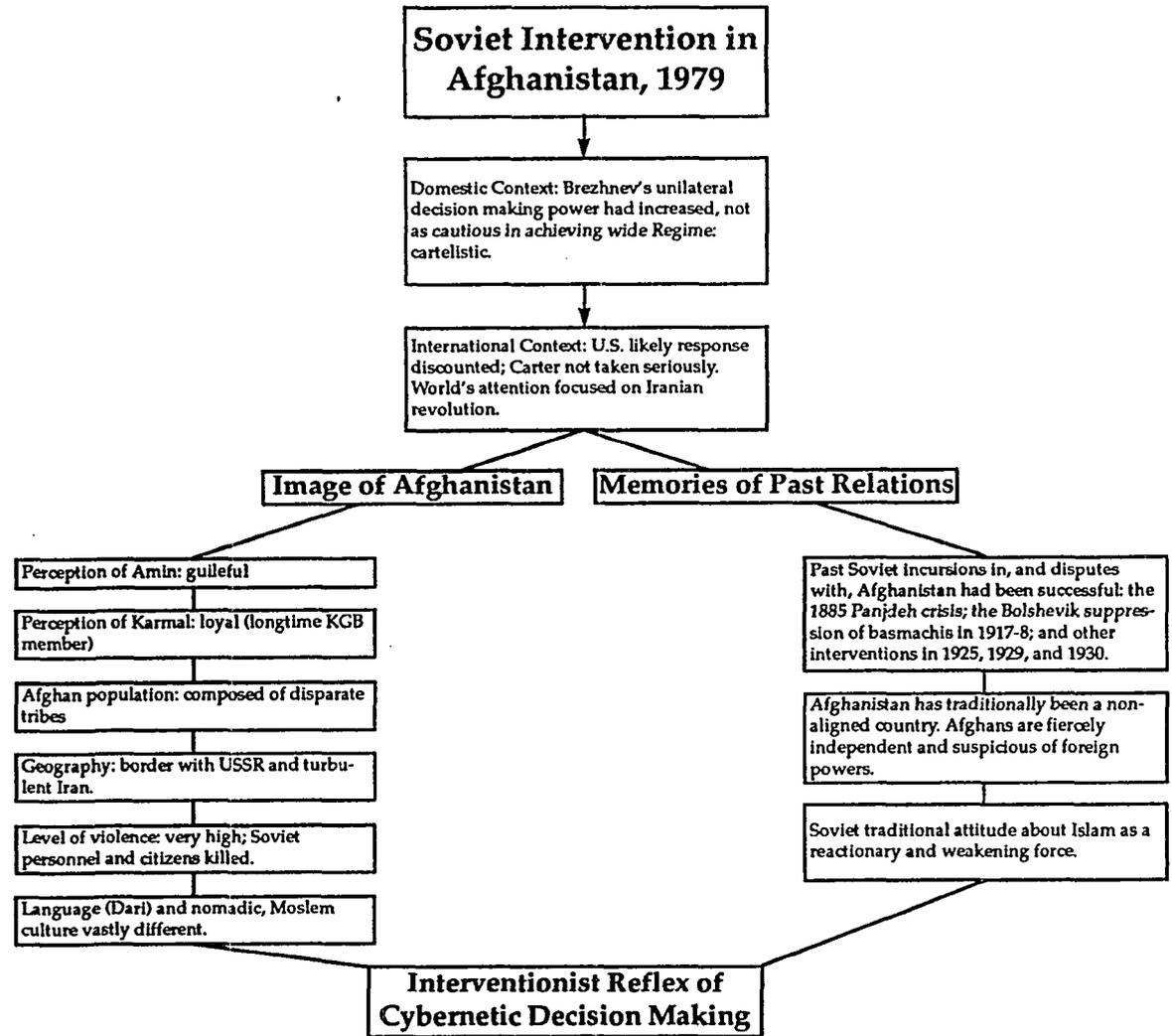
The Soviet Leadership in 1979 as Cybernetic  
Decision Making, Reiterative Learning, Unit

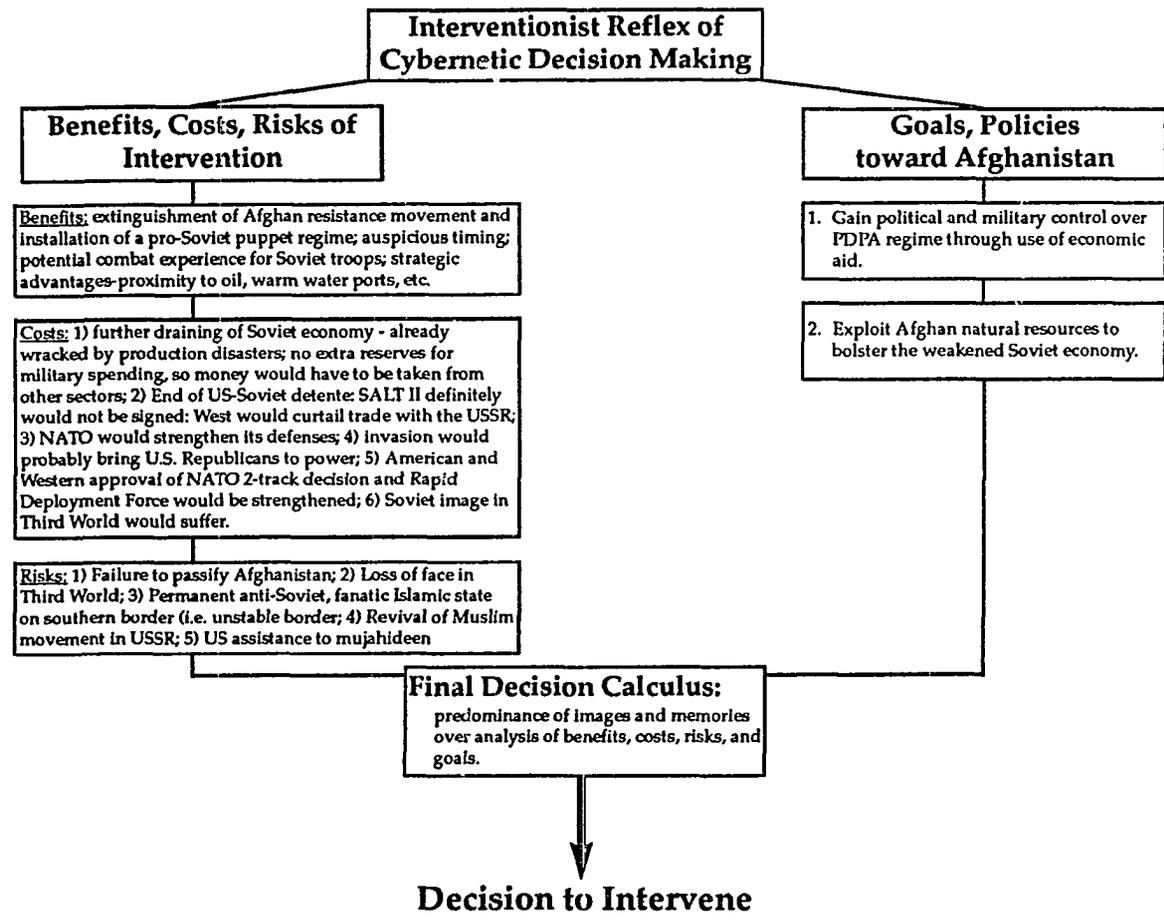
According to the above analysis, the Brezhnev leadership tended to behave as a cybernetic, rather than analytic, decision making unit. The Soviet leaders apparently relied predominantly on habits, images, and memories, considered only a limited number of alternatives, and exhibited a reluctance to reevaluate knowledge in the light of new events.

Official Soviet explanations for the invasion are replete with themes of preservation, as opposed to achievement. Brezhnev said "absolutely false are the allegations that the Soviet Union has expansionist plans in respect of Pakistan, Iran, or other countries of that area....We are not coveting the lands or wealth of others."<sup>675</sup> Ponomarev's deputy, involved in the handling of relations between the Soviet Communist Party and the PDPA, stated

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<sup>675</sup> Novosti Press Agency, The Truth about Afghanistan: Documents, Facts, Eyewitness Reports (Moscow, 1980), pp. 10-11.





that "the Afghan state was on the verge of disintegration." "To leave the Afghan revolution without internationalist help and support," he explained, "would mean to condemn it to inevitable destruction and to permit an access to hostile imperialist forces to the Soviet border."<sup>676</sup> One Soviet editor added that Soviet help was needed to "prevent democratic Afghanistan from losing its gains."<sup>677</sup> According to other accounts in the Soviet media, foreign imperialists had launched an "undeclared [offensive] war" against the communist regime in Kabul; the very existence of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan as an independent and sovereign state was "threatened."<sup>678</sup> In many ways it is easier to preserve something achieved in the past (because there is less uncertainty) than it is to set new goals in the distant future and to act to achieve them. The cybernetic decision maker, one will recall, has a fundamental conservative purpose; his essential decision criterion tends to be survival more than the maximization of expected utility.

One of the most important things the Brezhnev leadership sought to preserve was the Soviet reputation for ensuring that a communist government, once established, would never collapse. This is more difficult to do than one would initially suppose, for all

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<sup>676</sup> Ulyanovskii, "The Afghan Revolution," in USSR Report, no. 1279, July 20, 1982, p. 14.

<sup>677</sup> NHK Television, Tokyo, January 14, 1980 in FBIS, Middle East, January 15, 1980, p. S3.

<sup>678</sup> Tass from Kabul, December 6, 1980 in FBIS, Soviet Union, December 8, 1980, p. D12; also Moscow Radio, January 8, 1980 in FBIS, Soviet Union, January 9, 1980, p. D11.

that is needed to destroy such a reputation is one incident, or precedent. Such an incident had already occurred in the Western Hemisphere, for example, and it would be infinitely worse if a kind of "domino effect" took hold within the Soviet sphere of influence. The Soviet Ambassador Stepan Chervonenko (who was Ambassador to Czechoslovakia in 1968) warned that "the Soviet Union would not permit another Chile."<sup>679</sup> East German Ambassador Hermann Schweisau told the US Charge d'Affaires Bruce Amstutz that if the Soviet Union allowed a pro-Soviet Communist government in a border state to collapse, it could have an unsettling effect on other border states within the Soviet orbit.<sup>680</sup>

Brezhnev's seniority as General Secretary also reinforced the cybernetic decision patterns, since he personally had concrete memories of previous decisions to intervene, from the Prague invasion of 1968 (involving Soviet troops) to the more recent and relatively effortless interventions by Cuban proxies in Angola (1975), Ethiopia (1978), and South Yemen (1978). To be sure, one is more likely to act according to habits that one has formed oneself as a result of one's own concrete experiences than one is to adhere to habits formed by previous Soviet leaders. The lack of serious international repercussions after the Prague invasion, coupled with the increasing ease with which subsequent interventions were executed, and the United States' apparent

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<sup>679</sup> "The Brezhnev Doctrine, Afghanistan, and the Upcoming Warsaw Pact Summit," Radio Liberty Research Report, RL-171/80 (May 7, 1980).

<sup>680</sup> Amstutz, op. cit., p. 42.

paralysis in international politics (the so-called "Vietnam Syndrome") further habituated the Brezhnev leadership to military intervention as a viable solution to problems. By the time the Soviet leaders decided to send troops into Afghanistan--a country they had never before occupied--their threshold of sensitivity to foreign reactions was no doubt significantly lowered.<sup>681</sup>

The Soviet leaders may also have become habituated to docile national leaders whom they could manipulate. They must have concluded that Amin too could be cowed into submission by the presence of 85,000 Soviet soldiers, and this image of the Afghan leader influenced their decision to intervene militarily. (Unlike Imre Nagy and Alexander Dubcek, Hafizullah Amin never publicly criticized the Soviet Union.) The Soviet leaders probably also reasoned that the PDPA regime, headed by the more obedient stooge Babrak Karmal, who would follow Soviet advice more closely about catering to the Afghan population, could remain in control of the country. As in Hungary in 1956 (until October 30 when Nagy permitted other parties to become established) and in Czechoslovakia in 1968, there were no rightist or centrist parties in Afghanistan (by 1978).<sup>682</sup> The fact that the PDPA had been the

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<sup>681</sup> This discussion draws on Henry Bradsher's analysis. See Bradsher, *op. cit.*, pp. 140-147.

<sup>682</sup> A right-wing party (the "Afghan Mellat") flourished in the 1960s and promoted national democratic socialism. But in mid-October, 1979, Amin arrested several nationalist military officers who had attempted a coup against him and who were members of the Afghan Mellat. See Arnold, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

only tolerated opposition group under President Mohammad Daoud's rule (1973-78), and that in 1979 there were no well-organized opposition parties, further increased the Soviet planners' confidence in the potential success of an intervention.

But Brezhnev and his subordinates soon learned that they erred by relying on habits of perception. Of the three communist leaders, Amin was by far the most amoral and brutal. Even the Stalinist leaders Matyas Rakosi and Antonin Novotny conducted their bloody purges in the 1948-1952 period in obedience to Stalin and the latter's wish to incriminate Tito. The Afghan leaders Taraki and Amin, on the other hand, killed tens of thousands of political opponents (or simply independent thinkers) entirely of their own volition, regardless of the Soviet Union's desires. Indeed, Afghan culture to some extent sanctions murder. Every Afghan citizen is taught to remain loyal to his tribe and to perpetuate blood feuds; to refrain from avenging enemies on behalf of one's tribal ancestors is tantamount to losing one's birthright. The Soviet leaders suddenly found themselves in the unusual predicament of trying to restrain Amin, coaxing him to relax his extreme leftist policies, to broaden his reforms to ensure that they better met the needs of the Afghans (a people more reactionary than the Hungarians, Czechoslovaks, and even the Russians themselves). Their resentment of Amin is evidenced in their characterization of him as a "usurper" who, "taking advantage of Taraki's credulity, weaved behind his back a conspiracy inimical to the people and hounded honest patriots and

revolutionaries."<sup>683</sup>

The Soviet leaders eventually realized that Amin was not as docile as they had expected, despite outward manifestations of loyalty, and that he was just as capable of deceiving them as they were of him.<sup>684</sup> This realization probably shaped their later tactics vis-a-vis Amin; rather than sending high-level delegations to negotiate formally with him and accuse him of various ideological sins, the Brezhnev leadership simply tried repeatedly to kill him. As outlined earlier, there were at least three known attempts. The first attempt, the palace shoot-out in mid-September, 1979, failed because Seyed Daoud Taroon (police commandant and chef du cabinet for Taraki) was standing in front of Amin, and was thus killed by the bullet intended for Amin.<sup>685</sup> The Soviet leadership tried a second time (according to former KGB officer Kuzichkin) by poisoning Amin.<sup>686</sup> By the third attempt in early December, Amin was slightly wounded, and his nephew and chief of the secret police Assadullah Amin seriously hurt.<sup>687</sup>

Finally, the Soviet reliance on habits is demonstrated in

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<sup>683</sup> Oleg Golovin, "Of Friends and Enemies of Independent Revolutionary Afghanistan," New Times (Moscow), no. 12, March 1980, pp. 7-9.

<sup>684</sup> In all likelihood the discrepancy in the communist and Islamic value systems fostered an instinctive distrust, which prevented either governments (Soviet or Afghan) from being deceived for any length of time. See Chapter Two on this issue.

<sup>685</sup> Bradsher, op. cit., p. 113.

<sup>686</sup> See interview with Kuzichkin in Time article, op. cit.

<sup>687</sup> Amstutz, op. cit., p. 43.

their propaganda before and just after the intervention. Like Khrushchev in 1956, Brezhnev used techniques of blaming and denial. He simply counterattacked when accused by the United States of aggression. Soviet writers blamed the United States, Pakistan, Iran and China for training and arming the "rebels" who had caused the "civil war" in Afghanistan, and denied that Soviet troops were occupying the country or were even involved in Afghanistan's internal affairs.

In regard to images, and the degree to which the Soviet leadership appeared to be guided by them, the remark of one Moscow-based source is extremely revealing. According to Soviet journalist Dev Murarka, the Kremlin was annoyed by American policies at the time and thought it "necessary to show that the Soviet Union was still capable of defending its interests."<sup>688</sup> If this remark represents the Politburo members' thinking to any extent, it implies an inordinate degree of dependence on the perceptions of the United States, as well as a fundamentally competitive attitude and a lack of independent standards of political conduct.

First, the desire to "show" the United States that it can defend its interests suggests that the Soviet Union is constantly competing with the United States, and that the Kremlin leaders assume, vice versa, that the United States is competing with their country. Thus the image of the United States as fiercely competitive appears to have been an omnipresent factor in the 1979

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<sup>688</sup> Murarka, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

decision to intervene in Afghanistan (in addition to the image of Hafizullah Amin) and was intensified due to the already poor state of US-Soviet relations. It follows, then, that if Brezhnev expected the intervention to be relatively quick and painless and effectively to show Washington that the Kremlin had the strength and resolve to defend its interests, then the "crisis" in Afghanistan was perceived as an opportunity. If the latter is at least partially true, then it is doubtful that Brezhnev and his colleagues considered every possible alternative to military intervention as a solution to the Afghan problem, as an analytic decision maker would have done. On the contrary, they must have decided to intervene with relative alacrity, and not as a last resort.

Moreover, the mere articulation of a concern that the United States believe in the Soviet Union's capability of defending its interests may even suggest an underlying suspicion in Soviet officials' minds that their country's military capability was in fact diminishing. If the Soviet leaders were truly confident in their armed forces, then they would be careful to employ them only when necessary, and not at every opportunity simply for their demonstration effect.

If the Soviet Union is engaged in an ongoing competition with the United States, basing its actions on what the United States is or is not doing, then there will be a constant tendency among Soviet decision makers to confuse success in particular foreign policy issues with the fundamental worth of the Soviet Union as a

country. Similarly, if the Kremlin makes a poor decision--or fails to make a decision when it should have--this failure will be construed as a sign that the USSR is losing its overall status as a great power. According to one Izvestiia editorialist, "We would have ceased to be a great power if we refrained from taking unpopular but necessary decisions...prompted by extraordinary circumstances."<sup>689</sup>

Several memories in all likelihood abetted the decision to intervene. First, the memory of having intervened militarily in 1956 and 1968 with impunity must have emboldened the Soviet leaders in their decision making process in late November, 1979. International moral recriminations aside, the world eventually turned its attention to new crises and accepted the Soviet interventions as faits accomplis. The most recent intervention in another West Asian country, South Yemen, (June 1978) in particular occurred so smoothly that, if Pavlov's theory applies, the positive response immediately following the action "taught" the Kremlin to associate military intervention (via proxies) with pleasant stimuli.<sup>690</sup>

Second, by sending 85,000 troops into Afghanistan in round-

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<sup>689</sup> Izvestiia, April 1980, quoted in Karachi Dawn, August 10, 1983 in JPRS Near East/North Africa Report, September 7, 1983, pp. 80-81. This source is cited in Amstutz, op. cit., p. 43 (p. 427 n83).

<sup>690</sup> The Soviet Union, having flown 5,000 Cuban troops into Aden, and fired on the Yemeni President Salim Rubayya Ali's palace from naval ships in the harbor while the Cubans attacked from the air and on the ground, were able to execute Ali and install the quisling Abd al-Fattah Isma'il in a matter of hours.

the-clock airlifts, the Soviet planners demonstrated that they had benefited from the memory of the Budapest intervention in 1956. On October 24, one will remember, only two mechanized divisions were initially employed to put down the student demonstration; the Kremlin later (on November 4) sent in fifteen divisions. A third memory from the 1956 intervention may also have served the Russians. Whereas the Khrushchev leadership through negligence allowed the miscreant Imre Nagy to take refuge in the Yugoslav Embassy (before they eventually flew him to Moscow to be imprisoned and later executed), the Brezhnev leadership shielded from Amin's murderous wrath four Afghan ministers who had conspired against him in September.<sup>691</sup>

Heavy reliance on habits, images, and memories inculcates a sluggishness in collecting information. The main repository of knowledge about Afghanistan--the Institute of Oriental Studies (Institut vostokovedeniia) of the Academy of Sciences--is comprised mostly of historians and linguists.<sup>692</sup> In books on Afghanistan published by the Institute, as well as by other publishing houses, very few pages are devoted to political and

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<sup>691</sup> Bradsher, op. cit., p. 112. These four were Watanjar, Mazdooryar, Gulabzoy, and Sarwari. In a meeting with Taraki on September 14, 1979, Amin allegedly demanded that the three ministers and Sarwari be removed from their government posts. The military officer, Mohammed Aslam Watanjar, had studied in the Soviet Union.

<sup>692</sup> Ibid., p. 163.

military affairs.<sup>693</sup> Many Western officials and scholars have concluded, moreover, that--unlike in 1968--the Soviet leaders did not consult with their own "Americanologists" about the probable reactions of the United States to a military intervention in Afghanistan.<sup>694</sup> If this conclusion is correct, it is perhaps due to another memory which reassured and emboldened the Russians, viz. the failed rescue attempt in Iran. Having failed once in the use of force to achieve its objectives (i.e. to liberate American hostages) in the Middle East, the Carter Administration was not about to damage its reputation still further for less important objectives (e.g. to deter the Soviet troops from intervening or fight them after the fact).

Furthermore, despite their pronouncements about the intervention as being completely defensive in nature, Brezhnev and others no doubt dimly remembered that proximity to the Persian Gulf had been a Soviet aspiration as far back as 1940 when Stalin and his foreign minister Vyacheslav Molotov were negotiating a pact with the Germans. Molotov is reported to have said that the Soviet Union would accept the pact if the Nazis recognized that "the area south of Batum and Baku in the general direction of the Persian

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<sup>693</sup> Cf. M. R. Arunova, ed. Demokraticheskaiia Respublika Afganistana (Moscow: Institute of Oriental Studies, Academy of Sciences: Izdatel'stvo "Nauka," 1981), pp. 56-72 (16 pp. out of the total 152 pp.); Iu. V. Gankovskii, ed. Istoriia Afganistana (Moscow: Institute of Oriental Studies, Academy of Sciences, "Mysl," 1982), pp. 316-350 (34 pp. out of the total 350 pp.); M. A. Babakhodzhaev, ed. Afganistan: Voprosi Istorii, Ekonomiki i Filologii (Tashkent: Izdatel'stvo "Fan" of the Uzbek Republic, 1978), pp. 33-38, 100-104 (9 pp. out of the total 121 pp.).

<sup>694</sup> Bradsher, op. cit., p. 163.

Gulf is recognized as the center of the aspirations of the Soviet Union."<sup>695</sup>

Equally strong a motive as far back as Khrushchev's time has been the desire to keep Afghanistan out of the American "camp." Brezhnev no doubt remembered Khrushchev's 1955 tour to Afghanistan and the latter's diary excerpt:

At the time of our visit there, it was clear to us that the Americans were penetrating Afghanistan with the obvious purpose of setting up a military base...The capital which we've invested in Afghanistan hasn't been wasted. We have earned the Afghans' trust and friendship, and it hasn't fallen in the Americans' trap.<sup>696</sup>

The weight of the evidence suggests also that the Brezhnev leadership in 1979 failed to consider a large number of alternatives before choosing military intervention as the best solution to the Afghan problem. Unlike in 1968 the East European leaders appeared surprised by the intervention which would indicate that they were not consulted beforehand. If this is the case, the Soviet decision making process was probably more narrow in scope, in spite of Brezhnev's post-invasion statement that "the Party's Central Committee and the Soviet Government...took into account the entire sum total of circumstances" before coming to a final decision.<sup>697</sup>

Many official Soviet accounts set up the problem as an either-

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<sup>695</sup> Raymond J. Sontag and James S. Beddie, eds., Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941; Documents from the Archives of the German Office (Washington, D.C.: Department of State, 1948), p. 259.

<sup>696</sup> Nikita S. Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1971), p. 508.

<sup>697</sup> Pravda, January 13, 1980, p. 1.

or situation. According to one Izvestiia reporter writing under a pseudonym:

We [the Kremlin leaders] had either to bring in troops or let the Afghan revolution be defeated and the country turned into a kind of Shah's Iran....We knew that the victory of counter-revolution would pave the way for massive American military presence in a country which borders on the Soviet Union and that was a challenge to our country's security [emphasis added].<sup>698</sup>

A later TASS report was even more extreme. "We had no choice but to send troops."<sup>699</sup> Yet, upon closer analysis, the Soviet leaders did indeed have other options that might have been more expedient than a massive intervention. They may have scheduled conferences between the Soviet and Afghan Politburos, or other forums for negotiation. They may have consulted with East European leaders in the Warsaw Pact and persuaded them to join forces against the errant socialist country. The East European leaders, or perhaps even pro-Soviet leaders of "newly liberated" countries, whom Amin trusted more than the Russians, may have met individually with the headstrong Afghan leader and successfully persuaded him to broaden his political base. The Soviet leaders may have increased their output of propaganda and experimented with new ideas in an attempt to win over the Afghan population, or at least to cast aspersions on the mujahideen ("freedom fighters"). Even if the Kremlin had still concluded that a military intervention was their best bet, they might have employed their trusty Cuban surrogates to do the

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<sup>698</sup> Izvestiia, April, 1980, quoted in Karachi Dawn, August 10, 1983 in JPRS Near East/North Africa Report, September 7, 1983, pp. 80-1.

<sup>699</sup> TASS, June 23, 1980 in FBIS, Soviet Union, June 24, 1980, p. R4.

job. In order to maintain respectability they could have first dethroned Amin and installed Babrak Karmal, so the latter could then "invite" Soviet troops to help quell the local uprisings. Or they could have simply sent a few thousand troops, as opposed to 85,000, so the intervention would not have shocked the world as a blatant act of aggression. In short, there were other--perhaps more logical--options the leaders might have selected.

The Soviet leadership also evinced a reluctance to reevaluate past knowledge in the light of altered circumstances (another trait of cybernetic decision making). By 1979 they had invested so much money and manpower in Afghanistan that they simply could not permit the PDPA regime to collapse, if only from an economic perspective. There were at least 1,500 Soviet officials in the civilian ministries and 3,500 officers and technicians in the armed forces. By October, 1979 approximately 8,000 officers in the Afghan army during the 1978 coup had been purged for political reasons (with Soviet approval).<sup>700</sup> A paradoxical situation had developed, for while there were so many Soviet personnel assisting the Afghan government, which gave the Soviet Union some degree of power, Amin himself had direct control over the key levers of power in the Afghan government. And Amin--the Kremlin had discovered ruefully--was intractable. The very presence of such large numbers of Soviet citizens increased the Soviet leaders' sense of vulnerability, for their prestige had become committed and the lives of their citizens hung in the balance (especially

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<sup>700</sup> See Bradsher for further details, pp. 120-130.

after the Herat massacre in March, 1978). The combination of the heavy commitment of money and manpower with the lack of decision making power no doubt contributed to an inertia or inability to reevaluate and redefine the problem to fit the unexpected circumstances.

Secondly, the fact that the Soviet leaders had succeeded in the past to persuade the Parcham and Khalq factions of the Afghan Communist Party or PDPA to reunite in July, 1977 (nine months before the coup overthrowing Daoud) after many failed attempts probably made it difficult for them to understand the significance of a later development: the disintegration of the PDPA only six weeks after the coup. The Brezhnev leadership apparently chose instead to ignore this fact and to continue to prop up the Kabul regime via military intervention. (They may have continued to console themselves by the fact that--as stated above--there were no rightist or centrist parties in Afghanistan by 1978 to challenge the PDPA. Perhaps the disunity of the Afghan mujahideen themselves two years after the Soviet troop withdrawal (February, 1989) is the most important factor enabling the pro-Soviet Afghan government to continue to exist.

A third, more minor, example of the Soviet leaders' reluctance to reevaluate past knowledge in the light of new events is their tardiness in replacing Aleksandr Puzanov, the Soviet Ambassador to Afghanistan. At a meeting on October 6, the Afghan Foreign Minister Shah Wali angrily denounced Puzanov for participating in the plot against Amin and formally requested (on November 8) that

he be recalled, but not until November 19 did Puzanov actually make his farewell call.<sup>701</sup> Brezhnev replaced him with a fifty-one-year-old Tatar Muslim named Fikryat Tabeyev.<sup>702</sup>

Hence the Brezhnev leadership in 1979 chose to eliminate cognitive dissonance, to return to Festinger's theory, by two of the three methods explained earlier: by suppressing the knowledge of the dissonance, and by avoiding new information that would force one to confront the disparity. On the one hand, by pouring money and advisors into Afghanistan, the Brezhnev leadership was acting on the premise that the PDPA regime was inherently strong and would survive if it received a temporary boost from its powerful northern neighbor. Yet, on the other hand, the Russians were aware at some level that the majority of Afghan people (fervent Muslims) were steadfastly rising up against the PDPA regime. The Soviet leaders chose to ignore the underlying premise of this second observation, namely that the increasing amounts of Soviet aid were not ameliorating the situation; they simply continued sending aid and searching for a way to eliminate Amin. If they could kill Amin and appoint someone else who would implement socialist policies very gradually, they must have reasoned, the communist government would survive.

#### Cybernetic Uses of Marxism-Leninism in 1979

The Brezhnev leadership in 1979 employed Marxism-Leninism in

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<sup>701</sup> The Economist, November 3, 1979, pp. 52-53.

<sup>702</sup> Ibid.

a cybernetic manner, but perhaps to a lesser degree than Khrushchev did in 1956. Brezhnev's personal experience of having used Marxism-Leninism in 1968 as a tool for analysis and decision making explains in part why he did not use the ideology exclusively in a cybernetic manner eleven years later.

One of the cybernetic uses of Marxism-Leninism is to filter out unpleasant or complex variables in such a way that one's method of perception is constricted. The definition of the problem is immensely simplified and the recommended course of action rendered clear-cut. The Soviet leadership's reliance on this screening-out function of Marxism-Leninism is shown by its repeated references to the intervention as an "international duty" (internatsional'ny dolg) or "obligation." According to Victor Grishin, Politburo member and Moscow city party boss, "Socialist internationalism obliged us to help the Afghan people defend the April Revolution's gains [emphasis added]." <sup>703</sup> One Soviet writer said, "To leave the Afghan revolution in the lurch, prey to the counterrevolution, would be to ignore our international duty as communists [emphasis added]." <sup>704</sup> Rather than as a method of analysis, Marxism-Leninism served as an excuse for not thinking and analyzing, and consequently absolved the decision makers of guilt should anything go wrong. How could the Soviet leaders--or the troops directly involved--be blamed if they were merely doing

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<sup>703</sup> Moskovskaia Pravda, February 6, 1980, pp. 2-3 in FBIS, Soviet Union, February 14, 1980, p. R22.

<sup>704</sup> Victor Sidenko, "Two Years of the Afghan Revolution," New Times (Moscow), April 25, 1980, p. 23.

their duty? Ideology in this case enabled them to escape taking responsibility for their decisions and actions.

The "correlation of forces" concept--of which the analytic agent makes ample use--was apparently neglected by the Soviet decision makers in 1979. Had they gauged the correlation of forces more carefully, they would have been keenly aware of ascendant and unprecedented forces that would have dictated against the use of the military in Afghanistan. Such forces include the rise of Islamic fundamentalism, the incipient collapse of the Soviet economy, and the growing assertiveness of the United States in foreign policy.

The overall purpose of the intervention, as the official propaganda would suggest, was of a predominantly prophylactic nature. The "gains of the Saur [April] revolution" were to be preserved, the foreign "counterrevolutionaries" prevented from becoming entrenched in the Soviet Union's southern neighbor. In the first public statement on the events in Afghanistan (on Soviet television and in Pravda the next day) the USSR acknowledged that it sent a "limited military contingent" to Afghanistan solely to repel "external armed interference."<sup>705</sup>

The Soviet leaders, characteristic of cybernetic agents, demonstrated their fundamental conservative purpose by not professing to advance the march of communism. They did not strive to make new decisions or set new goals. Even the TASS statement justifying the intervention repeated almost verbatim the words

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<sup>705</sup> Pravda, December 31, 1979.

used to justify the intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968. At that time, TASS said that the Czechoslovak leaders had "asked the Soviet Union and other allied states to render the fraternal Czechoslovak people urgent assistance, including assistance with armed forces." The Czechoslovak request, TASS added, followed threats to the Czechoslovak state from "counterrevolutionary forces which have entered into a collusion with foreign forces hostile to socialism."<sup>706</sup>

Another cybernetic use of ideology is the depiction of capitalist countries as a permanent source of conflict rather than of cooperation, and in a hazy manner so as to mobilize the masses against them. Izvestiia, for example, charged that the CIA was "directly involved in training Afghan rebels in camps in Pakistan" and maintained "contacts with counterrevolutionaries and reactionaries in Afghanistan itself."<sup>707</sup> TASS later issued a sharp rebuff to President Carter's condemnation of the Soviet aggression by calling Carter's interview on American television "militant and malicious." TASS accused Carter of distorting the "aims and nature" of Soviet actions in Afghanistan.<sup>708</sup> Pravda and Izvestiia continued to insist that "counterrevolutionary activity"

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<sup>706</sup> For further comparisons and analysis, see Robert Rand, "A Chronology of Soviet-Afghan Relations: April 1978-January 1980," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, January 2, 1980.

<sup>707</sup> Izvestiia, January 1, 1980.

<sup>708</sup> See "USSR This Week," Radio Liberty Research Bulletin, January 7, 1980.

had not stopped in Afghanistan.<sup>709</sup> Compared to the propaganda pertaining to the 1968 intervention, the Soviet literature in 1979 appears to contain more recriminations against foreign counterrevolutionaries and subversive activities. The Soviet soldiers were told that they would be fighting Americans and Chinese when they got to Afghanistan, for example.<sup>710</sup>

Moreover, these polemics drew on Lenin's writings. According to Novoye Vremya (New Times), a journal designed for foreign audiences, the Soviet leadership

proceeded from the behests of Lenin, who wrote back in 1915: the socialist state would, if need be, help the oppressed classes of other countries "using even armed force against the exploiting classes and their states." Lenin ridiculed the "recognition of internationalism in words, and its replacement in deed by petty-bourgeois nationalism and pacifism...in practical work."<sup>711</sup>

Building on Lenin's theory of imperialism, Pravda commentator Vitalii Korionov averred that the United States was using the US-Iranian conflict as a "stepping stone" for its "far-reaching designs."<sup>712</sup> He claimed that the Americans sought to create "military-strategic bridgeheads on which US imperialism" could threaten unspecified countries and "stage punitive operations against peoples fighting for national independence." These plans, he claimed, were targeted for the Indian Ocean and other regions

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<sup>709</sup> Pravda and Izvestiia, January 3, 1980.

<sup>710</sup> See the account by Andrei Okulov in Voina v Afganistane (Frankfort: Possev-Verlag, 1985), p. 45.

<sup>711</sup> Novoye Vremya, no. 17, April 1980.

<sup>712</sup> TASS in English, January 3; Pravda, January 4; Radio Liberty Research Bulletin, January 7, 1980, p. 4.

where--he added on a more optimistic note--the "antiimperialist liberation movement is gaining momentum."<sup>713</sup> Brezhnev, too, in a Pravda interview, drew on the imperialist theory by declaring that failure to have intervened "would have meant leaving Afghanistan a prey to imperialism, allowing the aggressive forces to repeat in that country what they had succeeded in doing, for instance, in Chile where the people's freedom was drowned in blood."<sup>714</sup>

The technique of preemptive accusations is also characteristic of the cybernetic decision maker, and was used liberally by the Brezhnev leadership in 1979. Although it is difficult to determine the Russians' sincerity in them, the accusations in themselves served usefully both to fend off inevitable Western accusations and to prevent the Soviet leaders from appearing hypocritical. The rationale behind the vehement and abundant rebukes was to seem so indignant that other countries (perhaps with a shallow knowledge of Russian and Soviet history) would excuse what they recognized as a act of aggression by rationally that at least the Soviet leaders believed they were behaving correctly and therefore should not be blamed too harshly.

There is another, related, process involved. After repeated accusations against the West--and the cybernetic agent learns by repetition, after all--Brezhnev and his colleagues probably came to believe their own claims. Thus the repeated verbal attacks,

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<sup>713</sup> Ibid.

<sup>714</sup> Pravda, January 13, 1980 . 1, in FBIS, Soviet Union, January 14, 1980, pp. A1-6.

however deceitful initially, became in their minds authentic perceptions of the Western capitalist countries (and any other countries working with them, e.g. Pakistan and--in some sense--Iran) as permanent sources of conflict rather than of cooperation.

In at least two ways the Brezhnev leadership used Marxism-Leninism in a more analytic fashion. First, the Kremlin was careful not to characterize Afghanistan as a "member of the socialist commonwealth," and hence it refrained from invoking the "limited sovereignty" concept (known in the West as the "Brezhnev Doctrine"). Instead it referred to the 1978 Soviet-Afghan Friendship Treaty as the rationale for "providing military assistance." This state-to-state diplomatic rationale (according to the Soviet media) was announced by the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan in a broadcast from Kabul in Dari on December 27.

Because of the continuation and expansion of aggression, intervention and provocations by the foreign enemies of Afghanistan and for the purpose of defending the gains of the Saur Revolution...and on the basis of the treaty of friendship, good-neighborliness and cooperation dated 5 December 1978, the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan earnestly demands that the USSR render urgent political, moral, and economic assistance, including military aid, to Afghanistan [emphasis added].<sup>715</sup>

The fact that, unlike Imre Nagy in 1956 or Alexander Dubcek in 1968, Nur Mohammed Taraki and Hafizullah Amin took a purely expedient approach toward Marxism-Leninism, probably contributed to the Brezhnev leadership's reticence to claim it intervened solely for ideological reasons. It was also careful not to

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<sup>715</sup> FBIS, Soviet Union, December 28, 1979, p. S2; Pravda, September 18, 1979, p. 1 in FBIS, Soviet Union, September 19, 1979, p. D1. Also Hammond, op. cit., p. 100.

construct any ideological barriers to withdrawing Soviet troops.

As stated in Pravda on December 31, 1979:

The Soviet Union decided to satisfy this [the Afghan government's] request and to send to Afghanistan a limited Soviet military contingent, which will be used exclusively to help repel armed interference from outside. The Soviet contingent will be completely withdrawn from Afghanistan when the factors that made this action necessary are no longer present [emphasis added].<sup>716</sup>

### Conclusion

By 1979 Brezhnev apparently had consolidated his power in the Kremlin, in part due to his ties to the military establishment, and had thus grown more confident in his ability to make decisions without a prolonged process of consensus-building and generating and weighing all possible options. As a result of this increased confidence and his seniority as General Secretary, Brezhnev's decision making behavior became more cybernetic than analytic, yet not to the extent of becoming identical with Khrushchev's decision making style in October-November, 1956. The Brezhnev leadership's images and memories of the Afghan opponent ostensibly took on more importance than calculations of benefits, costs, risks and goals and policies. The Soviet leaders seem not only to have accepted the poor state of US-Soviet relations by the late 1970s, but to have grown accustomed to capitalizing on the fact. From their point of view, if those relations were already poor, there would be few costs and risks involved should the Russians intervene

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<sup>716</sup> Alexei Petrov, "K sobytiem v Afganistane," Pravda, December 31, 1979, p. 4.

militarily in Afghanistan. The United States' inertia in foreign affairs since their troop withdrawal from Vietnam in 1975 probably lulled the Soviet planners into thinking they could afford to take greater risks with no penalty. Yet, as this chapter has attempted to illustrate, the Soviet leadership overlooked a number of key factors while deciding how best to solve the crisis in Afghanistan. These ignored factors, which have played a significant role in Gorbachev's "new thinking" (novomyslenie), will be examined in greater detail in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5  
COMPARISONS AND CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, the two main questions posed in Chapter One will be addressed. The first question is: 1) Which factors influence the Soviet leaders to intervene in a country in the Soviet sphere of influence? The second question is: 2) What accounts for the Soviet "successes" in Hungary and Czechoslovakia as opposed to the "failure" in Afghanistan?

To answer the first question four tasks must be accomplished. First, the similarities and differences among the three cases of intervention, specifically among the domestic and international contexts and individual factors of decision making, will be isolated and examined in relation to the initial propositions about Soviet decision making theory articulated in Chapter One. Second, new propositions will be formed based on the evidence that emerged from the case studies, which connect the decision to intervene with the domestic and international contexts, and the four factors of decision making. To recapitulate, these are: the image of the opponent held by Soviet leaders; their calculations of costs, benefits, and risks associated with intervention; their goals, policies and commitments vis-a-vis the opponent; and their memories of past relations with the opponent. To enhance the

validity of these propositions (which are based largely on logical inference), more rigorous empirical testing would be required in a future study. The third task involves testing the key propositions and conclusions for validity by applying them to two other cases of Soviet intervention and four cases of nonintervention. The fourth, and final, task is to determine how the study can be refined.

In answer to the second question posed above regarding the failed intervention in Afghanistan, three causes will be explored: Islamic fundamentalism, US assertiveness in international affairs, and the collapse of the Soviet economy.

After the two questions have been addressed, the analytic and cybernetic decision making models will be appraised. Finally, some broader conclusions and implications of this study for the Soviet Union in the 2000s will be discussed.

#### I. Factors in the Soviet Decision to Intervene

We turn now to the first question: Which factors influence the Soviet leaders in their decision to intervene in a neighboring country?

##### Similarities and Differences

Six similarities in particular can be noted at the outset. Of these similarities it is important to distinguish between those which represent the "inputs" into the decision calculus from those which are simply "outputs" of the process. Three similarities pertain to inputs: 1) in all three cases the Soviet leaders

believed that the communist party in the target country was either in danger of collapsing or had already collapsed and needed to be restored with outside help; and 2) the Soviet leaders in all three cases predicted U.S. noninvolvement.<sup>717</sup> The remaining broad similarities are simple conditions or outputs of the decision process. First, each country (Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Afghanistan) is located in the Soviet sphere of influence. While not a member of the "socialist commonwealth" (sotsialisticheskogo sodruzhestvo), Afghanistan has nevertheless been of vital concern to the Soviet leaders as a country located on its southern border.

Second, the military interventions either coincided with, or occurred in the immediate aftermath of, other major crises or wars that absorbed the world's attention (the Suez crisis in 1956, the Vietnam war in 1968, and the Iranian hostage "crisis" beginning in November 1979).

Third, the Soviet leaders attempted to exploit factional struggles in each target country by organizing pro-Soviet coups and synchronizing them with the military interventions. Finally, in terms of tactics (or in Soviet parlance the "arithmetics" as opposed to the "higher mathematics" of crisis management), the Soviet planners repeated certain techniques of deception (e.g.

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<sup>717</sup> This can be inferred, since intervening militarily in the face of clear warning signals from Washington would have entailed risking a U.S.-Soviet confrontation. At times when the United States clearly demonstrated its political and strategic interest in a country (e.g. Iran in 1946, Yugoslavia in 1948, Poland in 1980-1), the Soviet Union relented by reversing its course or refraining from taking offensive military actions in the area.

removing the batteries from the target country's tanks, halting all public criticism for several weeks or months before the attack, etc.)

It is important to note these similarities, because one can infer that they are necessary, although perhaps not sufficient, causal factors in the Soviet decision to intervene. For the purpose of analysis, let us transform them into a tentative proposition.

The Soviet leaders will decide to intervene militarily when: 1) the country is located in the Soviet sphere of influence; 2) they perceive the local communist leader to be out of control of the situation; 3) they predict US noninvolvement; 4) there is another international crisis to distract the world's attention; 5) there is factional struggle in the country that can be manipulated and synchronized with a pro-Soviet coup.

Several obvious differences among the three cases should be stated briefly. First, the intervention in Afghanistan failed; a ten-year war ensued. It was not the solution to the existing problem, but the prelude to an even greater one. Second, Afghanistan was formally a nonaligned country located outside the Soviet bloc. In fact, not since World War II had Soviet ground forces been employed in divisional strength outside the Soviet bloc. (Elite combat units had, however, been sent to such Third World countries as Egypt, Ethiopia, and South Yemen). Third, Afghanistan is an Islamic country, unlike Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Fourth, and finally, in Hungary a multi-party government was technically in place when the Soviet Union invaded--not a single Communist party, as in Czechoslovakia and Afghanistan.

These differences may or may not be important in influencing the final decision to intervene. There are two basic reasoning processes by which to interpret the significance of discrepant factors. First, if in all three cases the outcome is the same (the decision to intervene), but in one of the cases a factor is missing that is present in the other two cases, at least three facts can be inferred: 1) the factor is not a necessary causal ingredient; 2) the other factor(s) that are present in all three cases have more impact on the final outcome than does the missing factor; or 3) the factor was misnamed, and is concealing a different, more fundamental, factor that really is present in all three cases.

Second, if the outcome is the same in all three cases, but in one of the cases a factor is present that is missing in the other two cases, at least four facts can be inferred: 1) the extra factor has no impact on the final outcome; 2) the factors that are present in all three cases have more impact than this new factor; 3) the new factor has assumed enormous importance that outweighs the influence of the once powerful factors common to all three cases; and 4) the new factor is misnamed, and its fundamental essence is incorporated with one of the other common factors.

In general, these differences imply that the Soviet Union will intervene under less restrictive conditions than formally supposed. Omitting the first difference (the Afghan intervention became a ten-year war), which is an outcome, not a causal factor, the second difference (Afghanistan's nonaligned status) can be

interpreted by inference #2 in the first reasoning process, namely that the most important condition is the presence of a ruling Communist party in danger of collapsing. The target country's past diplomatic status is less crucial in the equation. The third difference (Afghanistan's Islamic affiliation) probably can be interpreted by inference #2 in the second logical sequence. The fact that Afghanistan shared a border with the Soviet Union and that the Afghan Communist party was endangered in all likelihood outweighed the importance of Islam as a factor in the Kremlin's cost-benefit-risk calculations. (As we shall see, the Soviet leaders made a gross error in downplaying this factor.)

There are a great many more detailed similarities and differences among the three cases of Soviet military intervention, and these should be analyzed and compared within the higher-level concepts to which they relate. Since each case was examined in regard to the domestic and international contexts, and the four factors of decision making (outlined above), we will now extract the similar and disparate features of these factors across the three time periods. Other variables, such as the role of technology, will be kept constant in this analysis. By conducting the comparative study in this manner, it will be possible later to draw more useful and policy-relevant propositions.

#### Domestic Context

There are several similarities and differences in the domestic and international contexts of the three decisions to intervene. The basic similarity relates to the two leaders' aims in domestic

policy; both Khrushchev and Brezhnev strove to reform the system only in response to specific problems, staying always within the parameters of the post World War II system forged by Stalin. They never questioned the essential legitimacy of Soviet controls over the governments and economies of the East European countries.

Both Khrushchev and Brezhnev also placed high priority on economic revitalization, particularly on agricultural reform, and advocated party interventionism as a spur to economic initiative, but their conceptions of the scope, purpose, and character of party intervention were very different. Khrushchev's methods can perhaps be characterized as horizontal, i.e. he often appealed directly to the masses over the heads of the official elite. He used material incentives indiscriminately and thus inefficiently. His stated goals were wildly unrealistic in terms of past Soviet performance and the given time frame within to reach those goals. Brezhnev, on the other hand, set less ambitious goals but had a better record of reaching them. He restored Soviet workers' faith in themselves and their capability to reach short-term goals. He delegated many tasks to his associates, instead of tackling every problem himself (as did the "tireless" and "energetic" Khrushchev). He gave job security to party and government officials. Unlike Khrushchev, he never accused officials of "anti-state" activities, but instead created an atmosphere of mutual trust and mutual responsibility for running the country. In sum, Brezhnev was an excellent manager. His policies and style can be distinguished from those of Khrushchev by their verticality. In

other words, he strengthened the official party hierarchy and restored a sense of protocol, never going over local officials' heads with direct appeals to the masses, and vice versa, never warned the national elite of possible mass disorder.

There are more concrete differences between the domestic contexts of the three Soviet decisions to intervene. First, the Khrushchev leadership in 1956 was looked upon as more of a "collective leadership" than Brezhnev's leadership, which has been characterized by scholars as "oligarchic" and, in the latter half of the 1970s, as "cartelistic."<sup>718</sup> Khrushchev had not completely consolidated his power in the Kremlin until he had ousted the "Anti-Party Group" in 1957 (Molotov, Malenkov, Kaganovich, Bulganin) and then ousted the military celebrity who had helped him, Marshal Zhukov. Even though the leadership may not have actually operated as a collective, Khrushchev was still constrained to uphold the myth that it did. The period of collective leadership prevailed in the three years immediately following Stalin's death, and was probably drawing to an end by 1956. In fact, Khrushchev in all likelihood was counting on the

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<sup>718</sup> See, for example, Seweryn Bialer, "The Soviet Political Elite and Internal Developments in the USSR," in W. E. Griffiths, ed. The Soviet Empire: Expansion and Detente (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1976); Archie Brown, "Policymaking in the Soviet Union," Soviet Studies 23 (1971): 120-148; Zbigniew Brzezinski and Samuel Huntington, Political Power: USA/USSR (New York: Viking Press, 1965); Jerry Hough, "The Soviet System: Petrification or Pluralism," Problems of Communism 21 (1972): 25-45; D. Hammer, USSR: The Politics of Oligarchy (New York: Praeger, 1974); and Grey Hodnett, "The Pattern of Leadership Politics," in Seweryn Bialer, ed. The Domestic Context of Soviet Foreign Policy (Boulder: Westview Press, 1981).

military intervention in Hungary to serve as a foreign policy achievement to strengthen his image as Stalin's worthy successor.

Second, apart from the brief crackdown in East Berlin in 1953, Khrushchev in 1956 had no precedent of a successful Soviet intervention on a massive scale to guide him in his decision. He had only the memory of Stalin's past successes in foreign policy to help him. Third, in contrast to the immense allocation of resources to the military sector under Brezhnev's leadership, Khrushchev actually cut back the number of Soviet troops after the armistice in Korea. Between 1955 and 1956 he reportedly reduced military manpower from 5,700,000 to 3,860,000 personnel. A smaller troop reduction followed in 1958-59, when some Soviet troops were withdrawn from Rumania.<sup>719</sup>

A more pervasive difference between the domestic context in 1956 and that of the later periods is the influence of Stalin. Memories of his personality cult and the modes of behavior obligatory for survival in Soviet society were still potent in 1956; the released prisoners spoke freely among themselves, and an intense reevaluation of Soviet history was taking place, partly in public, mostly in private. Increasingly uncontrollable forces were released within the Soviet population as well as among the populations of all the bloc countries. Khrushchev's decision to intervene in Hungary was the final answer to the question, "How

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<sup>719</sup> Phillip A. Petersen, "Soviet Perceptions of Military Sufficiency: 1960-74," in Bernard W. Eissenstat, ed., The Soviet Union: The Seventies and Beyond (Lexington, Mass: Lexington Books, 1975), p. 250.

far will Destalinization be permitted to go?"

By 1968, however, criticism of Stalinism had given way to patriotism, articulated and repeated from the top echelons of the party leadership. About half of Brezhnev's speeches to domestic audiences from 1964 to 1968 centered around patriotic themes, such as the greeting of cosmonauts, celebrations of the 20th anniversary of victory in World War II, and various awards to the republics for their contributions to national goals. Given this reliance on patriotism as an integrating myth and the general "verticality" of his political style, the "spillover" of ideas from the 1968 Prague Spring was no doubt particularly pernicious to Brezhnev. In contrast, Khrushchev's populist mentality and "horizontal" approach probably directed him to single out the fact of "fellow communists being killed in Hungary" as one of the most important reasons for invading Hungary.

Perhaps the most important difference between the domestic political context in 1968 and that of 1956 and 1979 is Brezhnev's commitment to a kind of "proceduralism" in running the country's affairs. He made no rash decisions, hatched no "hare-brained" schemes, but instead synthesized the ideas which emerged from the key Politburo members after long debate. The memory of Khrushchev's blunders was an important causal factor in this new approach.

There are at least three similarities between domestic context of 1956 and 1979. First, some of the men in the inner decision making sanctum in both years currently held (or had held in the

past) positions of responsibility in the KGB or the military. Bulganin (who replaced Malenkov as Prime Minister in 1955) had made his career in the Cheka, for example. Andropov (KGB), Grechko, and Gromyko were admitted as full members of the Politburo in April 1973. Second, both Khrushchev in 1956 and Brezhnev in 1979 encouraged or at least permitted public criticism of officials for incompetence, which indicates the cyclical development of Soviet styles of leadership; Brezhnev was changing his earlier practice of providing the "cadres" with "stability" and protecting their reputations. Finally, the domestic context of the 1956 and 1979 decisions is overshadowed by a succession struggle. In the first case (1956) it was coming to an end, and Khrushchev's decision to send tanks into Budapest was a bid for personal power in the Kremlin. In the second case (1979) the succession struggle was just beginning; the final long-term successor to Brezhnev would be the one who could achieve a withdrawal of tanks from Afghanistan (Gorbachev).

The above comparison suggests that what is essential in the domestic context of the Soviet decision to intervene is an unalterable commitment to maintain Soviet control over the East European states acquired at the end of World War II. The similarities and differences between the three time periods suggests that there are many ways factors can combine to produce the final decision to intervene. Khrushchev's military cutback, for example, would seem to be a constraining factor, but it was no doubt offset by the influence of Stalin, his populist sympathy for

the Hungarian communists, his desire to emerge the victor in the succession struggle, and his predilection for quick solutions. Likewise, factors such as Brezhnev's "proceduralism," realistic goal-setting, and the absence of military or KGB officials (in 1968) acted to delay the decision to intervene.

#### International Context

To reiterate, the main similarity among all three international contexts is that the Soviet intervention occurred simultaneously with other international events or crises. There are at least six main differences among the international contexts of the three Soviet decisions to intervene. First, only in 1969 had the Soviet Union reached a state of strategic parity with the United States. Already by 1968 Soviet Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) totalled approximately 800, almost double the 1967 figure.<sup>720</sup> A limited Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) system, based on the Galosh anti-missile missile, was being to be deployed around Moscow, and a surface-to-air missile system was being installed along the Baltic coast.<sup>721</sup> The United States, on the other hand, had 650 Minuteman 1 and 350 Minuteman 2 operational solid-fuel ICBMs, or a total of 1,000.<sup>722</sup> Between 1965 and 1973 Soviet intercontinental missile forces expanded tremendously, from

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<sup>720</sup> The Military Balance, 1968-69 (London: Institute of International Strategic Studies, 1969), p. 5.

<sup>721</sup> Ibid.

<sup>722</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

270 in 1965 to 1575 in 1974.<sup>723</sup> But in 1956 the Soviet leadership lacked a credible nuclear deterrent and was therefore much less confident about US reactions to Soviet political moves.

Second, the Soviet Union wielded much more power politically, economically, and ideologically over the Eastern European satellite countries in 1956, than it did in 1968 and 1979. It is true that there had been some rebellions in East Berlin (1953), Poznan, Poland (1956), Pilsen, Czechoslovakia, and in other towns throughout Eastern Europe in the aftermath of Stalin's death, but these elicited a quick Soviet response, be it a military crackdown, a personal visit by the entire Soviet Politburo, or a threatening phone call from the Kremlin. By 1968, however, the Eastern European countries had each discovered the particular parameters of acceptable behavior within which they could maneuver. Ever since the 1956 invasion, Hungary's reliability as a Warsaw Pact member had been weakened. After the Sino-Soviet rift became public (1960), the bloc countries could win greater freedom from the Russians in return for siding with them against the Chinese. In 1961 Albania refused to participate in Warsaw Pact activities, and began the war of polemics with the Soviet Union, branding it a "rightist revisionist."

Third, the international context in 1956 differed from that of 1968 and 1979 in the respect that Soviet relations with the People's Republic of China (PRC) were still close. Mao Tse-tung, having stayed well informed of the events in Hungary through his

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<sup>723</sup> Petersen, op. cit., p. 255.

scholarly Ambassador there, Ho Te-ching, sent an urgent message to the Kremlin asking Khrushchev for quick action against the Hungarian revisionists.<sup>724</sup> By 1968 the PRC was absorbed in the Cultural Revolution, and the invasion of Czechoslovakia merely widened the rift between the orthodox Warsaw Pact states and the Albanian and Chinese "leftist revisionists." Finally, by 1979 not only was the PRC on bad terms with the USSR, but it had actually normalized relations with the rival superpower, the USA.

Perhaps as a result of the weakening control over East Europe and the PRC, the Soviet Union increased its influence in the Third World. A fourth difference, then, between the international contexts of 1956 and 1968 and that of 1979 is the fact that the Soviet Union had recently built up a record of "successes" in Africa (Angola, 1975; Ethiopia, 1978; South Yemen, 1978).

Fifth, since Khrushchev had no concrete precedent of a successful military intervention in the post-Stalin years, he could not be sure of American reactions to the 1956 invasion. Brezhnev in both 1968 and 1979, however, had learned that the United States respects the Soviet sphere of influence, despite the fact that it had not officially recognized the post-World War II status quo. Indeed, Republican presidential candidates (e.g. Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan) no doubt observed that their chances of winning national elections improve in the aftermath of Soviet interventions.

Sixth, and finally, in 1979--unlike in 1956 and 1968--the

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<sup>724</sup> Radvanyi, op. cit., p. 27.

Soviet Union came into direct conflict with an alien ideology: Islam. The implications of this encounter will be explored in more depth when the failure of the intervention in Afghanistan is discussed.

Several conclusions appear to follow from the above comparison, although further empirical testing would be required to improve their validity. First, the Soviet Union does not need strategic parity with the United States in order to feel sufficiently confident to send tanks into a neighboring country in its sphere of influence. Second, the less influence the Soviet Union has over Eastern Europe as a whole, the less likely it is to intervene in one of the East European countries, and the less likely it will have cooperation from other East European countries in doing so. In the 1956-79 period, Soviet influence over Eastern Europe had been replaced by influence over Third World countries. Third, either close Soviet-Chinese relations have minimal or no effect on the Soviet decision to intervene, or other factors have more impact (e.g. perceptions of the target country's resolve, perceptions of United States' likely reactions, etc.). Fourth, Soviet-Third World relations (like Soviet-Chinese relations) have varying degrees of impact on the final Soviet decision to intervene. Fifth, the fact that Khrushchev had fewer ways by which to estimate what the American reaction to the 1956 invasion would be (since he had no precedent with which to draw an analogy, excluding the East Berlin uprising in 1953), implies that Khrushchev was a greater risk-taker than was Brezhnev. Finally, as

explained earlier, Afghanistan's Islamic affiliation probably did not figure prominently in the Soviet decision to intervene (as it should have).

#### Image of the Opponent

Apart from the fact that each country shares a border with the Soviet Union, and that in each case the Soviet leaders perceived the local leader to have lost control over his people, there are no other striking similarities in the Kremlin's images of the three opponents. Several differences between them emerge, however, upon closer scrutiny. First, Hafizullah Amin was guileful, while Nagy and Dubcek gullible. Amin was just as adept at deceiving the Soviet leaders as they were at deceiving--or attempting to deceive--him. This may stem from the fact that Amin apparently had radically different, more self-serving, motives for becoming a communist (or professing to believe in communism), than did Nagy and Dubcek.

Second, Amin had had no experience living in the Soviet Union for an extended period of time, as had both Nagy and Dubcek, so he probably had less psychological ties to that country. Third, both Czechoslovakia and Afghanistan were divided by ethnic groups or tribes, while Hungary was fairly cohesive ethnically. Fourth, in terms of geography, Czechoslovakia was the only country that shared a border with Germany, and was the most westward territory of the bloc countries. Fifth, unlike in Hungary and Afghanistan, there was no violence in Czechoslovakia. Sixth, the languages spoken in Hungary (Magyar) and Afghanistan (Dari) are radically

different from the language spoken in Czechoslovakia (Czech), which is a Slavic language. This suggests that the anti-Russian tradition was more potent in Hungary and Afghanistan, and that the Soviet leaders decided more quickly to suppress the resistance movements by military force. A seventh, and final, difference is that the Soviet leaders overestimated the potential in individual Czechoslovak leaders to become quislings (e.g. Indra, Bilak, Svoboda), while they accurately perceived Kadar (Hungary) and Karmal (Afghanistan) as leaders of the "normalization" process. This perhaps indicates that the Soviet leaders' deliberations before the decision to intervene in Czechoslovakia was reached were more thorough than their preparations for "normalization" after the intervention had taken place.

#### Benefits, Costs, and Risks and Long-term Goals

In each case of intervention the Soviet leadership in all likelihood perceived at least two main benefits: the crisis would be solved in a short period of time (military intervention being a "quick fix"), and the Soviet army would gain field experience. The Kremlin also had one similar goal in all three cases: maintain strong economic ties between the target country in question and the Soviet Union (i.e. prevent the country from becoming too integrated with Western economies). In the Hungarian and Czechoslovak cases, the Soviet leaders had another similar goal: maintain the post World War II status quo.

There are several differences among the three cases as well. There seem to have been two additional costs that the Soviet

leadership incurred after the 1968 and 1979 interventions that they did not incur after the 1956 invasion. First, detente suffered a setback after the 1968 and 1979 interventions; as early as 1956, however, the policy had not been fully formulated. Second, the international communist movement was disrupted to a greater degree after the later two interventions; in 1956 the movement was still fairly cohesive because Sino-Soviet relations were still strong.

Another difference in comparing the three cases is that the cost of intervening in Czechoslovakia was greater than that associated with the other two interventions in the respect that the traditional sympathy of the Czechoslovak people was permanently destroyed. Moreover, one risk of military intervention was realized in the 1968 case, namely the risk of not being able to establish a pro-Soviet regime to "normalize" the situation quickly.

Fifth, in terms of economic policies, in Hungary and Czechoslovakia indigenous economic problems were one of the major causes of the rebellion and reform movement respectively. These problems stemmed in large part from the Soviet Union's exploitation of the satellite countries' economies to finance the heavy industrialization drive within the Soviet Union. In Afghanistan the Russians also exploited the Afghan economy and its natural resources, but at the same time they had also given large amounts of gratuitous aid (or very low-interest loans) from 1953 to 1973. The intervention in December 1979 was in a sense the

Russians' effort to protect their investment. Exploitation was a two-way affair in this case; Amin had been exploiting Soviet money and resources just as much as the Russians had been exploiting his country's resources.

A final difference in Soviet strategic goals in the three cases consists in the fact that, unlike in 1956 and 1968, the Afghanistan invasion contained offensive as well as purely defensive elements. The Soviet Union had never intervened in divisional strength in Afghanistan before; the country had long been considered a nonaligned country. By invading, the Soviet Union was now considerably closer to the Persian Gulf, i.e. to warm water ports and oil reserves, and to the outer edges of the American sphere of influence in the Middle East. Given several unprecedented conditions--Afghanistan's nonaligned status, its unfamiliar terrain, the fanatic, uncompromising nature of Islam, and the United States growing assertiveness in international politics--it may be concluded that Brezhnev took a greater risk in intervening in Afghanistan than Khrushchev had earlier in 1956, and than he himself took in 1968.

#### Memories of Past Relations

There are several differences in the Soviet memories of each target country. First, Hungary was the only country of the three to have fought on the German side in both world wars (although Afghanistan cooperated with Germany). Second, both Hungarians and Afghans were defeated by Russian military forces--in the first case, by Tsar Nicholas I's army in 1848, and in the latter case,

by both Russian and Soviet soldiers on at least five occasions (the 1885 Panjdeh crisis, the basmachi revolts in 1917-8, and the Soviet incursions of 1925, 1929, and 1930). Hence both these countries have a strong anti-Russian tradition. In contrast, the Czechoslovaks had never fought with, and been defeated by, Russian or Soviet armies (excluding the 1948 coup which did not entail widespread violence). This country lacked an anti-Russian tradition; the Communist Party (represented by Klement Gottwald) received 38% of the vote in May, 1946 after the Soviet "liberation" of Czechoslovakia. Of the three countries, Czechoslovakia has the strongest anti-German tradition.

Third, both Hungary and Czechoslovakia had once belonged to the Austrian-Hungarian empire, whereas Afghanistan has been a traditional buffer state, i.e. keeping two large empires apart: Great Britain and Russia. Fourth, and finally, Stalin had not wielded unlimited control over Afghanistan as he had over Hungary and Czechoslovakia, which again, suggests that Afghanistan had more national pride and determination to resist Soviet aggression.

#### New Propositions

The above discussion of similarities and differences among the domestic and international contexts and the four factors in the Soviet decision making process enables us now to formulate a set of detailed hypotheses and contingent generalizations with which to create a richer, more differentiated theory of Soviet decision making. In answer to the first main question of this study, there

are many factors that influence Soviet leaders to decide to intervene militarily, and that of the four factors examined here, it is the specific combination and interaction of intervening variables that results in the final decision in each case. The various ways in which these variables can interact is revealed in the propositions below.

It will be recalled that one of the initial working propositions about the role of the domestic context in the Soviet leadership's decision to intervene was: the more oligarchic (less collective) the power structure in the Kremlin, the more cybernetic will be the decision making process, because the leaders will think in similar ways. A consensus will be easily reached, and as a consequence, the leaders will not be stimulated to generate and weigh alternatives. However, this study has revealed several intervening variables, or causal factors, which make it necessary to qualify the initial proposition:

The degree to which an oligarchic leadership makes decisions in a cybernetic manner depends upon: 1) the type of lessons learned from the incumbent leader's predecessor and that leader's method of decision making (e.g. lessons Brezhnev learned from Khrushchev and his "hare-brained schemes"); 2) the leadership's perception of the urgency of the situation in the target country (e.g. the degree of violence against communists, the amount of time before the situation is transformed, etc.); 3) the number one leader's power base in comparison with those of his colleagues; 4) the number of men from the military and the KGB in the inner decision making circle; and 5) the length of the number one leader's tenure in the Kremlin.

Thus, while Brezhnev's leadership was an oligarchy in 1968, it did not behave in a cybernetic manner because of the vivid memories of the mistakes Khrushchev had made by deciding matters rashly; the

perceived lack of urgency about the Czechoslovak case because of the lack of violence and the lack of a deadline (until June 1, when Dubcek announced the upcoming elections on August 26 and September 9); Brezhnev's Khrushchevite power base versus the different power bases of Podgornii, Suslov, and Kosygin (resulting in a loss of influence over these men to some extent); the lack of any men from the military or KGB in the Politburo; and the mere four years that Brezhnev had been General Secretary.

In 1979, however, the Brezhnev leadership had become a tighter oligarchy--even a "cartel" as some scholars have termed it--and did behave in a cybernetic manner. This can be attributed to the fact that by 1979 the memory of Khrushchev's mistakes had probably dimmed in Brezhnev's mind; the situation in Afghanistan was perceived to be urgent, because Soviet personnel and citizens had been killed (e.g. at Herat in March); Brezhnev had appointed new men to the Politburo (Andropov, Grechko, Gorshkov in April 1973), so his influence over his political colleagues had increased; there were more representatives from the military and KGB in the inner sanctum; and he had been General Secretary now for fifteen years.

What, then, accounts for the cybernetic behavior of Khrushchev's "collective leadership"? First, an oligarchic power structure is not a necessary component of the definition of cybernetic decision making articulated in Chapter One. Stated simply, cybernetic decision making is not solely a function of the power structure or regime. There were other factors strongly

influencing Khrushchev's leadership which cancelled out the restraining effect of the collective leadership. One such factor was Khrushchev's immense pride in Stalin's strength and resoluteness as a leader, despite the former's "Secret Speech" exposing Stalin's "crimes." Khrushchev was anxious to act in a manner worthy of Stalin's successor; the act of permitting a communist party to lose its leading role in a socialist country on the Soviet border did not fit with this aspiration. The inherent admiration of Stalin imbued Khrushchev with a fundamentally conservative purpose where Soviet foreign policy was concerned.

A second factor that counterbalanced the restraining influence of the collective leadership was Khrushchev's own impulsive personality. Impulses, memories, and ingrained habits tended to influence Khrushchev's actions rather than his own scale of preferences and comparisons of various options to those preferences. Third, since Stalin was only three years in his grave, and according to many otherwise rational Russians "more powerful in death than in life," many high officials had not recovered the aptitude to think independently. Thus while the power structure in the 1953-56 period was more collective than Brezhnev's regime in 1968 or 1979, it was not "collective" in the real sense of the word. It is highly doubtful, for example, that Politburo members such as Bulganin, Saburov, or Pervukhin argued energetically with Khrushchev over whether or not to intervene. Fourth, the very fact that the structure was not fully "collective" suggests that Khrushchev may have been eager to

intervene and quickly crush the "counterrevolution" to further prove his leadership skills and worthiness to become the number one decision maker in the Kremlin.

The second initial assumption pertaining to the domestic context was: the more imaginative or innovative the number one leader in the Kremlin is in the domestic sphere, the more imaginative he will be also in foreign policy. Based on the study's findings, the new, qualified proposition should read:

The principal leader in the Kremlin who is innovative in the domestic sphere will not ipso facto behave innovatively in response to foreign policy crises (i.e. consider solutions short of force), given the following intervening variables: 1) the leader's pride in Stalin's foreign policy achievements (e.g. Soviet hegemony over Eastern Europe) and consequent desire to preserve these gains; 2) his image of the opponent (i.e. the amount of violence perpetrated against communists, the country's anti-Russian tradition, etc.); 3) auspicious timing--simultaneous occurrence of another crisis by which to distract world attention; 4) a succession crisis in the Kremlin and the leading contender's desire for a foreign policy achievement.

In regard to the international context of the decision to intervene, it was initially assumed that the more distracted the United States is by other international events or crises, the more likely the Soviet leadership is to decide to intervene militarily in the country located in its sphere of influence where another crisis was brewing that threatened Soviet national interests. Based on the study's findings (particularly on the Afghanistan case study), the new proposition becomes:

The Soviet leadership will decide to intervene even if American intelligence agencies (e.g. the CIA) are fully aware of its plans, provided that: 1) the Kremlin perceives the American President to be indecisive, lacking in domestic support (even from his own political

party), and unlikely to react in ways extremely detrimental to Soviet national interests; and/or 2) the United States is about to hold national elections, and the Kremlin leaders anticipate that one of the parties--Democratic or Republican--will find a Soviet intervention opportune.

Several, more detailed, propositions and hypotheses regarding the Soviet image of the opponent are in order as well. First, the Soviet leaders' choice of means by which to solve a crisis in a nearby socialist country is in part a function of their image of the local leader. If they perceive him to be gullible, they are more likely to attempt methods of persuasion rather than force. (The military option is never ruled out, however, because if the local leader is perceived to be gullible, then the Soviet leaders will tend to think a military intervention will be easy, because the leader will not order his country's army to resist, and--being a fellow Communist--he can be easily deceived.) Conversely, if the local leader is perceived to be guileful, the Soviet leaders are more likely to attempt quick, forceful methods by which to solve the problem (e.g. murder, military intervention).

Second, if the Soviet leaders become aware of other influential and experienced political leaders in the target country, they will tend to underestimate those leaders' national pride and assume that they can easily be persuaded to head a new pro-Soviet regime. Third, related to the above "search for quislings" is the observation that political figures that have withstood long years in prison, but who then return to politics, are excellent candidates. They have acquired the right combination of personal ambition, cynicism, and national pride (e.g. Janos

Kadar, Gustav Husak--and in a larger sense--Matyas Rakosi and Wladislaw Gomulka).

Fourth, if the Soviet leaders perceive the target country to be ethnically homogenous and/or intensely nationalistic, then they will be more likely to conclude that the crisis can only be solved by military means. Fifth, if the Soviet leaders know that Soviet personnel or simply native communists are being killed in the target country, then they will perceive the situation as more serious than otherwise, and they will decide more quickly how to solve the crisis (Hungary, Afghanistan). Sixth, if the language and culture of the target country are radically different from those of the Soviet Union, the Soviet leaders will not be as concerned about the "spillover of ideas" into Soviet regions than otherwise.

One can conclude about the role of the Soviet image of the opponent in the decision calculus that ostensibly favorable aspects of the target country (from the Soviet viewpoint) can be offset by other, less favorable aspects, thus resulting in the same final decision to intervene militarily. For example, the fact that a country is ethnically split can be positive, in the respect that there is less danger of the population being united against Russians. But if the language and culture of the country are similar to Russian, even though the country is ethnically split, then there is another danger to Soviet interests, namely the "spillover of ideas" into Russian territory. To give a second example, the fact that communists or Russian citizens are being

killed in the target country can be extremely humiliating for the Soviet Union and harm its international image, but just as harmful to the Soviet image is a military intervention in the absence of any physical violence. The less violence in the country, the greater the Soviet leadership's need for an ideological "doctrine" to justify its actions and protect the Soviet Union's precarious legitimacy.

The original assumption about cost-benefit-risk calculations was: confidence in risk-taking increases with repetition. This proposition must be qualified in the light of the study's findings. With the exception of a few perceived benefits, costs, risks, and goals that are identical in all three cases:<sup>725</sup>

Perceptions of benefits, costs, and risks varies slightly in each of the three cases of Soviet intervention.

The original assumption implies that, regardless of what the particular cost-benefit-risk ratio is in each specific case, the mere act of repetition increases Soviet leaders' confidence in taking future risks. This is a very dubious proposition. Having investigated the Brezhnev leadership's decision to intervene in 1968, however, we know that Brezhnev's confidence in risk-taking did not result solely from the fact that Khrushchev had intervened successfully in Hungary. Instead, the Brezhnev leadership acquired a degree of confidence in risk-taking after a lengthy analysis of

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<sup>725</sup> For example, auspicious timing, field experience, prevention of extensive economic ties between the target country and the West (common benefits); diminished Warsaw Pact reliability, rifts within the international communist movement (common costs); and some deterioration in US-Soviet relations, Soviet casualties (common risks).

the benefits, costs, and risks associated with various options. In 1979, however, the Brezhnev leadership does appear to have acquired confidence in risk-taking based on the successful repetition of risk-taking in the 1968-78 period, particularly the interventions in 1968 (Czechoslovakia), 1975 (Angola), 1978 (Ethiopia), and 1978 (South Yemen). Thus a more accurate proposition becomes:

Confidence in risk-taking is not solely a function of repetition, but if the same General Secretary takes consecutive risks and succeeds over a period of 5-10 years, it is more likely that he will grow confident in future risk-taking even in the face of greater odds than before.

A caveat must be added at this point, that--of all the factors of decision making--the calculations of benefits, costs, risks, and their relation to long-term goals is the most difficult to analyze, given the lack of concrete data. The above analysis is based largely on logical inference, as it must be.

The original assumption about economic goals and policies was: the Soviet leaders will intervene, among other reasons, in order to prevent the target country from forging extensive economic ties with Western or pro-Western countries. In the light of evidence from the Afghan case, it is possible to qualify this proposition:

The Soviet leaders will intervene, not merely to prevent the burgeoning of economic ties with the West, but also to protect the Soviet Union's past economic investments and to prevent further losses.

Finally, the initial assumption about the role that memories of past relations with the opponent plays in the Soviet decision calculus was: the memory of past victories over the opponent tends

to reinforce beliefs that the Soviet Union can subdue the opponent again by military force in a timely fashion. Based on the comparative case study, this proposition appears to hold true, although the memory of past victories can be outweighed by another variable: the target country's anti-Russian tradition (as in Hungary and Afghanistan). Thus the confidence that Soviet leaders may gain from memories of having defeated the country in the past is tempered by the knowledge that the country in question is more likely to fight with more determination and in a more united manner. Moreover, if the anti-Russian tradition is strong enough it can outweigh the lack of ethnic homogeneity in the country.

What factors, then, influence the Soviet leaders to intervene in a country in their sphere of influence or on their borders? (This question refers, of course, to Soviet behavior in the pre-Gorbachev era.) Based on the above comparison of similarities and differences, the initial proposition can be refined as follows.

The Soviet leaders will, in all probability, decide to intervene militarily in a country in their sphere of influence under one or more of the following conditions:

- 1) The country actually shares a border with the Soviet Union, or at least with West Germany.
- 2) There is a ruling Communist Party in the target country, but its leading role is threatened or has recently been lost (with or without the local First Secretary's permission;
- 3) The leaders have pride in Stalin's foreign policy achievements (e.g. Soviet control over East European countries) and a desire to protect these achievements;
- 4) They predict US noninvolvement (perhaps because of the American President's indecisiveness or impending national

elections);

5) They anticipate logistic or political support from either the East European or Third World countries;

6) They perceive available quislings in the target country and expect rapid "normalization;"

7) The timing is auspicious because of a simultaneous crisis elsewhere;

8) They consider certain benefits (e.g. restoration of the communist party, elimination of the security threat, field experience for the Soviet army) to outweigh certain inevitable costs (e.g. rifts in the international communist movement, deterioration in US-Soviet relations);

9) They want to improve the Warsaw Pact's strategic position and preparation vis a vis NATO and prevent the target country from integrating its economy too closely with the West; and, finally,

10) They remember having defeated the target country in the past.

#### Testing for Validity

To strengthen the explanatory or predictive power of this set of propositions, it would be useful to determine whether or not they apply to other cases of Soviet intervention, and also whether or not they apply to cases of nonintervention. In the first case, if many of the conditions hold for other cases of Soviet intervention, one can then conclude that they are strong motives for military intervention. In the latter case, if some conditions or causal factors are present while the outcome is different (nonintervention), one must conclude that they were not necessary factors in the equation, and that there are still other causal factors that did not surface in this comparative study. Clearly, it would require a second volume to examine in depth all cases of

Soviet intervention and nonintervention to ascertain whether the above conditions were present. For this reason only two cases of military intervention and six cases of nonintervention in the post World War II era have been selected. They are: Iran (1946), East Germany (1953), and Yugoslavia (1948), Finland (1948), Poland (1956), and Poland (1980-81).<sup>726</sup>

#### Iran, 1946

In many ways Iran is a special case, because it is the only country in which the Red Army established communist regimes (the "Autonomous Republic of Azerbaijan" and "Kurdish People's Republic" in northern Iran), only later to withdraw and permit them to collapse. Also, the Iranian conflict qualifies as a superpower crisis, as well as a crisis between Iran and the Soviet Union. In this brief analysis, the Iranian case is used as an instance of Soviet intervention, despite the fact that Stalin eventually withdrew his forces when threatened by the United States. Seven of the above criteria (#1, #2, #3, #4, #6, #7, #8) fit the Iranian situation, one (#10) does not, and the remaining criteria (#5, #9) are not applicable. Stated briefly, Iran does share a border with the Soviet Union. A communist party was technically in power and in danger of collapsing. Stalin was proud of his latest acquisitions and determined not to lose them. He probably assumed that the very presence of the Soviet army on

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<sup>726</sup> The interventions in Angola (1975), Ethiopia (1978), and South Yemen (1978) have been omitted, both because Cuban proxies played a more active role than Soviet personnel, and because these countries lie outside the traditional Soviet sphere of influence (in the "socialist commonwealth" or on the Soviet border).

Iranian soil signified that it (Iran) could eventually be incorporated into the Soviet Union. The veteran communist, Jaafar Pishevari (head of the Azerbaijan Democratic Party) was available to head a Soviet puppet regime. The year 1946 was fraught with international tensions<sup>727</sup> to distract the world from Soviet actions (although admittedly, the Iranian crisis was perhaps of primary importance to Washington officials). Apparently Stalin considered the benefits of intervention to outweigh the costs; he had seen how eager the Americans were to demobilize and go home, and how easy it was to establish communist regimes in Eastern Europe.

The tenth criterion does not fit the Iranian case, because the Russians have no memory of having defeated, or wielded lasting influence in, Iran in the past. In 1920 when a revolt broke out against the Shah, the Russians sent arms and troops and established the Soviet Republic of Gilan. The communist regime had minimal chance of survival in the Islamic country, and eventually the Russians withdrew and the republic collapsed.

The most important difference between the three cases of this study and the Iranian case is that President Truman had issued an ultimatum to Stalin stating that he had ordered American military chiefs to prepare for the movement of ground, sea, and air forces

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<sup>727</sup> The Cold War was beginning; the communist satellites were being established; Japan and Germany were being occupied and demilitarized; the French were beginning the war in Indochina; and the British were preparing to withdraw from India (1947).

into the area.<sup>728</sup> In May, 1946 the Red Army evacuated northern Iran. Apparently Iran lies in the "seam" between the American and Soviet spheres of influence.

#### East Germany, 1953

In the case of East Germany in 1953, five of the above criteria fit the situation (#1, #2, #3, #4, #8), one (#7) does not, and three (#5, #6, #9) are not applicable. East Germany shares a border with West Germany and is located close to the Soviet Union. The German Communist Party (SED) did perceive a threat from the rebelling workers (although Ulbricht probably could have suppressed them with his own security forces). The rebellions were by workers, and only in small, working-class districts in East Germany, in a year of great upheaval due to the death of Stalin, the great Leader (vozhd!). Thus, the "collective leadership" in Moscow probably discounted the probability of American interference in Soviet internal affairs, perhaps reasoning that Washington, too, had grown accustomed to giving Stalin a wide berth in international politics. The rebellions were easily quelled with Soviet forces, so it is also unlikely that expectations of East European countries' logistic or political support had motivated the Soviet leaders to intervene.

Since Ulbricht actually invited the Soviet tanks, the business of finding a "quisling" to head a pro-Soviet regime also does not apply. In fact, Malenkov and Beria are reputed to have urged

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<sup>728</sup> Thomas Hammond, Anatomy of Communist Takeovers (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), p. 32.

Ulbricht in the early spring of 1953 not to be so orthodox.<sup>729</sup> One is reminded more of Hafizullah Amin than of Imre Nagy or Alexander Dubcek. Moreover, the Kremlin apparently believed that the benefits of intervention (eliminating the security threat and setting a precedent for the other restless satellites) would outweigh the costs. Since Sino-Soviet relations were still good, there was little likelihood that any serious split would occur over this incident, and--as stated above--the United States was unlikely to interfere in the Soviet Union's "internal affairs." Finally, the Russians remembered having fought and defeated the Germans in both world wars.

In summary, there are five common factors between these two other cases of Soviet intervention, namely: 1) a common border with the Soviet Union or West Germany; 2) a ruling communist party in danger of collapsing; 3) Stalin's or his successors' pride in past foreign policy achievements and the determination not to "lose" these past gains; 4) the Soviet leaders' prediction of US noninvolvement; and 5) the Soviet leaders' belief that benefits, such as restoring the leading role of the communist party or eliminating security threats, exceeded costs, such as deteriorating US-Soviet relations or rifts in the international communist movement.

The set of propositions appears thus far to have a good deal of explanatory power, since five out of the ten propositions pertain to other cases of Soviet military intervention as well,

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<sup>729</sup> Dallin, *op. cit.*, p. 172.

and three other propositions do not apply simply because of chronological realities. For example, proposition #9 cannot apply to the Iranian crisis of 1946 simply because the Warsaw Pact was not formed until 1955. Likewise, propositions #5 and #6 do not pertain to the East German case, because of the small scale of the workers' rebellions and because Ulbricht--having invited in Soviet tanks himself--did not need to be replaced by a Moscow stooge.

We will now test the propositions in cases of Soviet nonintervention, to determine whether the hypothesized causes of the decision to intervene are present. If any of them are, it can then be concluded that these variables have little or no impact on the Soviet decision to intervene.

#### Yugoslavia, 1948-50

In the case of Tito's Yugoslavia (1948-50), seven of the propositions do not hold true (#1, #2, #4, #6, #7, #8, #10); two of them do hold true (#3, #5); and one (#9) is not applicable. Yugoslavia does not share a border with either the Soviet Union or West Germany. The ruling Communist Party was not threatened; on the contrary, having been elected by an overwhelming majority of Yugoslavs in 1945 and with Tito as its head, the Party had strong grass-roots support. It developed first as a resistance movement during the Nazi occupation of Yugoslavia. As far as the United States was concerned, Stalin could not rule out the possibility of US assistance to Yugoslavia in the event of a Soviet invasion. Tito had received US aid, both directly and through facilitated

loans from the World Bank.<sup>730</sup> It was reasonable for Stalin to conclude from these actions that the United States would support Tito, and even provide military assistance, should Stalin try to invade. Given Tito's popularity, moreover, the Soviet perception of available quislings to head a new regime could not have been a factor.

In regard to international crises, there were two major crises to distract the world, although they probably discouraged--rather than encouraged--Stalin from invading Yugoslavia. The first crisis was the Soviet imposition of a blockade in Berlin and the subsequent US airlift; by May 12, 1949 the Russians had removed all restrictions on communication and travel between western Germany and West Berlin. A second crisis broke out in June 1950 when the Soviet-sponsored regime of North Korea crossed the border along the thirty-eighth parallel and launched an invasion of the Western-supported republic in the south. According to Hungarian General Bela Kiraly, the Soviet bloc countries were poised, about to strike in Yugoslavia at that time, had the United States and the United Nations not intervened in Korea, necessitating Soviet support for North Korea.<sup>731</sup> Thus in the overall calculus, Stalin probably did not consider the benefits of a prospective invasion

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<sup>730</sup> Washington also loosened export controls where they concerned Yugoslavia, lifted limits on civil aviation, and approved the export of a steel mill. Alex Dragnich, "The Soviet-Yugoslav Conflict," in Jonathan Adelman, ed. Superpowers and Revolution (New York: Praeger, 1986), p. 173.

<sup>731</sup> Wayne S. Vucinich, ed. At the Brink of War and Peace: The Tito-Stalin Split in a Historic Perspective (New York: Brooklyn College Press, 1982), pp. 273-88.

(e.g. curtailment of Tito's insubordination) to outweigh the costs (further deterioration of US-Soviet relations at the height of the Cold War). Finally, the Soviet leaders had no memory of having fought and defeated Yugoslavia militarily in the past.

Since two of the propositions hold true (#3, #5), we can conclude that they are not necessary factors in the decision to intervene. In 1948-1950 Stalin was certainly proud of his latest acquisitions in Eastern Europe, but this hubris alone did not compel him to plunge ahead with an invasion of Yugoslavia. Secondly, Stalin would have been able to count on assistance from the other bloc countries in an invasion of Yugoslavia, but again, this factor was apparently not enough to influence the final decision to send in Soviet troops. One other proposition (#9) does not hold true, because in 1948-50 the Warsaw Pact did not exist.

#### Finland, 1948

In the case of Finland in 1948 (February to April), six propositions do not hold true (#2, #4, #5, #6, #7, #8), while three others do hold true (#1, #3, #10), and one is not applicable (#9). To begin this analysis, a brief explanation of the "crisis" is in order. On February 22, 1948, while the Prague coup was still occurring, Stalin sent Finnish President J. K. Paasikivi a note suggesting that a Soviet-Finnish friendship treaty be signed--one similar to treaties recently signed by the Soviet Union with Hungary, Rumania, and Bulgaria. (The signing of friendship treaties, as we know now, was stage one in Stalin's master plan for extending Soviet control over East Europe.) President

Paasikivi wisely stalled for a month. Then he sent a seven-man mission to Moscow to negotiate. Stalin unexpectedly took a conciliatory line, and settled for a friendship treaty based on a draft Paasikivi had written. In effect, the treaty preserved the status quo; the Soviet Union had veto powers over Finland's foreign policy, but no power over its domestic policy. Finland did not have to enter into a military alliance with the Soviet Union.<sup>732</sup> Since Stalin could have decided differently, the Finnish case is useful to examine.

Let us now test the propositions briefly. Finland shares a long border with the Soviet Union (specifically with the Baltic republics). There was a strong, well-organized communist party (SKP--Suomen kommunistinen puolue), but it was non-ruling and had been formed in exile in the Soviet Union.<sup>733</sup> Stalin was undoubtedly aware of the fact that, before Chicherin signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, Finland had been annexed to Soviet Russia. Thus he may have had a proprietary attitude toward Finland and a desire to regain the lost territory. Stalin in all probability could not rule out the possibility that the United States would render military assistance to the beleaguered Finns

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<sup>732</sup> For a succinct discussion of this episode, see Kevin Devlin, "Finland in 1948: Lessons of a Crisis," in Thomas T. Hammond, The Anatomy of Communist Takeovers (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), pp. 433-447.

<sup>733</sup> However, acting through a front organization of secessionist left-wing socialists, the SKDL (Finnish People's Democratic League) the Finnish Communists won 23.5 percent of the total vote and thus gained one-quarter of the Diet seats. Devlin, op. cit., p. 438.

or threaten the USSR in some way, since the United States had the atomic bomb, and President Truman was by now aware of Stalin's designs and was taking steps by which to "contain" communism (e.g. providing economic assistance to Western Europe via the Marshall Plan, helping to combat the communists in the Greek civil war, etc.).

In addition, Stalin probably was not counting on collaborating militarily with the East European countries in a possible invasion of Finland, for while he had gained considerable power over the individual communist leaders and parties, the Warsaw Pact still did not exist and thus there were no institutionalized Soviet controls over the armies of the Eastern European countries.

As far as quislings are concerned, one veteran Finnish Communist and Comintern member named Arvo Tuominen became disillusioned with the Soviet Union after the Winter War in November 1939. Another longtime Comintern member and later top official in the CPSU, Otto Kuusinen, would not have been a good choice either. One secondary purpose<sup>734</sup> of the Winter War had been to install a puppet Communist government at Terijoki on the Karelian Isthmus. Since Tuominen refused the premiership, it went to Kuusinen. Stalin later allowed the puppet government to fall in 1940. Clearly, Kuusinen would have been an extremely unpopular leader if he attempted to head a second puppet regime in 1948. Hence, there were no available puppets in Finland in 1948.

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<sup>734</sup> Stalin's primary purpose was ostensibly to strengthen the USSR's defensive position on the Leningrad front. Devlin, op. cit., p. 435.

As for other international crises, there were no acute crises that demanded Washington's undivided attention in February 1948. True, the communist coup was occurring in Czechoslovakia in February 1948, and the Chinese civil war was raging, with Mao's communists gaining the advantage over the US-supported Kuomintang under Chiang Kai-shek. But in the first case, the coup was executed so swiftly that it was a fait accompli before Washington could even begin to think of ways to prevent it. In the second case, the Chinese civil war was a prolonged crisis, allowing Washington officials to attend to other matters in intervals.

In terms of cost-benefit calculations, Stalin must have reasoned that, if Finland was willing to support the Soviet Union in its foreign policy, then there was no security threat on the northern flank. And, since a puppet communist government had been established in 1939-40 and failed to gain popular support, communism probably just did not fit the Finnish temperament; further attempts to force communism on the Finns would be fruitless. Stalin's efforts in the Central and East European countries, moreover, were paying off; there was no need to get "dizzy from success." He probably wanted to avoid alarming the West too soon. Stalin's primary purpose had always been to extend Soviet power and to promote Soviet national interests, not necessarily to pull another country into the Soviet bloc or add another communist party to the international communist

movement.<sup>735</sup>

Lastly, the Russian and Soviet leaders (Tsar Alexander I, Lenin, and Stalin) did have memories of having fought with, and defeated, Finland in the past. In 1808 the Russians invaded Finland, and the latter became a Grand-Duchy within the Russian Empire. In 1905, taking advantage of the popular revolution, the Finns regained their autonomy, only to be suppressed again in 1910. Again, taking advantage of the Russian Revolution in 1917, the Finns declared their independence. But in 1939 the Soviet Union invaded again, initiating the fifteen-week Winter War. Although the Russians got what they wanted (16,000 square miles of territory: Petsamo and Porkkala), the Finns fought fiercely. In 1941 the Finns joined the Germans in their attack on the Soviet Union, in order to regain their lost territory.<sup>736</sup> The ninth criterion (the strengthening of the Warsaw Pact) is not applicable, again because the organization had not been established until 1955.

#### Poland, 1956

There are at least two periods in post-World War II Polish history when the Soviet Union almost invaded, but finally decided not to: October, 1956 and 1980-1981. We will examine both of these

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<sup>735</sup> One will recall Stalin's failure to prevent the "Shanghai Massacre" (on April 12, 1927) when the Chinese Communist Party led by Chen Duxiu was routed by the Kuomintang.

<sup>736</sup> Alan Palmer, The Penguin Dictionary of Modern History, 1789-1945, 2nd ed., s.v. "Finland," p. 115.

crises to determine whether or not the factors which influenced the Kremlin to invade in 1956, 1968, and 1979 were also present in these two cases of nonintervention. Seven of the propositions do not hold true in the Poland, October, 1956 case (#2, #4, #5, #6, #8, #9), while three of them do hold true (#1, #3, #10). This case involves the Khrushchev leadership's attempts to control appointments to the Polish Politburo, and the latter's defiance by insisting on electing Wladislaw Gomulka as First Secretary and removing Marshal Rokossovsky (the Polish-born Soviet general) from the Politburo. Despite initial attempts to intimidate the Poles,<sup>737</sup> the Soviet leaders eventually gave their consent, probably because they perceived that: 1) Gomulka was a sincere Communist and would not oppose the Soviet Union in foreign policy; 2) the Polish officer corps and soldiers were poised to resist the Russians militarily; and 3) there were enough "healthy forces" in the Gomulka leadership to ensure its basic loyalty to Moscow.

Let us test the ten criteria briefly. Poland has the largest

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<sup>737</sup> First, when Khrushchev heard on October 15 that the Polish "reformers" called for a Central Committee Plenum to be held on October 19, he and Molotov, Mikoyan, and Kaganovich (as well as several high-ranking Soviet generals) flew uninvited to Warsaw to attend the meeting. Soviet premier Nikolai Bulganin and Marshal Zhukov had also attended the July Central Committee Plenum in Warsaw which was convened to discuss the Poznan revolt (June 28, 1956). Secondly, as negotiations proceeded between the Polish and Soviet leaders (in the Belvedere Palace in Warsaw), reports were coming in from outlying regions of the country that Soviet tanks and armored vehicles were coming toward Warsaw and of Soviet warships in Poland's Baltic ports. See Dallin, op. cit., pp. 358-63; Andrzej Korbonski and Lubov Fajfer, "The Soviet Union and Two Crises in Poland: 1956 and 1980-1" in Adelman, op. cit., pp. 241-263; and Christopher Jones, Soviet Influence in Eastern Europe (New York: Praeger, 1981), pp. 68-72.

population of all the erstwhile "People's Democracies" and shared the longest border with the Soviet Union. In 1956 there was, of course, a ruling communist party, but its leading role was not in jeopardy. Despite his reputation as a "reformer" and "national communist," Gomulka continually stressed his desire for "Soviet-Polish friendship," meaning close coordination of Polish and Soviet foreign policies. As in the other cases, the Soviet leadership (viz. Khrushchev) had a great deal of pride in Stalin's past acquisitions and was determined not to relinquish them. As in the Hungarian case, the Khrushchev leadership could not completely rule out the possibility of US military assistance to Poland, since he lacked a precedent with which to draw an analogy. Secretary of State Dulles' "liberation" rhetoric had to be taken at face value, as well as the immutable fact that the United States had strategic superiority in October 1956.

Moreover, political and military support from the other East European countries was not guaranteed. Unlike in 1968, the nature of the conflict in Poland (internal party appointments) did not seem to threaten the other East European leaders' jobs the way the uncensored Czechoslovak reform movement did. Because the "reformers" were in the ascendancy in the Polish leadership, and because the hard-line Stalinists had already resigned or been deposed, the Soviet leaders did not have any Polish "quislings."

In addition, there were no international crises to distract the world's attention. (The Suez affair had not really intensified until October 29, when the Israelis bombed Egypt.) In terms of

cost-benefit calculations, the Khrushchev leadership apparently reasoned that the costs of invasion would exceed the benefits. An invasion would be bloody and costly, and since both Tito and Mao approved of Gomulka, Khrushchev would anger them and possibly precipitate further rifts in the international communist movement.

Finally, the Soviet leaders did indeed have memories of having fought and defeated Polish forces in the past, and this may have influenced them to believe that they could again force their will on the Poles. Poland had been "partitioned" five times, the first three of which had taken place between the three great autocracies of the eighteenth century: Russia, Prussia, and Austria. In the fourth partition of 1815 the Russians had extended their region westward to include Warsaw. The Poles fought the Russians and lost on at least three other occasions: the revolts of 1830 and 1863, and in the war of 1920. The fifth partition occurred in September, 1939, when the Germans defeated the Polish army and allowed the Russians to advance as far as Brest-Litovsk.<sup>738</sup>

As for the ninth criterion (improvement of the Warsaw Pact's strategic position), because Soviet troops were already stationed in Poland, there was no urgent need to invade for the purpose of permanently installing divisions, as there was in the 1968 Czechoslovak case.

#### Poland, 1980-81

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<sup>738</sup> This historical sketch draws on information provided by Alan Palmer in The Penguin Dictionary of Modern History, s.v. "Polish Partitions," p. 231.

The final case of Soviet nonintervention we will examine is that of Poland, 1980-81. In this case, three (#4, #5, #8) of the criteria do not hold true, while seven (#1, #2, #3, #6, #7, #9, #10) do hold true. The 1980-1 crisis can be seen as a mixture of both the Hungarian crisis of 1956 and the Czechoslovak crisis of 1968, since it involved a mass movement (as in Hungary) while the process of democratization with the ruling party resembled the Prague Spring. The Soviet Union reached a state of readiness to intervene on two separate occasions: December, 1980 and March, 1981.<sup>739</sup>

Again, we will briefly test the criteria in this case. Poland, as we said, shares a long border with the Soviet Union. The leading role of the Polish United Workers' Party (PUWP) under Edward Gierek and then Stanislaw Kania was threatened by the Solidarity trade union movement led by Lech Walesa. Brezhnev, like Khrushchev, had pride in Stalin's past achievements and was determined not to lose them. Poland was especially important strategically because it was the Soviet link to East Germany; should Poland become independent, East Germany would probably reunite with West Germany and possibly join NATO. Given the many warnings from the United States (e.g. the personal visit by Senator Charles Percy at the end of November, 1980, the strong warning from NATO on December 12, 1980, etc.) it was impossible for Brezhnev to ignore American reactions to a Soviet intervention

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<sup>739</sup> Richard D. Anderson, "Soviet Decision-Making and Poland," Problems of Communism (March-April, 1982), pp. 22-36.

following the one in Afghanistan so closely. As far as collaboration with the Warsaw Pact countries are concerned, the Soviet Union could probably count on it, as joint military exercises in March (Soyuz 81) portended. However, there was a quisling that Brezhnev could count on: General Wojtech Jaruzelski. There were also two other international events or crises to occupy the world's attention: the Iran-Iraq War and the Iranian Hostage Crisis. Obviously for Brezhnev the benefits of invasion could not outweigh the costs. Already embroiled in the war with Afghanistan with no end in sight, and the Soviet economy flagging, the Soviet Union could not afford to drive the nail into the coffin of detente with the West.

One benefit of an invasion, it is true, would have consisted of fortifying the Northern Tier of the Warsaw Pact by increasing the number of divisions permanently stationed in Poland. Finally, as pointed out earlier, the Soviet leaders had memories of having defeated Poland before, which may have boosted their confidence.

It is possible to conclude from this section that, of the five factors originally thought to influence Soviet leaders in making the decision to invade (#1, #2, #3, #4, #8), two factors must be excluded (#1, #3) because they were also present in cases of nonintervention. The fact that a country shares a border with the Soviet Union is not a necessary and sufficient factor in the Soviet decision to invade. Pride in past Russian and Soviet acquisitions and the desire to retain them is also not a necessary and sufficient factor. Our final conclusion becomes:

The most important factors which influence the Soviet leadership to intervene militarily in a nearby country are: 1) the presence of a ruling communist party, whose "leading role" is threatened or has recently been lost (with or without the local First Secretary's acquiescence); 2) the perception that the United States will not render military assistance to the target country; and 3) the overall belief that the benefits of intervention outweigh the costs and risks.

#### Suggestions for Further Refinement of the Study

The fact that so many factors do hold true in the case of Poland, 1980-1 suggests that there is another intervening variable that changes the outcome of the equation (the Soviet decision to intervene), namely: the simultaneous occurrence of another Soviet intervention that has become a war (Afghanistan). Given the already heavy demands on the Soviet economy, and the fact that the United States was more watchful of Soviet moves because of the prior intervention, the Soviet leaders were sufficiently deterred from invading Poland, despite the serious threat to the ruling communist party. One way, then, to strengthen this inquiry into the motives of Soviet intervention is to measure this new variable.

Other variables that need to be measured, which would further strengthen this study, are: 1) the impact of the intervention immediately preceding an impending one<sup>740</sup>; 2) the Kremlin's perception of the loyalty of the target country's security forces

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<sup>740</sup> To some extent this was done in the present study, but to measure this variable more precisely, more data is needed (e.g. actual analogical statements uttered by Soviet decisionmakers on the eve of the decision to invade which refer explicitly to the previous intervention.

to the Soviet Union<sup>741</sup>; 3) the impact of other interventions in which the Soviet Union participated (e.g. Angola, Ethiopia, South Yemen); 4) the impact of a domestic succession struggle in the Kremlin on the decision to intervene<sup>742</sup>; and 5) the role of geography--specifically, the effect of another crisis which engages the rival superpower's attention when it occurs in the same geographical region as a crisis which engages the Soviet Union's attention.<sup>743</sup>

The study could also profit by more precise ways to operationalize the four variables of decision making, especially 1) the image of the opponent and 2) memories of past relations with the opponent. This might be done, for example, by a) examining a specific number of Soviet newspapers and journals (specialized and regional, as well as central papers); and b) codifying the citations according to a left-right scale of benign

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<sup>741</sup> This also appears to be a crucial factor, since the AVH (in Hungary) fought with the Soviet troops against the insurgents, while the KBW (in Poland)--under the direction of General Komar, a personal friend of Gomulka--supported the Polish United Workers' Party against the Soviet Union.

<sup>742</sup> The evidence seems to suggest that Soviet leaders are more inclined to intervene in another country at those times when the leadership is in transition--either because the incumbent General Secretary is new or because he is dying--and there is a need to create an illusion of outward unity.

<sup>743</sup> The Afghan case seems to suggest that the boundaries of each superpower's sphere of influence tend to become "blurred" at times when two crises take place simultaneously. In other words, the Persian Gulf/Central Asian region was made especially sensitive by the fact that two crises were occurring simultaneously--one affecting the United States' national interests, and the other affecting Soviet national interests. Soviet leaders apparently overlooked this factor when discounting the possibility of US assistance to the mujahideen.

to hostile attitudes on a number of specific issues, such as Soviet views toward the target country's predominant religion, cultural mores, past defeats by the Russians, etc. The manner in which these variables are measured must be made as uniform as possible so that any two researchers using the same definitions can reach the same conclusion. However, the difficulties involved in measuring the "image of the opponent" stem from the dearth of actual statements made by Soviet decision makers which reveal their genuine (subjective) perceptions of the people in the target country. So much information is necessarily gleaned from inference.

## II. Soviet Interventions: Successes and Failures

We turn now to the second question of this study: What accounts for the "success" of the interventions in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, and the "failure" in Afghanistan? It is necessary, first, to specify what is a successful intervention. From the Soviet viewpoint, a military intervention is "successful" if: 1) it eliminates the original problem that motivated the leaders to intervene; 2) it results in the establishment or restoration of an unequivocally pro-Soviet regime; 3) it is quick; 4) does not involve many Soviet casualties; and 5) does not provoke serious international fallout other than moralistic recriminations in forums such as the United Nations. Measured by these standards, the intervention in Hungary was successful because it suppressed the Hungarian Revolution; a pro-Soviet regime headed by Kadar was installed; it lasted about two weeks; and very few Russians were

killed.

The intervention in Czechoslovakia was successful, also because the original problem was eliminated (an uncensored reform movement); the Dubcek regime was forced to sign and adhere to the Moscow Protocol, and was eventually replaced one year later by Gustav Husak; the intervention was quick and nonviolent; there were very few casualties; and there were no serious sanctions against the Soviet Union in the international political arena (the issue did not even come up in the United Nations General Assembly). In certain other respects, however, the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia was not so successful. The Soviet leaders failed to find a quisling to set up a new regime right away and had to negotiate with Dubcek directly. The Czechoslovak population's campaign of passive resistance forced Moscow to cloak its motives in ideological verbiage (hence the "Brezhnev Doctrine") in order to make its actions appear to have been more legitimate. Finally, the 1968 invasion furthered deepened the rift between the PRC and the USSR.

The intervention in Afghanistan, on the other hand, was a failure because it did not eliminate the original problem that motivated the Soviet leaders to intervene in the first place (Afghan resistance movement); the pro-Soviet regime (PDPA) is still not entirely secure; it became a nine-year war; it involved more Soviet casualties than did all post-World War II conflicts combined, as well as several billion rubles; and provoked a wide range of retaliatory measures by the United States and the

international community (e.g. restrictions on grain shipments and sales of high technology, limits on export credits to Moscow by the Europeans and Japanese, etc.).

Analysts and scholars have debated the fundamental causes of the Soviet failure in Afghanistan. If the United States had not sent heat-seeking Stinger missiles to the mujahideen ("freedom fighters"), would the Soviet army eventually have succeeded in pummelling them into submission? What would have collapsed first, the Soviet economy, or the Afghans' spirit to resist? If the Afghan war bears any resemblance to the Vietnam war, one would be tempted to claim that the Afghan resistance fighters would have continued to fight to the point of near extinction. The reasons for making this claim lie in the fundamental nature of Islam. This section will explore three of the most important causes of the Soviet failure in Afghanistan: the fanaticism of Islam; the increased American assertiveness in international politics, culminating in the shipments of Stingers to the mujahideen; and the collapse of the Soviet economy.

One's first impression may be that the Islamic religion could hardly be a primary cause of the Soviet defeat in Afghanistan. But when one considers the sequence of events, one comes to realize that had the Afghan mujahideen--fortified by their belief in Islam--not persisted as long as they did in their struggle against the Russians, the United States probably would not have sent them anti-aircraft missiles (Stingers). Had the United States not sent in the Stingers, the Soviet leaders probably would have continued

the war, despite their faltering economy, believing that, with only obsolete weapons with which to defend themselves, the Afghan "dushman" would eventually surrender. Thus, one must understand the unique features of Islam in order to grasp the later concatenation of events culminating in the Russians' military fiasco.

Islam can be seen as possessing even more cybernetic qualities than Marxism-Leninism. The ideology does not merely justify the leading role of a single political party (as Richard Lowenthal maintained about Marxism-Leninism), nor does it serve as a tool by which cynical leaders can justify their actions ex post facto (as Samuel Sharp and Robert Daniels posited about Marxism-Leninism). Islam is infinitely more all-embracing and reactionary an ideology than the chiliastic Marxist-Leninist creed, and since it claims some 500,000,000 adherents or one-seventh of the world's population, it is worth analyzing in more depth.<sup>744</sup> Islam can be defined as a legal system, a religion, and a social system which acts as a straitjacket on independent thought.

In Islam there is no distinction between law and religion. "The Law, which is the constitution of the Community, cannot be other than the Will of God (Allah), revealed through the Prophet (Mohammed)."<sup>745</sup> Since God is the one and only Head of the Community, he is also the sole Legislator. As we have seen, in

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<sup>744</sup> H. A. R. Gibb, Mohammedanism; a Historical Survey (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 15.

<sup>745</sup> Santillana, Diritto, I, 5. Quoted in Gibb, op. cit., p. 67.

pre-revolutionary Russia, too, church and state were indivisible; the Tsar was believed to be God's representative on earth. But in the Soviet Union before Gorbachev, although the "nomenklatura" set down a code of laws that did not in reality protect citizens' rights, and citizens were helpless to protest, the members of the nomenklatura could not after all claim to be God's representatives because Marxism-Leninism is a secular creed. True, a "cult of personality" tended to develop around each successive General Secretary, but this cult could hardly equal the authority of a universal God. If a Soviet citizen violated a law, there was still a pretense at a trial (even at the height of Stalin's Purges, 1936-38). (Marxism-Leninism claims to represent the masses or "proletariat," after all.) However, if a citizen in an Islamic country (e.g. Afghanistan) breaks a law, or even ignores one, he has not simply infringed a rule of social order, but has committed an act of religious disobedience, a sin, and therefore deserves a religious penalty. The practice of retaliation is sanctioned in the Koran.<sup>746</sup>

Islam, then, because of its comingling of law and religion, can be seen as more authoritarian and uncompromising than Marxism-Leninism. From this vantage point, one can better understand how the Afghan resistance fighters construed the Soviet invasion in December 1979. Any foreign power that has the temerity to violate the sovereignty of an Islamic nation (tantamount to committing a sin) is hateful, but a foreign power that is also atheist is an

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<sup>746</sup> Gibb, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

"infidel," and a "jihad" (holy war) must be waged against it. The Afghan judged their communist neighbor to be just as imperialistic--if not more--as the capitalist nations. As one Islamic scholar wrote, "The Afghan mujahideen are now well aware that imperialism and communism are like the two blades of a pair of scissors for the purpose of cutting the roots of our beloved religion, Islam."<sup>747</sup>

As a religion, too, Islam is extremely authoritarian and regulatory. It places a high value on rituals, such as prayer, alms-giving, fasting, making pilgrimages to Mecca (Mohammed's birthplace), and waging "jihad" (meaning literally "the Way of God"). Prayers are compulsory at five specific times of the day: at daybreak, noon, midafternoon, after sunset, and in the early part of the night. Originally intended to discipline the wayward Bedouin tribes, the prayers are to be performed with rhythmic bowing motions. No such frequent rituals are required by the Marxist-Leninist creed.

With such a heavy emphasis on repetitive acts, the Islamic faith could hardly provide an impetus to independent, analytical thinking. As a religion, it is not even original; Mohammed borrowed concepts from Christianity, such as the Doctrine of the Last Judgement, the resurrection of the body, and the afterlife. The Koran itself is merely a series of recorded hadiths or "statements," short sayings or parables orally transmitted over

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<sup>747</sup> Nake M. Kamrany, "The Continuing Soviet war in Afghanistan," Current History (October, 1986): 334.

the centuries. Islamic culture in both the Ottoman Empire in Asia and North Africa and in the Mughal Empire in India consisted in the preservation of, but not the adding to, the intellectual heritage of Mohammed and his disciples. The Arabian tribes prided themselves for preserving the sunna or "custom of the Community." Any act of innovation (bid'a) was considered a heresy. Ijtihad, or "the right of individual interpretation" was restricted to only a few Muslim scholars.<sup>748</sup> The word "Islam" itself means "submitting oneself to God."

The Islamic religion virtually demands a cybernetic type of behavior of its followers. It was explained earlier that the cybernetic decision maker does not consider a large number of alternatives. The Koran decrees a specific way of praying, thinking, and acting so that a believer needs only to obey--not weigh alternatives. The cybernetic decision maker has a fundamental conservative purpose; a devout Muslim conducts his life according to the immutable Shar'a (the "highway" of divine command) and greatly values the principle of ijma or "consensus." Finally, the cybernetic decision maker strives to minimize uncertainty and risk by avoiding new information; the devout Muslim reads and chants the same material repetitively and refuses to expose himself to anything that could be considered heretical or blasphemous.

In short, by ignoring the fanatic, reactionary nature of Islam and sending in Soviet advisors and combat troops to subdue the

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<sup>748</sup> Gibb, op. cit., p. 66.

Afghan resistance, the Soviet leaders made a grievous error which led--directly or indirectly--to their own defeat. The potency of the resistance fighters' belief in Allah exposed the Soviet troops' Marxism-Leninism for what it was--a moribund creed about which everyone joked privately. While the Afghan rebels performed their prayer rituals, the Soviet soldiers drank and smoked opium. To the mujahideen, death while waging jihad was a tremendous honor, while to the Soviet troops the two-year compulsory service in Afghanistan was an exercise in both monotony and fear.

Once policymakers in Washington saw that the Afghan resistance fighters were not buckling under Soviet pressure, they began to consider supporting them in tangible ways. A year and a half after the invasion, the CIA coordinated an assistance program.<sup>749</sup> Seven years later, in April 1986, Representative Charles Wilson of Texas prodded the CIA (headed by William Casey) to send the more sophisticated Stinger antiaircraft missiles. Washington's more activist approach to the Afghan situation resulted from long pent-up feelings of disillusionment toward the Soviet Union. US policymakers and businessmen alike had entertained high hopes for detente with the Russians. The Soviet leaders, on the other hand, interpreted detente as an opportunity to profit in terms of technology transfer and arms control agreements, while surreptitiously building up their strategic arsenal. Ever since the humiliation of the Cuban Missile Crisis, Brezhnev and his colleagues who deposed Khrushchev fixed their attention on one

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<sup>749</sup> New York Times, April 17, 1988.

long-range goal: achieving strategic superiority vis-a-vis the United States. Exploiting American arms negotiators' impatience to have an agreement signed, and using cleverly wording crucial passages, the Soviet leaders managed to increase their strategic arsenal and simultaneously to induce the United States to scrap its ABM (anti-ballistic missile) system. Subsequent US administrations in the SALT II talks later resolved to correct the asymmetry in US and Soviet nuclear arsenals.

Apparently Brezhnev and his peers were convinced that, due to the pluralist nature of the American political system, they would always be able to manipulate US officials in a way to ensure their own profit. This pluralism had become especially rampant in the early and mid-seventies because of a series of well-known developments: the Watergate scandal of 1974, the US defeat in Vietnam in 1975 and the resulting Congressional ban on overt US assistance to Third World countries fighting communism. The Soviet leaders could not have been more mistaken. Though it may often be hard to achieve a consensus on a given issue, the American political system is nevertheless designed to reflect the realities of international politics with minimal lag. When it grew evident to Washington officials and the American public that the Russians were deceiving them, a foreign policy consensus began to develop, resulting ultimately in the election of Republican presidential candidate, Ronald Reagan, in 1980. Washington took some specific measures which signalled the beginning of the end of detente. The Stevenson amendment to the Export-Import Bank bill (in December

1974) placed a \$300 million limit on the funds that the bank could lend to the Soviet Union over the next four years.<sup>750</sup> A program to fund the Yakutsk/North Star Siberian energy project was halted.<sup>751</sup> Having observed Soviet behavior during the October 1973 war, senators and congressmen were determined to make future credits and technology transfers dependent on Soviet international behavior.

But Brezhnev and his colleagues would not be controlled. Realizing that the payoffs from detente were on the wane, they rechannelled their energies into the arena in which the United States was still hampered by Congress: foreign policy. A mere ten months after the Stevenson Amendment was passed, the Portugese Empire in Africa disintegrated--following Salazar's death and the ensuing Portugese Revolution--and Soviet-funded Cuban proxies were fighting in Angola to help the Marxist-Leninist MPLA movement to power. Two more successful interventions by Cuban proxies occurred in Ethiopia (1978) and South Yemen (1978) with minimal international outcry, so that by the invasion of Afghanistan Soviet officials in January and February of 1979 were startled by the tone and extent of U.S. political and economic sanctions (described in Chapter Four).

The Soviet leaders gradually realized that, sustained by both their fervent belief in Islam and with American heat-seeking missiles (as well as with arms from Britain, China, and Saudi

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<sup>750</sup> Gelman, op. cit., p. 149.

<sup>751</sup> Ibid.

Arabia), the Afghan "dushman" would exhaust Soviet resources. Indeed, Afghanistan had become a "bleeding wound" in the Soviet economy, as Gorbachev was to characterize it in his speech to the Party Congress on February 25, 1986. This wound was probably contributing to a general lack of productivity in the Soviet workplace. As Gorbachev lamented in his speech to the Central Committee early in February 1988, "It turns out that, basically, for four five-year periods there was no increase in the absolute growth (absolutnogo prirosta) of the national income and, at the beginning of the 1980s, it had even begun to fall. That is the real picture, comrades!".<sup>752</sup> Nikolai Baibakov, the chief of the State Planning Committee, acknowledged in his report to the Supreme Soviet on November 28, 1979 that there were shortfalls in production plans for coal, oil, steel, and agriculture in 1979 and announced lower growth rates in 1980 for consumer goods, heavy industry, and food supplies. The overall rate of industrial growth was only about 3.6 percent, rather than the planned 5.7 percent.<sup>753</sup>

By early 1990 Moscow was spending roughly \$3.7 billion a year on the Afghan Communist government headed by Najibullah (Karmal's successor). The total cost to the Soviet Union for the Afghan war, as disclosed by former Soviet Prime Minister Nikolai Ryzhkov to the Congress of People's Deputies on June 7, 1990 was 4 billion

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<sup>752</sup> Pravda, February 9, 1988.

<sup>753</sup> Craig R. Whitney, "Key Goods in Soviet Fall Short of Goal," New York Times, November 28, 1979, p. 3, col. 1.

rubles, the equivalent of \$70 billion.<sup>754</sup> In the eleven-year period preceding the intervention (1967-78) Soviet aid to Afghanistan had increased from \$570 million to \$1.265 billion.<sup>755</sup> In addition to Afghanistan, however, the Kremlin was doling out \$3.5 billion to Vietnam, \$4.9 billion to Cuba, and more than 3 billion to Angola, Mozambique, and Ethiopia. As former President Nixon put it succinctly, "Moscow's empire impoverishes rather than enriches the Kremlin...Its imperial domain costs the Kremlin over \$35 million a day."

The Afghan adventure cost the Kremlin more than just rubles. In only two weeks since the invasion began, between 900 and 1,200 Soviet soldiers were killed.<sup>756</sup> By 1985, according to the Soviet emigre journal published by Posev, about 35,000 Russian bodies had been returned to the Soviet Union in tin coffins.<sup>757</sup>

#### Reappraisal of the Analytic and Cybernetic Models

We have concluded above that the most influential factors in the Soviet decision to intervene are: 1) the presence of a ruling communist party whose "leading role" is threatened or has recently been lost (with or without the local First Secretary's acquiescence); 2) the belief that the United States will not

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<sup>754</sup> Bill Keller, "Soviet Premier Says Cutbacks Could Reach 33% for Military," New York Times, June 7, 1990.

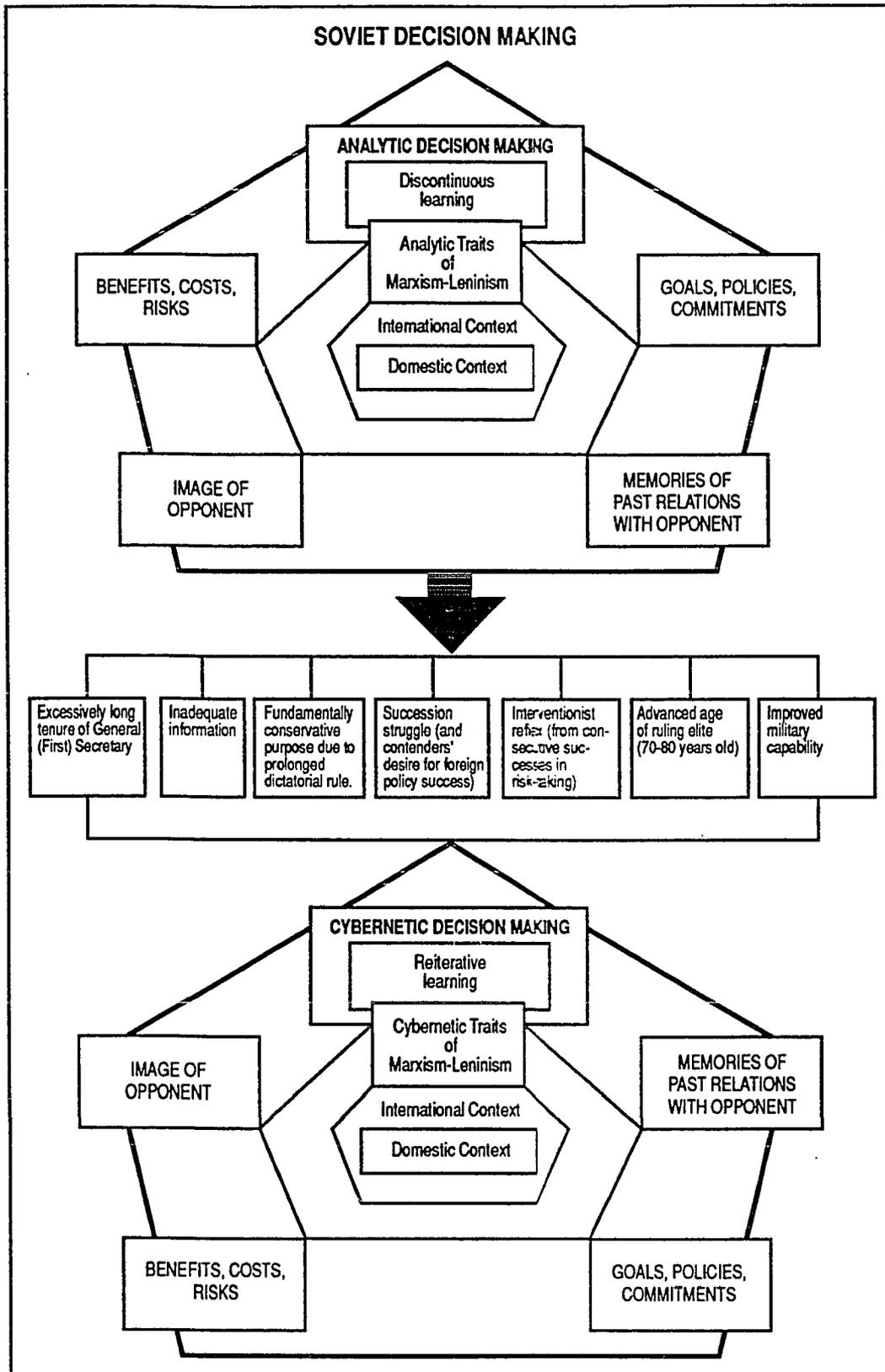
<sup>755</sup> Siddieq M. Noorzoy, "Soviet Economic Interests in Afghanistan," Problems of Communism (May-June, 1987): 52.

<sup>756</sup> New York Times, January 12, 1988.

<sup>757</sup> Voyna v Afganistane [The War in Afghanistan]. (Frankfort: Possev, 1985), p. 77.

render military assistance to the target country; and 3) the overall conviction that the benefits of intervention outweigh the costs and risks.

All three of these factors are attributes of the analytic, rather than the cybernetic, decision maker. Thus, it follows that, contrary to our initial assumption that analytic and cybernetic decision making are two separate modes of behavior, each existing independently from the other, the cybernetic mode is a deviant outgrowth of the analytic mode. The cybernetic form results from conditions such as 1) the excessively long tenure of the General Secretary (ten or more years); 2) a fundamentally conservative purpose resulting from prolonged dictatorial rule followed immediately by an insecure "collective leadership;" 3) a succession struggle and the desire of the contenders for a foreign policy "achievement" (such as a successful intervention); 4) advanced age of the ruling elite (70-80 years old); 5) consecutive successes in risk-taking; 6) improved military capability, particularly in force projection. (See the diagram on the next page.)



### Broader Implications of the Study

A rather positive forecast for the Soviet Union in the 2000s might be made on the basis of the conclusions drawn in the above analysis. If cybernetic decision making is a deviant off-shoot of analytic decision making, and if it is caused by such things as inadequate information, an aging leadership unresponsive to the needs of the population, succession struggles, and rapidly increasing military capability, then it follows that once these conditions are eliminated, the Soviet decision makers will tend to be more analytic. However, while the conditions enumerated above have disappeared, new conditions have developed as a result of the liberation of the countries in east central and southeastern Europe from Soviet-Communist domination in 1989. It is of course impossible to predict the future course of Soviet domestic and foreign policy exactly. However, perhaps at least three possible scenarios can be sketched out. The most optimistic scenario would involve the genuine metamorphosis of the Soviet one-party system into a multi-party system, complete with free elections, separation of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, and religious tolerance.

In accordance with this scenario, many of the conditions which have given rise to cybernetic behavior in the past (e.g. a gerontocracy, past successes in risk-taking, rapidly increasing military capability) would be eliminated naturally by a system of regular, free elections. Made directly responsible to their constituents, more Soviet leaders--like the popularly elected

leader of the Russian Republic, Boris Yeltsin--would not, in all likelihood, stay in power if they were to retain a fundamentally conservative outlook. Deprived of abundant and high-quality consumer goods for so long, the Soviet people would demand that funds formally earmarked for the military-industrial complex now be channelled into the light industry and agricultural sectors. Among other things, this means that the Soviet leadership simply would not be able to take military risks in far-flung areas of the world, the consecutive successes of which have in the recent past acted as a spur to still greater military expansion and farther deprivation of the Soviet population. Future military interventions would occur most likely as part of collective UN peacekeeping missions or as unilateral ones for de facto defensive purposes only--to repel foreign aggressors close to Soviet borders, rather than to salvage crumbling communist parties. President Gorbachev has in fact urged that new force structures and strategy be designed for the "non-offensive defense" of the USSR, rather than for swift and far-ranging counteroffensives against aggression.

Moreover, even if a particular elected official were to perform exceptionally well, no "cult of personality" for him (or her) would be likely to develop, due to the newly established time limits within which he would be permitted to serve. Finally, with established electoral procedures, there would be no prolonged succession struggles, and thus no urgent need for foreign policy "achievements" (e.g. military interventions) by which a contender

could further consolidate his power.

Furthermore (assuming that the "metamorphosis into a democracy" scenario is a valid one) once the Soviet Union--and the republics within--is governed by a party chosen by the people and by popularly elected officials, it would be less likely to perceive an immediate conflict when ruling communist parties in nearby countries are "endangered" by the masses and overthrown. No "interventionist reflex" would be experienced and acted upon, because the Soviet elite would have seen for themselves that 1) a communist party's demise is not synonymous with the decline of the country's power in general; 2) the Soviet Union's relations with that country will not necessarily deteriorate simply because it is no longer ruled by a communist party; and furthermore 3) the Soviet Union's borders are not menaced by the fall of a ruling communist party in a neighboring country, and thus do not need to be "protected" by actually sending troops into the country.

There is another development associated with the democratic scenario. As the Soviet leadership cooperates more with the United States--as it must do if it wants to receive a substantial economic aid package--it will probably be restrained from acting in blatant contradiction to American interests. Trade and other forms of economic assistance from the United States is no longer just an attractive option to the Soviet Union, as was the detente program in the 1970s; instead the Soviet Union needs a "Marshall Plan" from the United States and the Group of Seven economically advanced nations if it is to survive as a union of republics.

Roughly similar to the American occupations of Japan and Germany after the "hot war" (World War II), a prospective economic aid package to the Soviet Union would obligate the latter beneficiary to take increasingly greater steps toward the development of a democratic political system and market economy.<sup>758</sup>

Washington officials, in turn, having trusted the Russians to cooperate with them, would not tolerate another Soviet military intervention so easily, shrugging it off with an attitude of "What more can you expect of the Russians?" On the contrary, once President Bush and the leaders of the Group of Seven industrial democracies have reached a consensus on the type of aid package to present to President Gorbachev, and once the Soviet Union is allowed membership into such organizations as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, the Soviet leaders would be obligated to act in ways approved by their benefactors. In short, the Kremlin would be taking substantially greater risks if it invaded in the future on the same political and ideological grounds as before. The United States, having committed itself to "trusting the Russians" once again, would not risk losing its will and credibility--as it had after the Vietnam War and under the Carter Administration. Thus, the Soviet leaders would not be able in the future easily to discount American reactions to another

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<sup>758</sup> To be sure, great strides have already been made. In December 1988 an electoral law allowed for a choice of candidates at local and national elections. A state structure was established, with a small parliament and (beginning in 1990) a new executive Presidency. The maximum term for elected officials was set for two years.

Soviet invasion. To the new, more analytic decision makers in the Kremlin, the long-term costs and risks associated with intervention would greatly outweigh any perceived short-term benefits.

With a more pluralist political system and developing market system, then, the three factors found to be most influential in the Soviet leaders' past decisions to intervene militarily would be eliminated naturally, namely 1) the perception that a neighboring country's ruling communist party is endangered; 2) the Kremlin's prediction of US noninvolvement; and 3) the perception that benefits of intervention outweigh costs and risks.

A second scenario is complete anarchy. The initial enthusiasm of the Soviet population has waned considerably as the promises of perestroika's benefits have failed to match actual results. Given the Soviet Union's lack of a democratic tradition, the people may confuse pluralism of political views and harsh criticism of Gorbachev's leadership as sheer chaos. The splintering of east central and southeastern European states into myriad ethnic groups (e.g. in Yugoslavia) and the increasingly frequent ethnic riots in almost every Soviet republic will further buttress this view of anarchy. Some Soviet republics, such as Lithuania, Belorussia, and the Ukraine, may secede and form alliances with states such as Poland and Rumania. Many Soviet officials and citizens may conclude that one secession-alliance of this type will inevitably lead to another and yet another, each republic falling away from the Muscovite center like a row of dominoes.

In between these two extremes is a third, also pessimistic, scenario for the Soviet future, namely the emergence of a strongly nationalistic government akin to the Weimar Republic in Germany, 1918-1933.<sup>759</sup> Due to free local elections, the policy of glasnost and accompanying relaxation of censorial controls, Gorbachev's leadership has been open to widespread criticism from aspiring politicians as well as from the masses; its prestige has declined greatly as a result. In this growing state of anomie, large segments of the Soviet population conditioned by the Russian tradition of dictatorship by a vozhd' (strong leader) may conclude that a strong--albeit repressive--regime is preferable to a democratic, but weak, one. Economic difficulties, and disillusionment with both democratic and communist parties that have failed to ameliorate these conditions of scarcity, may very well spark the emergence of a party that is nationalistic, militaristic, and anti-semitic--similar to the National Socialist (Nazi) Party led by Hitler. Supporters of such a party may conceivably yearn for a vigorous foreign policy after the "loss" of post-World War II "socialist gains" in Eastern Europe. Military interventions then, cannot be completely eliminated as an option for Soviet leaders, if this "Weimar Russia" scenario has any credence. They may result as irredentist impulses, i.e. efforts to regain the territory in Eastern Europe over which the Soviet Union

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<sup>759</sup> For further elaboration of this scenario, see Paul Holman, "Whither perestroika?" in The Soviet Union After Perestroika: Change and Continuity (Cambridge, MA: Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, 1991), pp. 1-21.

had hegemony until 1989. Interventions may also take place simply as a concomitant of the USSR's status as the largest country in the world; a country of its size necessarily has more national interests to defend.

In general terms, however, the changes that have occurred in the Soviet Union were inevitable and will ultimately lead to positive outcomes, since what existed before was not stability--as Brezhnev claimed--but stagnation. Ironically, the failed intervention in Afghanistan has proven to be a catalyst for positive, far-reaching changes in the Soviet political and economic systems. The head-on clash with the alien ideology and religion of Islam has led not only to the Soviet Union's conscious recognition of the decay of its own allegedly guiding ideology--Marxism-Leninism--but also to a reevaluation of its relations with Third World countries. No longer can the Soviet Union control the wills of Third World leaders simply by being their principal source of arms. They have discovered that local leaders, epitomized by Hafizullah Amin, can adroitly use military aid while consistently opposing the Soviet leaders' wishes. In effect, the Soviet Union has merely wasted vast sums of money that could have been used to strengthen its own domestic economy. Here a decade-old cycle has grinded to a halt due (in part) to the Afghan imbroglio. The inherent weakness of the Soviet economy originally prompted Soviet leaders to seek military adventures in foreign countries, in order to suppress the desires of the local population and to justify further allocation of funds to the

military-industrial complex. But this solution merely spawned another problem; the Kremlin's increased risk-taking in countries and regions not traditionally considered as part of the Soviet sphere of influence shook the United States out of its paralytic state. In contrast to its response to the Hungarian and Czechoslovak crises, the United States gave substantial military assistance to the Afghan resistance movement. Boosted both by their potent and uncompromising Islamic faith and by American military assistance, the mujahideen indirectly forced the Soviet military planners to confront the fact that Afghanistan had become a "bleeding wound" to the Soviet economy. The very activity that was supposed to allow the nomenklatura to maintain the command economy (arms sales to, and interventions in, Third World countries) now threatened the entire Soviet system as it had existed for half a century. No longer could the Soviet leaders themselves hide from the reality that a command economy is intrinsically inefficient in an age of rapid technological innovation, and that Marxism-Leninism is an anachronistic ideology, futile as a guide for policymaking.

President Gorbachev's acknowledgement of these facts and his actions to better coordinate Soviet policies with domestic and international realities, indicates that he is--to a greater extent than Brezhnev in 1968--an analytic decision maker and discontinuous learner. In regard to Festinger's "cognitive dissonance" theory, it appears that Gorbachev's preferred method for eliminating discrepancies between two cognitive elements is to

change current anachronistic policies, rather than to deny the knowledge of the discrepancy or to avoid situations which would make him confront new information. Unlike the cybernetic decision maker who seeks to minimize risk, Gorbachev evidently has realized that, now, the risks involved in preserving the rigidity of political institutions, which have blocked popular political and economic initiative, actually exceed the risks entailed by changing the ossified Soviet bureaucracy into a parliamentary system of government and a decentralized market economy. Perestroika is, in many ways, less risky than Brezhnev's "stability of cadres" policy. Instead of refusing to reevaluate past knowledge and blocking off feedback channels as the reiterative learner would do, Gorbachev instituted glasnost in order to create and keep open channels for popular pressure which will insure the continuing revitalization of the system and guard against periods of stagnation in the future. Finally, instead of immediately perceiving conflict with the capitalist countries, Gorbachev apparently believes that cooperation with the Western capitalist countries is essential, not only in order to revamp the Soviet economy, but to solve unprecedented global problems such as nuclear proliferation, the AIDS epidemic, the pollution of the environment, and the depletion of natural resources. Problems such as these evolved, he allegedly believes, not because of any capitalist "conspiracies" aimed against the Soviet Union, but merely as the consequences of inevitable change; they are part of an "objective" reality, and must be solved by objective analysis.

The speed of technological growth will produce greater interdependence among nations, resulting in an "integral world" [tselostnyi mir].

### Conclusion

The overall conclusions of this comparative study are as follows. First, there appear to be ten common factors that motivated the Soviet leaders to intervene in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Afghanistan: a shared border, a ruling communist party perceived to be in danger of losing its "leading role," pride in past Soviet acquisitions, anticipated assistance from East European countries, an available "quisling" to normalize the target country, auspicious timing, a favorable cost-benefit-risk analysis, strengthening of the Warsaw Pact, and memories of having defeated the target country in the past. After testing these causal factors in other cases of Soviet intervention and nonintervention, it was found that the most enduring causes or conditions are 1) a ruling communist party perceived to be in danger of losing its "leading role", 2) the Kremlin's prediction of US noninvolvement, and 3) a favorable cost-benefit-risk analysis.

Second, the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan failed largely because of three factors: the fanatic intensity of the Islamic religion, the increased assertiveness of the Reagan Administration in international affairs, and the collapse of the Soviet economy. Of course, these factors are all interconnected; the intensity of Islam helped the mujahideen to persist against the Russians long

enough to receive substantial military assistance from the Reagan Administration, which finally forced the Soviet leaders to withdraw their troops and direct their attention to domestic economic and political reform.

Third, the analytic-cybernetic decision making model was found to be in need of refinement based on the comparative case study. Rather than being two unconnected modes of behavior, it was concluded that cybernetic decision making is a degenerate form of analytic decision making, caused by such factors as 1) an excessively long tenure of the General Secretary (ten or more years); 2) a fundamentally conservative purpose resulting from prolonged dictatorial rule followed immediately by an insecure "collective leadership;" 3) a succession struggle and the desire of the contenders for a foreign policy "achievement" (such as a successful intervention); 4) advanced age of ruling elite (70-80 years old); 5) consecutive successes in risk-taking; and 6) improved military capability, particularly in force projection.

Finally, the current changes in the Soviet Union and the resulting increased integration in the international system suggest that future Soviet leaders in the 2000s will be making domestic and foreign policy decisions more in accordance with the analytic, than cybernetic, model.

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