
Tensions arising from Russia's recent pursuit of a less reflexively pro-Western foreign policy, coupled with President Boris Yeltsin's unsettling warnings of a looming "cold peace," tempt us to forget the extraordinary change in the nature of Moscow's relations with the advanced industrial democracies since the mid-1980s. The debate over the future direction of Russia domestically and internationally is inextricably linked to the ongoing, spirited argument over the origins of the end of the Cold War. This essay joins the debate in offering an alternative analytical framework to explain the tectonic shift in Soviet foreign and military policy.

The advent of "New Thinking" (novoye mishleniye) accompanying the accession to power of Mikhail Gorbachev brought about the end of the Cold War and created the conditions for a durable East-West peace. Both the depth and the breadth of this change, from the unilateral steps to reduce and restructure military forces to give them a less offensive cast to the rejection of force to maintain communist domination in Eastern Europe and to prevent the dissolution of the Soviet Union itself, went far beyond what conventional international relations theories can accommodate as well as what knowledgeable area specialists imagined was possible.

This essay contends that reigning realist and liberal explanations cannot adequately account for New Thinking's revolutionary character, which made the transformation of superpower relations possible. If policy outcomes represent the final phase in a causal sequence, the principal contribution of realism lies at the front end, in identifying structural constraints on political actors. However, even here realism's preoccupation with material capabilities produces a reified view of structures that does not capture the multiple dimensions (e.g., political, ideological, moral) of the USSR's systemic crisis. Liberal approaches provide a richer context and greater explanatory power for foreign policy moderation in the early Gorbachev era, allowing us to move further along the causal chain. Yet they, like their realist competitors, either marginalize or ignore altogether the social processes that spawned the core ideas of mature New Thinking and helped bring them to policy fruition.

The ideas and identity framework developed here both complements and challenges realist and liberal paradigms. It builds on some of their powerful insights while pointing to analytical shortcomings and blind spots, posing different questions and proffering a new, more compelling explanation for changes in state behavior.

Most scholars and policy makers have interpreted the shift in Soviet foreign policy as a tactical adjustment necessitated by internationally or domestically generated imperatives rather than as a genuine reconceptualization of interests grounded in new collective understandings about the dynamics of world politics and in actors' evolving identities. The first view, which privileges material capabilities, unquestionably sheds light on sources of moderation in Soviet international policy, particularly the generally modest changes enacted during the early stages of Gorbachev's tenure. Its narrowly drawn, materialist conception of interests, however, misses the cultural-institutional context that shaped the ways in which future Soviet decision makers understood the policy implications of the USSR's economic and political plight. Only the second interpretation, with its emphasis on collective ideational constructs, can account for the revolutionary path followed once proponents of radical foreign policy reform triumphed over their moderate rivals.
The two accounts are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but integrating them requires explication of the complex interaction of ideational and material structures in influencing state behavior. Such eclectic theorizing can be accommodated far better by an explanation that does not take interests as given and fixed.

The central argument advanced here is that the momentous turn in Soviet international policy was the product of cognitive evolution and policy entrepreneurship by networks of Western-oriented in-system reformers coincident with the coming to power of a leadership committed to change and receptive to new ideas for solving the country's formidable problems. These expert communities comprised in part liberal international affairs specialists (or mezkduna.rodniki) from a few research institutes of the Academy of Sciences together with a small cadre of like-minded officials in the party and state apparat.

Having helped to lay the conceptual groundwork for the East-West rapprochement of the early 1970s, liberal specialists were spurred by its early successes and subsequent demise to question the basic assumptions undergirding the Brezhnev Politburo's coercive approach to detente. In seeking to strengthen and expand the norms embedded in this nascent security regime, they developed new understandings about cause-and-effect relationships in international politics and the nature of security in the contemporary age. Determined to reverse the self-defeating ways of Kremlin foreign and military policy, liberal specialists espoused jettisoning Marxist-Leninist ideology as a guide for defining state interests and advocated conciliatory measures designed to soften would-be adversaries' perception of hostile Soviet intentions. This "conciliatory realpolitik" perspective was the common baseline for virtually all foreign policy reformers and closely resembled the moderate strand of New Thinking prevalent in the early Gorbachev years.

But the radical course on which the Soviet regime embarked beginning in late 1987 and early 1988 and that led directly to the cessation of the Cold War was the work of a subgroup of specialists who promoted a new political order based in part on principles governing relations among the Western democracies and within those societies. Some of these principles were transmitted to Soviet reformers through transnational contacts with liberal-Left counterparts in the West that flourished in the 1970s and survived detente's precipitous decline.

Other central elements of New Thinking (e.g., the relationship between peace and socialism and between class values and "values common to all mankind") were indigenous, often the product of ongoing debate within the socialist bloc. The fact of Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe blurred the distinction between international and domestic policy and helps to explain why foreign policy radicals, virtually all of whom came to political consciousness as anti-Stalinist reformers, were equally committed to fundamental changes in the way Soviet society was organized. In this respect, the end of the Cold War is directly linked to the collapse of communism and the long-standing struggle of in-system reformers to realize an alternative socialist future.

Propelled by a vision of the USSR as a democratic and peaceable member of the international community and touting "values common to all mankind," these "idealists" sought to eliminate the underlying causes of East-West conflict. Conceiving of the Soviet Union in this new identity rendered obsolete the two-camp view of the world that formed the core of Marxist-Leninist ideology. This change, in turn, enabled the two sides to transcend their decades-long confrontation rather than simply mute the rivalry—which had been the extent of Soviet aims since the Khrushchev era.

The contest between advocates of these two discrete yet closely linked perspectives formed part of the political-intellectual milieu in which Soviet foreign policy was forged in the mid- to late 1980s. As discussed in the concluding section, this battle over the content of New Thinking also goes far in explaining elements of both continuity and change between the Gorbachev and Yeltsin governments.
Realist and Liberal Explanations

Realist and liberal explanations capture some of the factors and processes that contributed to the change in Soviet international policy in the Gorbachev era. The former tend to emphasize adverse changes in material conditions in inducing states to modify their behavior. Some realist explanations stress imperial overstretch or Moscow's deteriorating geostrategic position in the wake of American military resurgence and demonstrated military-technological prowess in the Reagan years. Companion arguments focus on economic stagnation and the requirements of advanced industrial production and the need to integrate into the global economy to reap the benefits of the scientific-technological revolution.

That material circumstances, both international and domestic, affect the intellectual evolution and policy choices of political decision makers is not in dispute, though the nature of the interaction between the material and the ideational worlds remains undertheorized. Scholars have shown, for instance, that periods of crisis can both stimulate new ideas and create a demand for them, particularly when accompanied by political succession. Historically, incoming regimes have tended to be more receptive to new ideas, multiplying the opportunities for policy entrepreneurship. In the Soviet Union, the combination of economic decline and unfavorable changes in the global correlation of forces increased the probability of reformers' coming to power in the first place and continued to influence the thinking of the Gorbachev regime in the ensuing years. Policy is not made in a vacuum. The saliency of the New Thinking critique and alternative strategy had much to do with the severity of the problems that the country was facing.

But how a political leadership will respond to the strategic environment is indeterminate; it depends at least in part on how decision makers understand the world and how they interpret the frequently ambiguous lessons of history. Virtually the same confluence of internal and external pressures that purportedly compelled the adoption of New Thinking had been present since the late stages of the Brezhnev regime without any significant changes in policy until 1985 and the arrival of the Gorbachev circle. Moreover, Gorbachev's rivals for power offered a different diagnosis of and cure for the country's ailments, and reformers themselves could not agree on either the nature of the problem or the prospective solution.

The point is that permissive structural conditions did not make New Thinking, particularly in its full-blown form, inevitable. Alternative strategies existed, and any satisfactory explanation for Soviet international policy in the mid- to late 1980s must deal with that reality. To what degree those strategies offered viable long-term solutions to the country's myriad problems is of less consequence than the fact that each commanded identifiable constituencies in the Soviet political establishment and thus constituted credible rivals to New Thinking. At the time of the death of Konstantin Chernenko, chairman of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), the foreign policy course that the world would come to know as New Thinking was not advocated by any of the contenders for power, including Gorbachev.

Options ranged from carrying on Chernenko's approach of muddling through domestically and internationally to heeding the hard-liners' call for mobilizing resources to repel the Reagan administration onslaught. Also in the policy mix were those who could be called "economic modernizers" of varying inclinations. They supported moderating Moscow's foreign policy to permit domestic economic renovation. Some proponents viewed this as a temporary arrangement to buy time to retool the defense-industrial complex for the inevitable long-term rivalry with the capitalist powers. Others hoped that a milder version of the Brezhnev-Gromyko international strategy would ratchet down the East-West military competition and yield a sustainable detente relationship. The USSR might have taken any one of these paths in 1985, and even after the selection of Gorbachev—known more as a talented technocrat than as an ardent reformer—the country was not fated to travel the New Thinking road. Realism cannot
provide the sharper analytical tools needed to explain why (or how) a particular policy option prevails.

Nor does realism (or liberalism, for that matter) necessarily generate unambiguous predictions about state action. Employing realist assumptions regarding the material basis of state interests to predict the foreign policy behavior of a beleaguered USSR in the early to mid-1980s yields two rather contradictory outcomes. On the one hand, Soviet decision makers could as William Wohlforth contends they did, respond rationally to perceptions of relative decline by retrenching, thereby trying to allay Western fears and encourage NATO to adopt a less hard-line anti-Soviet posture.20

On the other hand, a Soviet leadership attempting to balance against a heightened Western threat might just as rationally decide to resist this external pressure forcefully by exacting the sacrifices deemed necessary to match NATO's aggressive stance or, in an extreme and all but unimaginable case, launch a preventive war.21

To sum up, while identifying the set of constraints and incentives with which decision makers have to contend, realist explanations are underdetermining with respect to policy outcomes. In the case of Soviet international behavior in the period under discussion, even accepting that realism points to the increased possibility of reformers' coming to power, it cannot adequately account for the vast scope and radical content of the changes undertaken by the Gorbachev regime.

Having treated states' interests as given—rationally derived from the anarchic nature of and distribution of capabilities within the international system—realist arguments preclude any meaningful role for human reflection or political-ideological contention in (re)shaping actors' conception of interests.22 At the same time, realism's view of the material world as largely devoid of ideational content leads proponents to miss the importance of the existence of successful nonsocialist models of social organization and economic development (e.g., the prosperity of the West and great promise of the "Asian tigers") as well as norms of "civilized nations" in making up part of the strategic environment in which Soviet interests were defined.23

By ignoring the process of cognitive evolution and the ways in which collective understandings of cause-and-effect relationships and shared values are diffused through the political system, these explanations reduce the New Thinking revolution to a mechanical act of rational adaptation to adverse changes in material circumstances.24 The Soviet leadership "learned" only in the sense that like any firm in microeconomic theory, it had to conform to the dictates of the strategic environment if it was to survive.25 This account bears little resemblance to the intellectual and political processes whereby Soviet interests were redefined in the Gorbachev era.

The liberal paradigm is better equipped to incorporate the cognitive and political processes that produced the turn in Soviet international behavior. Scholars advancing a variety of liberal explanations centered on ideas,26 learning,27 international regimes,28 transnational linkages,29 and the social consequences of the modernization process;30 all either argue outright or allow for the possibility that changes in Moscow's foreign policy were the result of new conceptions of state interests. Each of these factors has causal significance, and several are integrated into the alternative framework outlined in the next section.

What these liberal explanations have in common is that they challenge realism's austere view of international politics.31 Liberal institutionalist approaches, for example, point to the set of rules that states have devised (or customs they have formalized) to regulate behavior and facilitate cooperation.32 Frequently these rules are institutionalized in the form of international regimes. Regime theorists acknowledge that institutions that were initially based on states' rational cost-benefit calculations can over time alter actors' conception of interests.33 One way that regimes accomplish this is by facilitating learning, usually through strategic interaction.34 I will show that this was the case with Soviet foreign policy reformers, who came to see in
detente's extant rules of prudential superpower behavior the potential for a more far-reaching
East-West accommodation.

Whereas realists deny or greatly downplay the causal effect of such regime-embedded
regulatory norms on actor behavior, several variants of liberalism accord these ideational
phenomena independent explanatory power. To the extent that New Thinkers' alternative
conception of Soviet interests was derived from the regulatory principles loosely codified in the
detente regime of the 1970s, a cognitive-institutionalist framework accounts for considerable
policy innovation in the Gorbachev period. But the decision makers who determined the content
of Soviet policy in the late 1980s were driven by a vision of the USSR that went far beyond that
embodied in the regulatory norms of superpower rapprochement.

Neither the realist nor even the aforementioned liberal approach can account for the New
Thinking revolution in its conceptual and applied-policy totality. The most likely policy trajectory
derived from the logic of a combination of realist and liberal assumptions approximates
conciliatory realpolitik. An incoming Soviet regime alert to the country's declining position could
be expected to pare down its overseas commitments, pursue modest arms reduction accords as
a way to cut military expenditures and reduce the West's sense of threat, seek an expansion of
East-West trade and technical cooperation, and generally try to recast itself in the image of a
kinder, gentler superpower rival. This was the program judged by the vast majority of in-system
reformers to be necessary to redress the USSR's most pressing domestic difficulties and
international setbacks.35  

But in moving unilaterally to reduce its military forces and give them a defensive character,
in actively pressing for peaceful resolution of protracted Third World conflicts, and in tolerating
the collapse of fraternal allies in Eastern Europe—for four decades considered the
indispensable bulwark against Western aggression—the Gorbachev leadership's fully
developed New Thinking strategy trumped conciliatory realpolitik.

The differences in the two policy approaches stem not from varying assessments of the
gravity of the Soviet problematique but from different underlying assumptions and motivating
forces. Idealists parted company with purveyors of a more cautious brand of New Thinking akin
to conciliatory realpolitik in rejecting a view of East-West relations as inherently conflictive—if
not ideologically, then geostrategically. Similarly, radical reformers were not content to
ameliorate the security dilemma; they were determined to transcend it altogether, through
strategies based on reassurance rather than deterrence threats and, more ambitiously, through
the transformation of the Soviet Union into a democratic society integrated into the Western
community of nations. And whereas proponents of a conciliatory realpolitik course lauded its
amorality and pursuit of decidedly traditional state interests (after decades of Marxist-Leninist
ideology as the guiding principle), idealists were driven by a normative vision that defined Soviet
interests in wholly new ways.

To reject categorically the use of force to maintain the Soviet Union's security shield in
Eastern Europe and then to preserve the USSR itself is inexplicable in realist terms. No Soviet
regime, regardless of the perceived urgency of the country's economic plight or its faltering
geostrategic position, would take steps that it thought would jeopardize the physical security of
the state. The Gorbachev cohort was no exception. What allowed it to pursue a strategy utterly
unthinkable to its predecessors was its fundamentally different understanding of the nature of
the threat.

In coming to hold an altogether different vision of the USSR and its relations with the outside
world, the Gorbachev regime's idealist cohort was confident that a transformed Soviet Union
would render the Cold War confrontation an artifact of history. It is the pivotal significance of this
identity dimension for explaining the revolutionary course in Soviet foreign policy in the late
1980s that eludes both realist and liberal approaches.
An Ideas and Identity Framework

Taking ideational phenomena seriously as independent variables in influencing actors' definitions of interests requires a systematic exploration of intellectual evolution within the Soviet policy elite and the political process whereby new strategic prescriptions carried by in-system reformers became state policy.

The alternative conceptual framework developed here seeks to incorporate identity and domestic politics into a social cognitive perspective. Following Judith Goldstein and Robert Keohane, I accord explanatory autonomy to collectively held ideas but refine their approach in showing the constitutive effects of norms on actor behavior. Identity is the link between norms and interests that motivate behavior. The idealist conception of Soviet interests that determined the content of New Thinking in the mid-to late Gorbachev period was championed by in-system reformers who identified with the principles governing relations among Western democratic states and between said governments and their respective polities.

I modify the framework offered by Goldstein and Keohane by unpacking their concept of principled beliefs to distinguish between regulatory and constitutive principles. Both assert claims on behavior, though the latter do so much more strongly. Regime theory tends to give short shrift to constitutive norms. Perhaps for most instances of policy revision, and certainly for changes in Soviet international practice in the first years of the Gorbachev era, regulatory norms suffice to explain the attending modification in decision makers' conception of state interests. In the case of the sweeping redefinition of interests that yielded the radical variant of New Thinking, constitutive norms of identity were the principal motor force.

For many liberal scholars, cognitive evolutionary processes are central to the discussion of the effects of norms on behavior, whether constitutive or regulatory. While there is no single approach to learning, the distinction drawn by Joseph Nye and others between "simple" and "complex" learning is helpful for explaining the magnitude of foreign policy change in the Gorbachev years. In the former, policy adjustments constitute a more efficient matching of means and ends—tactical adaptation that leaves fundamental assumptions unquestioned and unchanged. Complex learning, in contrast, involves intellectual deliberation in which decision makers' interests may be redefined in light of new understandings about cause-and-effect relationships. By this definition, both regulatory and constitutive norms are linked analytically to complex learning through their effects on actors' conceptions of interest. There is no analytical or methodological reason why changes in actor identity cannot be incorporated into cognitive evolutionary approaches premised on complex learning.

I employ the concept of specialist networks to explicate two distinct but interrelated processes: (1) social construction of the ideas/ideology and identities that gave New Thinking its radical orientation and (2) political contention/selection, or how these shared conceptions became the basis of state policy in the late 1980s. The use of specialist networks provides the leverage to overcome two major shortcomings of the cognitive approaches that form the core of my argument. First, I do not see learning as an act of individual cognition that can be aggregated to generate insights about state or institutional behavior. Cognitive evolution is a social process. New Thinking was a collaborative effort, the result of intellectual give-and-take within these expert groups. I integrate identity formation into the cognitive framework by emphasizing the collectivity. Identity norms make much more powerful claims on behavior than do the causal beliefs and schemata that are the central focus of most learning approaches. In addition, building identity norms into cognitive approaches corrects bias of the latter toward the diffusion of technical knowledge at the expense of values and principles.

The second relevant shortcoming of learning explanations is that they are frequently divorced from politics and questions of power. Specialist networks quite literally provide the bridge between the emergence of new ideas and identities and their prospective adoption by the
political leadership. Which conception of Soviet national interests would prevail was largely a function of political struggle between competing groupings within the elite.

As other scholars have made considerable headway in correcting the apolitical nature of most cognitive approaches, my primary aim in this essay is to demonstrate the impact of collective identity norms on actor behavior.

Incorporating constitutive norms of identity into existing cognitive explanations for Soviet foreign policy change allows me to differentiate between the conciliatory realpolitik and idealist perspectives within the New Thinking camp. This distinction has largely escaped students of contemporary Soviet/Russian affairs despite its importance in explaining the evolution of Soviet policy during the Gorbachev years and after.

The conciliatory realpolitik perspective was the dominant outlook among progressive detractors of the Brezhnev leadership's handling of foreign affairs. Proponents criticized the regime's approach on the grounds that its unilateralist and ideology-driven strategy was eroding rather than advancing traditional state interests defined in terms of military security and economic well-being. Soviet practice was self-defeating, having unnecessarily antagonized the West and squandered precious resources with little to show in return. For many, though by no means all, of the reformers who subscribed to this line of thinking, the problem was not the goals of Soviet policy but the means employed to attain them. In this sense, envisaged changes in Kremlin international policy did not reflect a full-fledged reconceptualization of interests.

In contrast, the idealist outlook claimed a much smaller following and was only just emerging in the late 1970s and early 1980s, although it too had its rudimentary precursors. Proponents of this perspective conceived of Soviet interests in ways unrecognizable to realist practitioners of traditional great power politics and even to liberal institutionalists. In addition to promoting a strategy of reassurance to reverse the arms race and eradicate the political sources of military conflict, they sought to inject normative criteria into the formulation and conduct of foreign policy.47

Idealists embodied a new identity that held out the possibility of transcending the East-West divide. They viewed Soviet national interests in the context of global problems and values common to all mankind. For them, the failure of the Brezhnev-Gromyko approach resided in both its skewed representation of international political reality and its flawed vision of how the world and the Soviet Union ought to be. Genuine peace, according to idealists, could be achieved only on the basis of a common identity. To this end, they envisioned the USSR's joining the community of advanced industrial democracies whose relationships were governed by norms of reciprocity and non-use of force. The Cold War would wither away, its sustaining logic having vanished.

In practice, idealist and conciliatory realpolitik perspectives were not so easily distinguishable. They are best thought of as two ends of a spectrum, with the vast majority of foreign policy reformers distributed along the continuum. Thus the purveyors of New Thinking simultaneously held elements of both worldviews, the precise admixture of which changed over time. This is why it is possible to find inconsistencies in their policy positions, starting with Mikhail Gorbachev, whose thinking underwent considerable evolution during his six years in power.48

The existence of contending factions within the reformer camp is also one of the reasons the idealist version of New Thinking took a few years after Gorbachev was chosen general secretary to become state policy.49 Proponents of foreign policy reform, including top decision makers, held divergent views about the source of the problem and the nature of the prospective solution. In the absence of an agreed-upon blueprint, the initial New Thinking vision articulated by Gorbachev was predictably an amalgam of themes and concepts, some of which even resonated with foreign policy conservatives.50 It was sufficiently vague to permit political forces with relatively moderate agendas to claim allegiance to a common ideal even as they strived to head off any radical change.51 For his part, Gorbachev remained open to the arguments of
advocates of both the conciliatory realpolitik and the idealist perspectives, ultimately siding with
the latter.52

The focus of the empirical section of this essay is the neglected idealist outlook because it is
here that we find the newly minted identity and attendant normative commitments that gave
New Thinking its transformative character and made possible the peaceful end of the East-West
conflict. As I have shown, existing liberal explanations that emphasize cognitive evolution can
account for many important policy revisions undertaken by the Gorbachev regime. In doing so,
they persuasively demonstrate that ideas promoted by in-system reformers exerted independent
influence on Soviet behavior, effectively rebuffing realists’ materialist conception of interests,
which views ideas solely in instrumental terms53 (i.e., used by Kremlin decision makers to justify
or make palatable changes necessary for domestic restructuring).54 But in order to account for
New Thinking’s idealist incarnation, which in effect deprived the West of its Cold War enemy,
these liberal approaches must be supplemented with a collective identity dimension.

The Empirical Case

Origins of New Thinking’s Idealist Variant

The ideas and identity that gave New Thinking its revolutionary content had historical
antecedents going back to the Khrushchev era and the beginnings of de-Stalinization. They
have been documented elsewhere and need not be examined here.55 But one cannot draw a
straight line from Khrushchev-inspired reformers—the self-described “children of the Twentieth
Party Congress”—to purveyors of the idealist strand of New Thinking almost three decades
later, even though in some cases they were same people.56 Getting to that point required some
conceptual leaps that many proved unable or unwilling to make. Those who did underwent a
profound evolution that led them to repudiate fundamental axioms of Marxism-Leninism that
they had once taken to be true.

It was as a result of both the early success and the disillusioning demise of 1970s
superpower rapprochement that liberal mezhdunarodniki began to challenge the underlying
assumptions of the Brezhnev regime’s coercive detente strategy and to formulate an alternative
approach. Detractors rejected both the prevailing conception of peaceful coexistence as a form
of class struggle and the dominant interpretation of Western accommodationist policies as being
compelled by a shift in the “correlation of forces” in favor of socialism. Their conclusion that
Western cooperative behavior was in part dispositional rather than wholly circumstantial pointed
to the need for more-conciliatory Soviet policies that could be expected to strengthen the hand
of “realistic-minded” circles in the elite and thereby elicit Western reciprocity.

With the expansion of East-West detente, liberal reformers were less inclined to view
capitalist states as inherently aggressive or to accept the notion of irreconcilable interests
between the two social systems. Buoyed by detente’s promising early returns, some of these
specialists saw the possibility that superpower rapprochement could bring about the
restructuring of international relations and with it the prospect of eliminating the risk of armed
conflict between the two blocs.57

The hope of radically recasting East-West relations was most evident in the distinction
drawn by Soviet commentators between “negative peace” and “positive peace.” The former
refers to the absence of war because of mutual deterrence, while the latter connotes a state of
pacific relations in which the root causes of conflict have been eliminated. The conceptual link
between the ideas of positive peace and the restructuring of international relations on the one
hand and the idealist strand of New Thinking on the other is unmistakable.58 What enabled
these ideas to survive the downturn in relations only to reappear in modified form in the
Gorbachev era was their partial codification in the series of East-West agreements that
collectively composed detente.
The institutionalization of nuclear arms control in the form of the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, which banned nationwide missile defense systems, and the Strategic Arms Limitations Treaty of the same year, which placed ceilings on offensive weapons, together with accords aimed at regulating superpower rivalry in the Third World (Basic Principles Agreement, BPA) and ratifying the postwar political settlement in Europe (the 1975 Helsinki Accords) constituted a nascent security regime. Embedded in the regime were fledgling norms of behavior that shaped the identity of would-be radical New Thinkers. These diffuse norms represented an attempt to articulate shared aspirations as well as to codify formally extant practices.

Regrettably, neither Moscow nor Washington was prepared to countenance the potentially far-reaching implications of the ABM Treaty or the BPA. That all changed when the Gorbachev regime placed reasonable sufficiency and finite deterrence on the policy agenda and made good on its pledge to seek political solutions to festering regional conflicts in Afghanistan, Cambodia, Angola, and elsewhere in the developing world.

The Basic Principles Agreement was especially relevant to the emergence of the idealist outlook in the Gorbachev years. The accord was destined to become a casualty of continuous superpower efforts to shape political outcomes in the Third World for unilateral advantage. But for liberal mezhdunarodniki analyzing the reasons for the demise of detente, the accord came to be viewed as a stillborn attempt to create a regime premised on nonintervention and nonresort to force. What the two sides initially regarded as a commonsense and self-interested way to constrain provocative behavior was later endowed with normative significance by New Thinkers whose vision of the USSR precluded the expansionist and militaristic Kremlin strategies they now concluded had helped destroy detente. They recognized the transformative but wasted potential of the BPA. The problem, according to these foreign policy revisionists, was not that superpower detente had been overambitious. To the contrary, detente had been too timid; it had neglected to address the root causes of the Cold War conflict, thereby forgoing any chance to move from managed rivalry to full-fledged collaboration.

The human rights provisions of the Helsinki Accords similarly affected the ideational evolution of would-be idealists, albeit indirectly, by giving rise to a network of committed activists in the USSR and Eastern Europe. Their courageous efforts, while more or less successfully suppressed by the various communist governments, did not go unnoticed by Soviet liberal reformers, anti-Stalinists all, who could condemn the dissidents' confrontational tactics but could no longer deny the validity of their simple message about the regime's harsh repression and the absence of basic freedoms. Dissidents such as Andrei Sakharov, together with Western transnational partners whose unwavering support for human rights and detente bolstered their credibility in the eyes of Soviet in-system reformers, confronted these liberal reformers with the dark reality of the regime of which they were very much a part.

The response by liberal mezhdunarodniki to the crash in East-West relations was largely confined to revisionist scholarship on international relations theory, although some specific regime policies were criticized by institute experts and specialists in the apparat. The Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO) took the lead in promoting an analysis that emphasized states rather than classes as the principal actors on the world stage, accelerating interdependence, the primacy of nonclass values, the role of nonmaterial factors (e.g., domestic politics, culture, individual leaders' worldviews) in determining states' interests, and implicitly, a more benign view of capitalism. All of these themes were to become central tenets of the USSR's new course, having been conveyed to future CPSU chairman Gorbachev through institute director Aleksandr Yakovlev (the reformist former Central Committee secretary banished to Canada to be Soviet ambassador and brought back to Moscow in 1983 at Gorbachev's behest to take the helm of IMEMO) and his successor Yevgeny Primakov. Joining IMEMO analysts in this self-conscious attempt to purge Soviet foreign policy of its ideological underpinnings were like-minded colleagues at the Institute of the United States and Canada (ISKAN), the Institute of Economics of the World Socialist System (IEMSS), and other
Academy of Sciences think tanks, together with sympathetic experts in the government and party bureaucracy. With growing temerity they advanced cogent critiques of Soviet international strategy despite the stifling impact on foreign policy—related discourse of the burgeoning conflict with the West.

As alluded to earlier, many of the international security and arms control concepts associated with New Thinking were originally developed by peace scholars and other liberal-Left experts in the West and transmitted to pro-reform *mezhdunarodniki* and aspiring civilian defense analysts in the USSR through transnational networks. None of these linkages proved more important than the membership of ISKAN director Georgi Arbatov on the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues chaired by Olaf Palme. Under the tutelage of West German arms control expert and prominent Social Democratic Party official Egon Bahr, the influential Arbatov became a convert to common security and his institute became the entrepreneurial source of proposals for asymmetrical cuts in nuclear and conventional arms and for nonoffensive-force postures later taken up by Gorbachev.

Other transnational links that influenced Soviet security policy included Soviet specialists' contacts with European alternative defense proponents such as Danish physicist Anders Boserup (through Pugwash Conference working groups) and Academy of Sciences vice president and Gorbachev adviser Yevgeny Velikhov's participation in joint projects with U.S. arms control experts. The fact that these Western specialists were critical of their own governments' policies as well as those of the USSR enhanced their standing with Soviet interlocutors.

Yet even more important than the contribution of transnational networks to the eclipse of the image of the West as implacably hostile and to the diffusion of knowledge about mitigating the pernicious effects of the security dilemma was the role of these specialists in the identity evolution of Soviet in-system reformers. During the heyday of detente, the Brezhnev regime did its best to insulate Soviet society from subversive bourgeois liberal ideas. Still, through transnational contacts, progressive *mezhdunarodniki* were exposed to Western conceptions of human rights and sensitized to the flaws in the Soviet system by staunchly pro-detente counterparts in the U.S. and Western Europe. They also witnessed the advantages of pacific international partnership, political pluralism and democratic governance, and the establishment of the rule of law.

Many of these specialists had the opportunity to travel to the West and, in the case of ISKAN postgraduates, to spend several months working in the U.S. at the embassy in Washington or at the UN mission in New York. Firsthand experience with the West did not necessarily send liberal reformers rushing to try to replicate on Soviet soil a free-market system and democratic political institutions. But by their own admission it instilled in them an abiding appreciation for the numerous strengths of these societies and purged them of many deeply ingrained myths and stereotypes about capitalism.

Contact with the West gave Soviet reformers a new lens through which to view their own society: the stifling repression, pervasive secrecy, lagging living standards, and adversarial relationship with every non-communist country on the Eurasian landmass. By the late 1970s a number of in-system regime critics, already firmly enshrouded in the Westernizer camp, were making the transition from anti-Stalinist reformers to democratic socialists and in some cases, to social democrats. Direct and indirect exposure to the West may have helped Soviet reformers to comprehend the magnitude of the USSR's systemic crisis, but, far more important, this contact influenced the content of the program that they formulated and then proceeded to implement once they gained power.

Liberal reformers who developed this new identity increasingly defined the Western threat in broad political-ideological terms. The adversary, as they saw it, was the bellicose strategy pursued by right-wing hawks in the West (and the provocative Soviet policies that helped
generate support for it), not the democratic capitalist system per se (some of the founding principles of which this cadre of Soviet reformers now accepted).

The intervention in Afghanistan was a pivotal event in the identity evolution of liberal mezhdunarodniki. Foreign policy reformers saw their unprecedented admission of Kremlin complicity in the fall of detente give way to a more profound critique of Soviet international behavior. Beyond conventional arguments that intervention would prove politically costly (e.g., deal a deathblow to an already ailing detente) and militarily ineffective, some of these specialists saw the introduction of Soviet troops as a violation of international law governing the resort to force and the sanctity of interstate borders. In essence, they were rejecting the Brezhnev Doctrine, a position that they articulated with greater force a few years later in connection with the rise of the Solidarity trade union movement in Poland and the possibility of armed Soviet intervention.

It was becoming clear to a growing number of reformers that the USSR could not take its place among the world's "civilized nations" if it insisted on violating at home and abroad the norms of behavior governing Western democratic regimes' treatment of their own citizens and relations between member states of that community. It is the significance of this identity-derived normative dimension in molding the ultimate character of the Gorbachev foreign policy revolution that is beyond the reach of realist and liberal explanations.

The vision of Soviet society and the USSR's relationship to the outside world that united moderate and radical reformers is conveyed in the term normal country. Virtually every New Thinker I interviewed or who has spoken or written on the topic has invoked it to describe his or her hopes for the nation. And while not all of them meant precisely the same thing, the general notion was not difficult to discern. At the most elemental level it meant removing the "absurdity and irrationality" that was everyday life. In the economic sphere, that translated to the necessity of a system with rational incentives that produced food and consumer goods in sufficient quantities that citizens would not suffer the indignity of perpetual lines. In the political sphere it meant once and for all throwing off the yoke of Stalinism and moving in the direction of democratic governance (i.e., respect for individual rights, establishment of the rule of law, competitive elections). With respect to interstate relations, becoming a normal country required abandoning Marxism-Leninism as a guide for defining state interests and pursuing either an enlightened realpolitik dedicated to advancing traditional security goals or, alternatively, a foreign policy based on the norms and principles associated with the bolder version of New Thinking.

Ideas reflecting both the amoral realpolitik perspective and its fledgling idealist competitor started to reach those who later would wield political power in the Gorbachev era. Dispirited by the failure of successive regimes to take remedial steps to redress economic and political stagnation and to repair the dangerous rift in superpower relations, nascent New Thinkers nevertheless were determined not to abandon their cause. They refined their critique, circulated heterodox views on contemporary international relations, and cultivated support among certain members of the leadership, most notably Mikhail Gorbachev, who by 1983 had become a major force on the Politburo and Andropov's heir apparent.

Examination of relevant CPSU and individual institute archives reveals that by this time Gorbachev was already on the receiving end of secret zapiski from progressive specialists. While generally avoiding assessments of specific Soviet actions (with the exception of the Afghanistan intervention and deployment of SS-20s), these analysts succeeded in raising first-order questions about the USSR's overall international strategy. There was also a collection of more than a hundred white papers written during Andropov's tenure by experts from an array of disciplines on the full panoply of problems confronting the USSR. They were done at the behest of Politburo member Gorbachev with the help of Nikolai Ryzhkov, head of the Central Committee's Economic Department. A few years later, addressing a group of sympathetic intellectuals to encourage them to redouble their efforts in the struggle for reform, Gorbachev
publicly confirmed the existence of the white papers. Recalling his earlier frank conversations
with many of the authors, Gorbachev stated: "The results of these discussions and their
analyses formed the basis for the decisions of the April [1985] plenum and the first steps
thereafter."

In addition to his close personal relationship with Yakovlev, who provided a window onto
innovative work being done at IMEMO, the future general secretary had contact with a range of
other prominent liberal thinkers. Among them were ISKAN director Arbatov, Political Science
Association chief Georgi Shakhnazarov, journal *Ogonek* editor Vitaly Korotich, head of the
Institute of Economics and Industrial Organization Abel Aganbegyan, and senior staffers from
the International Department of the Central Committee Secretariat. Gorbachev's practice of
seeking out experts and engaging them in wide-ranging discussions became institutionalized
once he was elevated to the CPSU chairmanship. He empowered pro-reform specialists to fill in
his sparse vision, which at that point more closely resembled conciliatory realpolitik than its
incipient idealist rival.

**The New Thinking Revolution**

During the Gorbachev period Soviet international policy evolved from a comparatively
modest set of initiatives aimed at ratcheting down the East-West confrontation to a daring
program for completely revamping the USSR’s relations with the West and the rest of the world.
Focusing on Moscow’s Eastern Europe strategy and on Soviet military doctrine and arms control
practices, I show that profound changes in these areas reflected the success of purveyors of the
idealist variant of New Thinking. Capitalizing on the failure of the early Gorbachev line to elicit
reciprocal Western restraint, radicalized *mezhdunarodniki* persuaded Kremlin decision makers
to embrace their analysis and policy prescriptions. Elements of the idealist version of New
Thinking were incorporated into leadership statements and initiatives from the outset of
Gorbachev’s tenure as CPSU chairman, although it became the dominant perspective in Soviet
policy only in 1988—1989. Beginning with the plan to eliminate nuclear weapons by the year
2000 and the general secretary’s “Political Report to the Twenty-seventh Party Congress” and
culminating in Gorbachev’s historic December 1988 speech at the United Nations and decision
to tolerate the collapse of successive communist regimes in Eastern Europe, Soviet interests
were redefined, consistent with the rival vision of the Soviet Union put forward by radical
specialists.

Contrary to the view of realist-minded skeptics in the West that Moscow was trying to make
virtue of necessity by cloaking an unavoidable redirection of international policy in noble
language, the New Thinking course pursued by the Gorbachev Politburo starting about late
1987 was the product of decades-long intellectual evolution that was influenced but not deter-
mined by material factors. It embodied both new understandings about how the world works and
normative judgments about how it should. What initially looked to suspicious NATO
governments like a straightforward case of survival-driven adaptive behavior cleverly packaged
to portray the USSR as the champion of inspiring, high-minded ideals was nothing less than a
long-time-in-the-making metamorphosis of intellect and conscience.

**Arms Control and Military Doctrine**

The drastic changes in Soviet defense policy that paved the way for the end of the Cold War
rivalry were not on the incoming regime’s original agenda. The new team in the Kremlin hoped
to alter the perilous trajectory of superpower relations through renewed summit meetings and a
number of modest arms control concessions (e.g., a freeze on the deployment of SS-20
missiles and a temporary moratorium on nuclear tests) designed to convey a more moderate
strategy and greater flexibility at the bargaining table.
At the same time, evidence of radical inclinations at the highest levels was not hard to find. Dismissed in the West as another in a long line of transparently propagandistic Soviet disarmament ploys designed to play to world public opinion, the January 1986 proposal for a nuclear-free world gave every indication of being a serious initiative. It differed from past grandiose pronouncements both in laying out a specific, sequential approach to reductions and, more important, in demonstrating an understanding of the nuclear revolution and the dangerous fallacy of a unilateral path to security. According to Vladimir Petrovsky, a respected international relations theorist and practitioner who helped draft the documents that became the basis of the proposal, the plan also captured Gorbachev's personal commitment to disarmament on ethical as well as on economic and security grounds. In statements aimed at explaining Moscow's thinking on contemporary international relations, the Soviet leader frequently expressed doubts about the morality of nuclear deterrence. It was a view he shared with Ronald Reagan and one that led them to flirt with a pact to eliminate strategic nuclear arms at the Reykjavik summit.

The vigorously contested report to the party convocation in February 1986 provided further evidence that radical New Thinkers were already influencing Politburo policy debates. Reiterating earlier statements about the need for new approaches in Soviet international praxis, Gorbachev embraced common security and endorsed the principles of reasonable sufficiency and nonprovocative defense that were already being promoted by maverick civilian analysts—albeit cautiously, given the strong taboo on public discussion of questions related to strategy and force posture.

The general secretary's declared intentions and some meaningful doctrinal modifications (e.g., a shift in the official goal from war-fighting to war prevention) notwithstanding, actual Soviet military policy changed relatively little in the early Gorbachev years. A major obstacle was the military high command, which persisted in trying to define reasonable sufficiency and nonoffensive defense in such a way as to deflect efforts to overhaul the armed forces and thereby safeguard its institutional autonomy. Nor was a political leadership that continued to harbor doubts about U.S. objectives ready to translate those abstract concepts into bold, concrete arms control measures.

The turning point came when Moscow moved to de-link a prospective agreement to ban all land-based intermediate range nuclear missiles from the impasse over the proposed American Star Wars antimissile system and reductions in the superpower strategic nuclear arsenals. Gorbachev attributed the decision to lobbying by civilian defense experts and discussions with foreign intellectual and cultural figures gathered in Moscow in February 1987 for a conference titled "For a World Without Nuclear Weapons, for Humanity's Survival."

Acceptance of the previously vilified "zero option" was the first crucial step toward implementation of the agenda formulated by radical New Thinkers. It reflected a substantial redefinition of Soviet security interests and marked a dramatic departure from past policy. The treaty's ban on an entire category of newly deployed nuclear weapons required deeply asymmetrical cuts in Soviet forces. Eager to extend glasnost to the secretive military establishment, the Soviet leader agreed to unprecedented intrusive verification provisions. In the stroke of a pen, Gorbachev and his allies had confounded Western forecasters and Soviet foreign policy moderates alike.

The accord proved empowering for ardent reformers because it was tantamount to official admission that the original deployment of SS-20s—and by extension much of Moscow's international security policy—had been fatally flawed. In acceding to the Western demand that it scrap its most modern medium-range missiles, the Soviet regime showed it was coming to terms with the USSR's role in detente's collapse, an analysis proffered by radicalized mezhdunarodniki in support of their more benign view of capitalist states. These specialists responded to the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces (INF) accord by intensifying their efforts on behalf of increasingly far-reaching measures to overhaul Soviet defense strategy and force structure.
In the months following conclusion of the accord, articles by emboldened civilian defense analysts began to appear in several publications. With growing confidence, these commentators advanced proposals to extend to strategic nuclear and conventional forces the conceptual breakthrough that sealed the INF deal and in so doing gave content to often amorphous New Thinking proclamations. The battle for the hearts and minds of the Gorbachev leadership to determine which version of New Thinking would prevail had entered a decisive and openly contentious phase.102

The intellectual work, political battling, and "lobbying" by radical civilian defense specialists was rewarded when Gorbachev announced before the un that Moscow would reduce troop levels by five hundred thousand within two years and would destroy ten thousand tanks, eighty-five hundred artillery systems, and eight hundred combat aircraft. He pledged to demobilize six Soviet divisions stationed in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and East Germany and said that remaining divisions would be reorganized and "given a different structure from today's, which will become unambiguously defensive after the removal of a large number of their tanks." Assault landing and river-crossing forces were also to be withdrawn.103 It was not so much the magnitude of the reductions that drew Western attention as the stunning shift from an offensive to a defensive military posture and the retreat from traditional Russian/Soviet conceptions of security that these unilateral moves represented.

Gorbachev's un speech had the hoped-for impact, propelling the U.S. and the USSR to dismantle the military confrontation that had defined their relationship for four decades. Having taken up the agenda urged by radical civilian defense experts, Gorbachev steered the superpowers toward a series of sweeping agreements that transformed the security situation on the European continent and advanced the cause of global peace and security. In less than three years East and West concluded the strategic nuclear arms reduction treaty (start I) and the conventional forces in Europe accord (CFE Treaty) and made substantial progress on eliminating chemical weapons and on follow-on cuts in the strategic arsenals.

The reconceptualization of Soviet security interests that made these agreements possible reflected a new collective identity in which a critical core of the Soviet leadership no longer viewed the West as the "other." When Gorbachev, Shevardnadze, and others spoke of depriving the West of an enemy, they were not only alluding to the possibility of the USSR's unilaterally dropping out of the arms race; they were expressing aspirations of joining the community of democratic states. They now understood that even significant disarmament accords would not suffice to overcome the East-West divide. Only a common identity would permit the two sides to transform their relationship, because at its core the Cold War was a political-ideological conflict, especially for the U.S., with its own Manichaean worldview and messianic impulse "to make the world safe for democracy." This is why, in addition to Soviet behavior abroad, the regime's policies at home and within the bloc would determine whether Moscow and the West would move beyond rapprochement to genuine partnership.

Eastern Europe

That the complete revamping of Soviet arms control strategy was informed by broader idealist commitments pertaining to the non-use of force in interstate relations and the fostering of conditions of "positive peace" is easier to discern in the context of Moscow's policy toward Eastern Europe.

Well acquainted with the large body of revisionist scholarship strongly suggesting a loosening of Soviet hegemonic control,104 the Gorbachev cohort came to power convinced of the need for a more permissive and outright supportive stance toward pro-reform elements in Eastern Europe.105 Addressing the Twenty-seventh Party Congress, the general secretary signaled the onset of a policy to "deregulate" the bloc106 when he observed that "unity has nothing in common with uniformity" or "with interference by some parties in the affairs of others."
The official death of the Brezhnev Doctrine was still more than three years away, but the leadership was clearly hinting that Moscow would not impose its will on Eastern European allies and certainly would not do so through force.

As part of the move to relax the USSR's four-decade iron grip on the bloc, Gorbachev actively encouraged Warsaw Pact governments to emulate Moscow in introducing greater liberalization in economic and political life. The result was to energize Eastern European reformers and antagonize Stalinist stalwarts such as East German chief Eric Honecker, but there were as yet few signs of the coming cataclysm and every reason for the Kremlin's confidence that it could control the pace of events.

A number of specialists at IEMSS and elsewhere who provided the intellectual and political support for Moscow's more benign stance sought broader changes in the USSR's relationship with fraternal socialist allies. They were motivated as much by normative qualms about an empire held together by force as by pragmatic considerations revolving around the desire to ease the economic burden posed by the bloc. The contrast between NATO's Kantian security community and the Warsaw Pact had not been lost on liberal mezhdunarodniki, many of whom envisioned a socialist commonwealth bound together by shared principles rather than by imposed dogmas and the omnipresent threat of Soviet intervention. These specialists found important allies within the regime's top echelons, including Foreign Minister Shevardnadze and senior Gorbachev advisers Georgi Shakhnazarov and Anatoly Chernyaev.

The Gorbachev leadership came under growing pressure from reformers to launch bolder initiatives in both domestic and foreign affairs. In the summer of 1988 two major gatherings, the Nineteenth All-Union CPSU Conference and a meeting of influential experts at the Foreign Ministry, propelled Soviet reforms in a more radical direction. Policy toward Eastern Europe was no exception. Authoritative statements in support of the principle of noninterference in allies' affairs were now more frequent and less equivocal and were given added credence by the multilateral accord providing for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan.

The cuts in Soviet military forces stationed on the territory of Pact states outlined in Gorbachev's watershed address to the UN were a powerful expression of Kremlin intentions toward Eastern Europe as well as the NATO states. The implicit removal of the threat of Soviet force to crush challenges to communist authority was followed by a series of fateful decisions by the Gorbachev hierarchy that indirectly fomented popular upheaval and hastened the collapse of all the Warsaw Pact regimes.

With Poland already making the transition to a non-communist led government and the East German regime under siege, the Gorbachev cohort showed it was true to its professed principles. During a trip to Helsinki in October 1989, the Soviet leader all but declared the Brezhnev Doctrine formally dead, stating that "the USSR does not have the moral or political right" to interfere in the affairs of its Warsaw Pact allies. He ordered Soviet troops based in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) (East Germany) not to participate in the suppression of antigovernment demonstrations threatening to topple the regime. The Berlin Wall was breached, and the communists were soon ousted. The same fate befell their comrades throughout the bloc by year's end. Near-total control over territory deemed absolutely essential to Soviet security for four decades had been relinquished without firing a shot. In the final analysis, Moscow may well have been a "hostage to revolution," but it was a revolution largely of its own making and one that the Gorbachev leadership consciously declined to derail when opportunities to do so still existed.

If the Gorbachev leadership had not intended to preside over the collapse of the Soviet position in Eastern Europe, why would it have made such feeble attempts to avert that outcome, given the bloc's overwhelming strategic value in Soviet security assessments? The answer is closely related to the idealist identity that was taking hold among the Gorbachev cohort and the attending redefinition of Soviet interests and external threats.
Moscow's benevolent response to the revolutions of 1989 reflected the goal of radical New Thinkers that the USSR take its place among the world's advanced industrialized nations not on the basis of its military prowess— the path pursued by each of Gorbachev's predecessors—but on that of shared principles and a common identity. What would it mean for an aspiring democratic Russia to move to suppress nonviolent popular democratic movements in Eastern Europe and how could such a country expect to join the community of Western states? Gorbachev and his chief allies were committed to a Soviet Union rooted in that community, and they made clear their readiness to expose Soviet society to the influence of Western ideas, values, institutions, and culture.

When Gorbachev had first invoked the image of a "common European home" during his visit to London in December 1984, his vision of a demilitarized continent was based on the continued existence of two political systems. By 1989 the "common home" phrase expressed the desire to create a new "European" (i.e., Atlantic to the Urals) security order based on a common identity made possible by the political and, to a lesser degree, economic reformation under way in the USSR. The Soviet leadership had come to appreciate that although disarmament accords and adoption of defensive military postures could ameliorate the security dilemma, only a common identity provided the basis for "positive peace" in which nations forswear (and cannot even fathom) resort to force or the threat of force as a means to resolve disputes. Significantly, Gorbachev's call for a USSR integrated into Asia, first made in his 1986 Vladivostok speech, never invoked visions of shared values and identity as had analogous statements on the common European home.

The point of the foregoing analysis of the relationship between identity evolution on the one hand and Soviet arms control strategy and policy toward Eastern Europe on the other is not to claim that purveyors of the idealist variant of New Thinking became Gandhian pacifists and Jeffersonian democrats. They did not, as the body of their statements, writings, and actions attests. But neither were they the same individuals who in their formative years viewed the world through the prism of Marxism-Leninism and continued to believe in its central tenets as a guide for Soviet international policy. Particularly the older cohort of reformers— the children of the Twentieth Party Congress—who came to power with Gorbachev, underwent tremendous changes in their thinking about the world, about Soviet society, and about themselves over a period of many years. This evolution was inextricably tied to changes in collective identity that, while greatly influenced by the transmission of Western ideas and principles, were essentially homegrown. It was nurtured in an oppressive system that denied its citizens basic political and civil rights and failed to provide anything more than a meager material existence and in a foreign policy that made hostile encirclement a self-fulfilling prophecy.

There is little question that foreign policy reformers, both liberal and radical, did not intend to bring about a precipitous decline in Soviet international influence, to say nothing of the disintegration of the USSR. On the contrary, they wanted to arrest the Soviet Union's accelerating internal decline and to preserve the country's status as a prime actor in world affairs. But how the idealist contingent defined being a great power varied markedly with historical Soviet understandings (as well as with extant Western ones). Reflecting on the theme of greatness and responding to the accusations of his vociferous detractors about his having engineered the USSR's loss of power and prestige, Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze poignantly stated:

The belief that we are a great country and that we should be respected for this is deeply ingrained in me, as in everyone. But great in what? Territory? Population? Quantity of arms? Or the people's troubles? The individual's lack of rights? In what do we, who have virtually the highest infant mortality rate on our planet, take pride? It is not easy to answer the questions: Who are you and who do you wish to be? A country which
is feared or a country which is respected? A country of power or a country of kindness?123

As Shevardnadze's questions illustrate, foreign policy radicals, of which he was definitely one, had a very different conception of what it meant to be a great power, a conception bound up with changing notions of Soviet national identity. These specialists were confident that if the Gorbachev government pursued the enlightened policies that they prescribed, the USSR could return to a position of visionary leadership in the international community. As the birthplace and tireless promoter of New Thinking, the USSR would be in the vanguard of the movement to construct a peaceful and prosperous new world order.

In this way there was a profound link to the ideals of the great October Revolution. Gorbachev's invocation of the Leninist legacy was not so much a bid to garner legitimacy for a regime moving to dismantle a system erected by the founding father as it was an attempt to redeem the promise of the revolution.124 Retaining its character as a socialist state was probably less important than reclaiming the mantle of international political leadership. For idealists, it was not enough that their country be a normal country. They entertained grander ambitions of transforming the Soviet Union, which, they reasoned, would in turn alter the fundamental nature of postwar international politics.125 As New Thinking idealists had hoped, the radical course finally adopted by the Gorbachev regime brought tribute from around the world and made Moscow the center of revolutionary praxis, thereby reaffirming the country's singular destiny. This sense of mission was and remains central to the Soviet/Russian national identity.

Back to the Future?

In this essay I have attempted to show that the revolutionary elements of Soviet New Thinking that ushered in the end of the Cold War were the product of a profound reconceptualization of state interests. This redefinition of interests was rooted in new collective understandings about causal relationships in international politics and in regulatory and constitutive norms that spawned a vision of a democratic Soviet Union in full partnership with the Western powers.

The ideas and identity framework developed here both complements and challenges realist and liberal approaches in offering, it is argued, a more compelling explanation for the transformative character of Soviet foreign policy in the mid- to late Gorbachev era. Beyond being able to account for the radical turn in Kremlin arms control strategy and the pacific response to the revolutions in Eastern Europe and independence movements in various then Soviet republics, it also helps to explain why the Soviet Union under Gorbachev rejected the "Asian path" of economic development as unsuitable for the USSR.126 In this regard, the ideas and identity framework speaks to both Russia's past and its future.

It does not follow from my explanation for the end of the Cold War that Russia would continue to pursue an entirely cooperative and arguably deferential foreign policy or that Kremlin decision makers would continue to view the nation's interests as fully congruent with those of its former adversaries. To the contrary, the framework presented here strongly suggests that the future direction of post-Soviet Russian international policy was and remains very much in question and that the long-run prospects for radical New Thinking were, for reasons elaborated below, never especially encouraging.

For realists who see burgeoning strains in U.S.-Russian relations—whether stemming from Moscow's hegemonic behavior in the "near abroad," its brutal war against the breakaway Chechen Republic, or its sale of nuclear technology to Iran—as confirming the inevitability of a return to great power rivalry following an aberrant honeymoon, Russia's growing assertiveness would seem to confound the expectations of realist theory. If, as realists insist, New Thinking was a rational response to dire circumstances, how can they account for the Yeltsin
government's increasingly nationalist course at a time when Russia is far weaker in both relative and absolute terms than in the late 1980s? Similarly, if Moscow's recent behavior does herald a return to more traditional Soviet/Russian patterns, thereby rendering late-Gorbachev-era New Thinking a historical anomaly, it is powerful evidence that state interests cannot be deduced from material capabilities.

To the extent that Russian rhetoric and actions in the international sphere reflect the exigencies of post-Soviet domestic politics, the driving force behind Moscow's behavior is beyond the reach of dominant (neo)realist structural explanations. In contrast, the ideas and identity framework, with its imperfect attempt to integrate politics and collective ideational constructs, makes intelligible Russia's ambivalent—partly cooperative, partly combative—stance toward the West.

The battle waged by opponents and supporters of New Thinking is part of a larger struggle over Soviet identity in the modern world—a struggle with roots deep in the Russian past. For centuries, Slavophiles and Westernizers armed with their competing visions have fought for the soul of Russia.127 What kind of society and what kind of country did Russia aspire to be?

Those questions must still be answered as the Russian Federation charts its foreign policy future. Many factors will determine which course Russia pursues in its relations with the outside world.128 The contest between advocates of the conciliatory realpolitik and idealist variants of New Thinking (later joined by stridently nationalist voices at the extremes of the political spectrum) remains relevant for understanding the Yeltsin government's flirtation with a more assertive international posture and for the longer-term evolution of Russian policy. Present-day policy debates in the political elite and increasingly in the general public reflect the ongoing struggle over the meaning and content of Russian national identity, which was only temporarily settled in the late Gorbachev era.130

The idealist view of the world and the USSR's place in it never commanded the support of a majority of foreign policy reformers even after Gorbachev sided with the radicals. Opposition from hard-liners was constant and continues to the present. What changed was the addition to the opposition ranks of moderate reformers who welcomed the initial revisions in Soviet strategy, then watched with alarm as radicals commandeered the policy process.131

Eduard Shevardnadze, one of the most forceful proponents of the radical agenda, was also among the first casualties of the backlash against what was seen as the "naive idealism" of the USSR's international course.132 The embattled foreign minister resigned under a barrage of criticism for kowtowing to the West and betraying Soviet interests (e.g., supporting the anti-Iraq coalition in the Persian Gulf war, permitting German unification and the new state's incorporation into NATO, bowing before the International Monetary Fund's demands for painful structural reforms). Detractors also attacked unilateral force reductions and the abandoning of longtime allies while disparaging New Thinking tenets such as universal human values and the diminished utility and dubious morality of armed force in the modern era.

More recently, former foreign policy reformers have joined extremists on the Right and Left in demanding a more forceful posture toward the states of the former Soviet Union, either to quell bloody ethnic conflicts along the Russian border or to prevent discrimination against Russian minorities living there.133

Bowing to pressure, President Yeltsin and Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev, at first content to continue the course that they inherited, began to take a harder—or at least a less overtly pro-Western—line. This has been manifested in the not-so-surreptitious intervention by Russian units in the Georgian civil war, delayed troop withdrawals from former Baltic republics, support for "brother Slavs" in the Bosnian war, and sometimes bitter complaints about Russia's treatment as a junior partner in its post-Cold War relations with onetime foes.

Moscow's recent decision to join the Partnership for Peace (after pressing vigorously but unsuccessfully for full NATO membership or some special status to distinguish Russia from other new partners) suggests that those who see Russia's future as a democratic and capitalist
nation firmly anchored in the West retain the upper hand. But whether this once and sure-to-be-future great power will continue to cast its lot with the West will depend in large measure on which among the competing national identities emerges as the most salient.

Western leverage over Russia's choice and its future evolution is modest, and pronouncements to the contrary run the risk of generating the kind of unrealistic expectations that doomed detente in the 1970s and already have a Republican-controlled Congress moving to slash U.S. aid to Moscow. Efforts to integrate Russia into the constellation of international institutions and emerging regional security architecture can help to blunt historical Russian suspicion that the Western powers harbor malevolent intentions and seek to exploit Moscow's weakened position. Decision makers in Western capitals have not been sufficiently sensitive to the multiple traumas—disorienting political and economic transformation at home and collapse of power and prestige abroad—that beset present-day Russia.

There is no simple causal nexus between U.S./Western action and Soviet behavior. In the early 1980s external Western pressure may have helped undermine the legitimacy of the old guard, but only because liberal reformers were ready and able to make a compelling case that Western belligerence was not immutable and was in part a response to threatening Soviet behavior. A similar Western strategy today would likely ensure Russia's nationalist turn. At a minimum, the ideas and identity framework elaborated in this essay can provide scholars and policy makers with an improved set of tools with which to assay the often neglected complex social processes that shape the ways in which states define their interests.

Having illuminated these processes and suggested a causal sequence that takes us from systemic crisis to recognition to political and ideological contestation and finally to foreign policy outcomes, the ideas and identity framework would appear to be a promising candidate for comparative crossnational research. Only further empirical study will tell.
The author would like to thank the participants at the three Social Science Research Council/MacArthur Workshops for illuminating discussions and helpful comments. I am also indebted to Peter Katzenstein, David Holloway, Stephen Walt, and two anonymous reviewers for their suggestions and insightful comments. I gratefully acknowledge the support of the Brookings Institution and the Social Science Research Council.

1. The term New Thinking became shorthand for the ensemble of insights, concepts, initiatives, and practices that the USSR's international strategy comprised in the Gorbachev era. While the precise content of New Thinking changed over time, the new approach rested on three core ideas. First, the existence of the "security dilemma," wherein measures taken by one side to enhance its security are invariably perceived by a would-be rival as undermining its own, means that security must be mutual or common and cannot be pursued unilaterally. Second, resort to force or threats of force is neither an efficacious nor a legitimate way to resolve interstate conflicts. To ameliorate the security dilemma and the pressures propelling states to eschew diplomatic solutions, strategies of reassurance must replace or at least supplement those based on deterrence threats. And last, class values should be subordinated to "universal human values." Adoption of this idea amounted to a repudiation of Marxism-Leninism's Manichaean worldview of irreconcilable interests between capitalism and socialism and thus paved the way for a new international order based on shared values. On the content of New Thinking, see Matthew Evangelista, "The New Soviet Approach to Security," World Policy Journal 5, no. 4 (Fall 1986):561-99; Elizabeth Kridl Valkenier, "New Thinking About the Third World," World Policy Journal 4, no. 4 (Fall 1987): 651-74; Bruce Parrott, "Soviet National Security Policy Under Gorbachev," Problems of Communism 37, no. 6 (November/December 1988): 1-36; Robert Legvold, "The Revolution in Soviet Foreign Policy," Foreign Affairs 68, no. 1 (Winter 1989): 82-98; and Raymond Garthoff, Deterrence and the Revolution in Soviet Military Doctrine (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1990).


4. Research for this project included interviews with dozens of specialists from institutes under the Soviet Academy of Sciences as well as with senior state and party apparatchiks, many from the Central Committee's International Department (CCID) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). I also worked in the CPSU Central Committee Archives and gained access to previously classified memoranda (zapiski) prepared by institute analysts for the leadership. The potential problems with interviews are well known. I took several steps to ensure that the oral testimony used in my analysis was reliable, including corroboration based on other independent accounts, interlocutors' published writings, and the aforementioned classified documents, which provided analysts with greater latitude to express critical views. And while the majority of interviewees were committed New Thinkers, my discussions extended to moderate and conservative opponents, some of whom occupied important posts in the government.

5. Three social science institutes figure most prominently in my research: World Economy and International Relations (ime no), USA and Canada (iskan), and Economics of the World Socialist System (iemss). This troika formed the bulwark of revisionist scholarship and provided many of the intellectual shock troops in the New Thinking army. For a more in-depth discussion of the early histories of these institutes, see Jeff Checkel, "Organizational Behavior, Social Scientists, and Soviet Foreign Policymaking" (Ph.D. diss., Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1991); Neil Malcolm, Soviet Political Scientists and American Politics (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984); Georgi Arbatov, The System: An Insider's Life in

6. In this paper norms are defined as collective beliefs that regulate the behavior and identity of actors.

7. Finer lines demarcating Europeanists and Atlanticists have been drawn by Western scholars, including Hannes Adomeit, "Capitalist Contradictions, and Soviet Policy," Problems of Communism 33, no. 3 (May/June 1984): 1-18.


9. The deideologization of Soviet foreign policy in the Gorbachev period has been well documented (e.g., see Stephen Kull, Burying Lenin: The Revolution in Soviet Ideology and Foreign Policy [Boulder: Westview, 1992]), but few works examine the identity basis of this change.


11. For a sophisticated form of the argument, see John Lewis Gaddis, "Hanging Tough Paid Off," Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists 45 (January-1989): 11-14. Subscribers to the "Peace Through Strength" thesis, mostly conservative analysts, credit the Reagan-era military buildup (especially the threat posed by the Strategic Defense Initiative) and bellicose strategy with forcing Moscow to adopt New Thinking and end the Cold War on Western terms. This account mirrors the dominant explanation in Soviet policy circles for U.S. interest in a relaxation of tensions in the late 1960s. Proponents of this interpretation of recent history contended that a shift in the correlation of forces in favor of socialism, most significantly Moscow's attaining strategic parity, compelled Washington to seek accommodation with its chief adversary.


16. Wohlforth, "Realism and the End of the Cold War."


19. Domestically, the Brezhnev, Andropov, and Chernenko regimes either ignored the gathering crisis or instituted cosmetic reforms that would do little to address systemic deficiencies. In foreign policy, contrary to the popular view that the U.S./West vanquished the USSR, forcing it to pursue accommodation, these regimes responded to the West's confrontational strategy with their own more bellicose posture. Strained relations also made it extremely difficult for nascent New Thinkers to express their views, even in classified sources. See Herman, "Ideas, Identity, and the Redefinition of Interests."

20. Wohlforth, "Realism and the End of the Cold War."

21. Many power transition theories predict that declining hegemons will go to war to preserve their international position. See Robert Gilpin, War and Change in World Politics (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981).


23. My thanks to David Holloway for this insightful point.

24. This view of learning-induced policy change does not even meet the criteria of "simple" or "tactical" learning in which decision makers devise more efficient strategies for pursuing unchanged goals; see Nye, "Nuclear Learning and U.S.-Soviet Security Regimes." Kenneth Oye offers a sophisticated realist argument that tries to show how the external environment is endogenized and can be read as incorporating a cognitive dimension. He contends that "international environmental characteristics—specifically the development of nuclear weapons and the subsequent long central systemic peace—were a significant permissive cause of the political and economic liberalization within the Soviet Union" ("Explaining the End of the Cold War: Morphological and Behavioral Adaptations to the Nuclear Peace," in Lebow and Risse-Kappen, International Relations Theory and the End of the Cold War, p. 58).

25. As Jeffrey W. Legro points out, neorealist theorists do acknowledge a role for political socialization whereby states are brought into conformity with system norms, but their emphasis is on punishment/reward for unacceptable/acceptable behavior, a process more aptly described as simple adaptation; see "Strategy Under Anarchy" (draft paper for Norms and National Security Workshop, Cornell University, February 1993).


29. Risse-Kappen, "Ideas Do Not Float Freely," and Evangelista, Taming the Bear.


35. This "detente-plus" strategy seems close to what at least some of Gorbachev's Politburo selectors had in mind. See Yegor Ligachev, *Inside Gorbachev's Kremlin* (New York: Random House, 1993); also author's interviews with Gorbachev advisers A. Yakovlev, G. Shakhnazarov, V. Zagladin, A. Chernyaev, and others.

36. The strategic prescriptions advanced by New Thinkers incorporated both causal ideas and principled beliefs, suggesting that the dichotomy proposed by Goldstein and Keohane (Ideas and Foreign Policy) needs further refinement. I am grateful to Thomas Risse-Kappen for calling this point to my attention.


38. As Philip Tetlock observes, there is not even agreement on the definition of the term; see "Learning in U.S. and Soviet Foreign Policy"; also see Jack Levy, "Learning and Foreign Policy: Sweeping a Conceptual Minefield," *International Organization* 48, no. 2 (Spring 1994): 279-312.


40. Haas, *When Knowledge Is Power*. According to Legvold ("Soviet Learning"), change at the level of fundamental beliefs can occur either gradually through "exposure to more testing instances," in which case a richer, more differentiated representation of reality results from the accumulation of greater knowledge, or suddenly, when the schema with which a person makes sense of the world crumbles under the onslaught of disconfirming experiences. In either case, decision makers demonstrate increased "cognitive differentiation and integration of thought and capacity for self-reflection." Also see Lloyd Etheredge, *Can Governments Learn?* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1985).


42. Proponents of constructivist approaches problematize the notion of structure; what matters is not so much objective conditions but how actors understand them. For many constructivists, this is largely a function of self-conception or identity, which in turn shapes definitions of interests. State behavior becomes intelligible only by examining such collective ideational phenomena; see Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It."

43. New Thinking can be viewed as an alternative ideology to Marxism-Leninism. For the purposes of this study I define ideology as a coherent set of interrelated ideas containing causal inferences about means-ends relationships, value judgments about those ends, and a guide to action for attaining them. Two classic works on Soviet ideology are Robert C. Tucker, *The Soviet Political Mind* (New York: Praeger, 1963) and Nathan Leites, *A Study of Bolshevism* (New York: Free Press, 1953).

45. In our interviews, liberal specialists cited discussions with colleagues, including Western counterparts, as playing a crucial role in their intellectual evolution. Key decision makers such as Gorbachev and Shevardnadze likewise credit formal and informal sessions with these experts as influencing their thinking.


47. Reflecting on the lessons of the Chernobyl disaster regarding Moscow's less-than-forthcoming initial reports to the international community, by then former foreign minister Shevardnadze wrote, "It tore the blindfold from our eyes and persuaded us that politics and morals could not diverge. We had to gauge our politics constantly by moral criteria" (*The Future Belongs to Freedom* [New York: Free Press, 1991], pp. 175-76).

48. This conclusion is based on my reading of Gorbachev's extensive writings and speeches, a large secondary literature, and interviews with senior Gorbachev advisers such as A. Yakovlev, A. Chernyaev, G. Shakhnazarov, and Ye. Velikhov.

49. The faint outlines of the idealist agenda were visible in statements from the April 1985 Central Committee plenum. They became more deeply etched in Gorbachev's report to the Twenty-seventh Party Congress (February 1986) and even more so in his speech before the Nineteenth All-Union Party Conference in the summer of 1988.

50. Gorbachev's much-heralded report to the Twenty-seventh Party Congress was far from a New Thinking manifesto. While the speech contained some significant revisions in Soviet thought, it also offered a generous dose of well-worn Marxist-Leninist polemics about capitalism's inherent militarism and imperialistic tendencies.


52. A number of Gorbachev's top advisers expressed to me that he came to power with a fairly sophisticated grasp of broad foreign policy issues and was intent on demilitarizing East-West relations. But he also retained vestiges of "old thinking" about the nature of capitalism, which partly explains the cautious nature of early Soviet overtures compared to later initiatives. Whether Gorbachev learned, and if so how, remains a matter of debate. See Stein, "Political Learning by Doing."

53. Even liberal macrohistorical and domestic political explanations that accord a role to ideas/beliefs tend to view them instrumentally. See Snyder, *Myths of Empire*, Deudney and Ikenberry, "Soviet Reform and the End of the Cold War"; and Mendelson, "Internal Battles and External Wars."

54. There is a parallel here to glasnost and democratization. Many commentators have rightly pointed out the instrumental character of the democratic turn: reforms would create pressure for change from below, bring the intelligentsia on board the perestroika bandwagon, help to weaken a bureaucratic structure hostile to reform, and allow for richer debate to correct past mistakes. On several occasions, the leadership spoke of democratic reforms as an indispensable companion to perestroika. But it is also the case that for many reformers greater individual freedom and steps toward some form of popular rule were goals in themselves, not merely a means to aid perestroika. In-system liberals such as Fyodor Burlatsky, Georgi Shakhnazarov, Andrei Grachev, Vitaly Korotich, and others believed strongly in the need for a multiparty system and the rule of law. For them the time had come for the USSR to join the ranks of the democratic states (though not necessarily to emulate the capitalist economic system of those states).

56. One of the most influential of the early liberal specialist networks was the group of consultants assembled around then Central Committee secretary Yuri A. Andropov in the early to mid-1960s. The members were Fyodor Burlatsky, Georgi Shakhnazarov, Georgi Arbatov, Oleg Bogomolov, Aleksandr Bovin, and Gennadi Gerasimov. Remarkably, all went on to play important roles in the New Thinking drama.


58. Nor is it surprising. The purveyors of these ideas in those two time periods were often the same people. See V. Petrovsky, "The Struggle of the USSR for Detente in the Seventies," Novaya i noveiyshaya istoriya 1 (January/February 1981); and D. Tomashevsky, "Na puti k korennoi perestroike mezhunarodnykh otnoshenii" [Toward a radical restructuring of international relations], MEIMO 1 (January 1975): 3-13.


60. Despite the failure to grasp these implications, a strong case can still be made that the ABM Treaty, by codifying mutual vulnerability, helped to turn the practice of non-use of nuclear weapons into an international norm on which New Thinkers would later build. The first part of the argument is put forward by Nina Tannenwald, "Dogs That Don't Bark: The United States, the Role of Norms, and the Non-Use of Nuclear Weapons Since 1945" (Ph.D. diss., Cornell University, 1995).

61. This was first done in Gorbachev's January 1986 proposal to eliminate all nuclear weapons by the year 2000. The text of the plan appeared in International Affairs 3 (March 1986).


63. One of the best treatments of the demise of the bpa and of detente in general is Garthoff, Detente and Confrontation. Also see Harry Gelman, The Brezhnev Politburo and the Decline of Detente (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984).

64. New Thinkers were not suggesting that the U.S. had lived up to its commitments under the bpa. However, Georgi Arbatov and other liberal Americanists did point out that important segments of the U.S. foreign policy establishment had opposed the war in Vietnam and were taking steps to prevent such imperialist interventions in the future (e.g., the War Powers Act). This, they argued, would render superpower military involvement in the periphery anachronistic.

65. Among the most forceful proponents of this view was Aleksei Arbatov, head of IMEMO's arms control and disarmament section. This analysis of the failure of detente was shared by a number of younger specialists then at ISKAN, among them Andrei Kortunov and Sergei Karaganov. One of their more interesting conclusions was a retrospective appreciation of the Carter administration's early efforts to push beyond the modest rapprochement of the early 1970s, most notably in the area of nuclear arms control and resolving Third World conflicts.

66. I am grateful to Daniel Thomas for his comments on the role of the Helsinki Accords and the CSCE process more generally with respect to the birth and/or strengthening of human rights movements throughout the communist bloc. How ironic that an agreement designed to stabilize Europe by codifying postwar arrangements would contribute to the collapse of communist power and the birth of democratic successor states. It did so by empowering small groups of human rights campaigners whose activities helped to erode the legitimacy of the various regimes.
67. This is the composite picture to emerge from numerous interviews with Soviet reformers. Without trying to portray themselves as having always been secretly in agreement with Sakharov and other regime opponents, several liberal specialists recounted how the dissidents' very visible activities speeded their own recognition that repression and denial of individual rights remained endemic to the Soviet system. The ambivalence that many in-system reformers felt toward the dissidents is apparent in Georgi Arbatov's memoir, *The System*.

68. The two policy decisions that drew the most fire were the intervention in Afghanistan and the reflexive modernization of medium-range nuclear missiles targeted on Western Europe—the SS-20 debacle. Critics were still circumspect in expressing their views, but there is little question that these two actions were regarded by most foreign policy reformers as egregious mistakes and, more important, as symptomatic of the flawed assumptions on which the ussr's overall international strategy tested. Oleg Bogomolov, director of the Institute of Economics of the World Socialist System, circulated one of the few pointed attacks; see "Afghanistan As Seen in 1980," *Moscow News* 30, July 30-August 6, 1988.

69. Checkel, "Ideas, Institutions, and the Gorbachev Foreign Policy Revolution." Among the relevant articles appearing in the institute's journal were Oleg Bikov, "Leninskaya politika mira i yeyo voploscheniye v deyatel'nosti kpsu" [Lenin's peace policy and its implementation in the activities of the cpsu], *MEiMO* 3 (March 1984); and V. Lukov and D. Tomashovsky, "Interesy chelovechestva i mirovaya politika" [Human interests and world politics], *MEiMO* 4 (April 1985).

70. Evangelista, *Taming the Bear*, and Risse-Kappen, "Ideas Do Not Float Freely."

71. The commission's final report was published under the title *Common Security: A Blueprint for Survival* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982).

72. Author's interview with Arbatov and several iskan analysts.

73. ISKAN defense specialists such as Andrei Kokoshin, Valentin Larionov, Andrei Kortunov, and Sergei Karaganov turned out increasingly ambitious proposals for reducing and restructuring Soviet nuclear and conventional forces. Their contributions and those of other pro-reform specialists to New Thinking were cited by Anatoly Dobrynin, the longtime ambassador to the United States, appointed by Gorbachev to head the Central Committee International Department. "For a Nuclear-Free World As We Approach the Twenty-first Century," *Kommunist* 9 (June 1986). Also see Pat Litherland, "Gorbachev and Arms Control: Civilian Experts and Soviet Policy," Peace Research Report 12, University of Bradford (uk), November 1986.

74. The Soviet ambassador to Copenhagen in the mid-1980s, Lev Mendelevich, took an active interest in Boserup's work. After Mendelevich was appointed head of the Foreign Ministry's Evaluation and Planning Directorate, he brought to bear some of the scientist's ideas. According to my interviews with former high-ranking Foreign Ministry officials Georgi Kornienko and Viktor Komplektov, a few months before Gorbachev's historic December 1988 un speech announcing unilateral force cuts and modest restructuring, Boserup was brought in to meet with senior staffers to discuss issues related to nonprovocative defense. On the contribution of Pugwash to East-West relations in this period, see Joseph Rotblat and V. I. Goldanskii, eds., *Global Problems and Common Security: Annals of Pugwash 1988* (Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 1989).

75. Author's interview. Velikhov chaired the Committee of Soviet Scientists for Peace, Against the Nuclear Threat, which lobbied the regime not to match the U.S. sdi program but to rely on cheaper, less-destabilizing countermeasures. Velikhov willingly credits discussions with Western counterparts, particularly the members of the American Academy of Sciences arms control working group (SISAC) for imparting knowledge on the finer points of nuclear strategy and persuading him on the wisdom of the superpowers' adopting a minimum deterrent posture and banning nuclear tests.

76. On the diffusion of Western values to Russia/USSR, see Frederick Starr, "The Changing Nature of Change in the USSR," in Seweryn Bialer and Michael Mandelbaum, eds., *Gorbachev's Russia and American Foreign Policy*, pp. 3-35 (Boulder: Westview, 1988).

77. Author's interviews with liberal institutchiki, particularly those who had spent time in the West when in their twenties.

78. This progression is admittedly difficult to track because fledgling democrats in the policy establishment were not prepared to jeopardize their positions by openly attacking the foundations of the Soviet political system. Still, among the ranks of the reformers was a smaller group whom, I later learned through extensive interviewing, colleagues credited with having held Western-oriented views regarding a multiparty system, individual rights, an independent judiciary, etc. There was no definitive consensus, but
prominent names most frequently mentioned included Georgi Shakhnazarov, Vitaly Korotich, Fydor Burlatsky, Aleksandr Bovin, and Andrei Grachev.

79. This was one of my most definitive findings, based on interviews with Soviet scholars, party and government officials, journalists, etc.

80. Shevardnadze was one of the first to give public voice to this position (and then only after three years as foreign minister) with his extraordinary admission that the USSR had "violated the norms of proper behavior." Some specialists (e.g., Vladimir Lukin, Aleksandr Bovin) had made similar arguments years earlier at the time of the Warsaw Pact's intervention in Czechoslovakia to crush the reformist regime of Alexander Dubcek. A number of zapiski written during the 1970s, mostly by experts at iemss, indirectly attacked the so-called Brezhnev Doctrine. Also see Bogomolov, "Afghanistan as Seen in 1980."

81. The Institute of Economics of the World Socialist System (iemss) worked diligently in zapiski and in conversations between director Bogomolov and key decision makers, including KGB chief Andropov, to persuade the Soviet leadership that the political crisis accompanying the rise of Solidarity could be resolved without resort to force. Secret reports prepared by institute experts emphasized the popular support enjoyed by the illegal labor union and also pointed out, using carefully crafted language, that armed intervention would do irreparable harm to East-West relations. Analyst Yevgeny Ambartsumov went further still, arguing that the Polish crisis was rooted in contradictions inherent in socialism and was not a product of imperialist subversion as the Kremlin claimed—a stand for which he was punished by the authorities.

82. A similar but less starkly moral argument was advanced by Yakovlev. A staunch opponent of the invasion, he felt strongly that the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan was the linchpin of any possible shift in East-West relations because the intervention seemed to corroborate the West's basest fears about Soviet intentions. According to colleagues, Georgi Arbatov made a similar case in suggesting that such armed intervention by the great powers had become anachronistic, citing the popular and elite-level backlash against the U.S. involvement in Vietnam. This line of reasoning flowed from an earlier book in which he contended that in the age of nuclear deterrence armed force was of diminishing utility: Ideologicheskaya bor'ba v sovremennykh mezhdunarodnykh otnoiheniyakh [The ideological struggle in contemporary international relations] (Moscow: Politizdat, 1970).

83. The phrase is Vladimir Petrovsky's, but it accurately expressed the view of the vast majority of the reformers I interviewed.

84. There is a caveat. Among the reformers were those I've termed "economic modernizers," who sought technocratic solutions to the Soviet Union's problems and were either agnostic about or hostile to corresponding political reforms. Two members of this school of thought were Nikolai Ogarkov and Sergei Akhromeyev, successive heads of the military's general staff. They reasoned that without structural changes in the economy the USSR would be unable to compete militarily with the technologically advanced capitalist powers in the coming decades. Like-minded commentators praised the path taken by China and South Korea, authoritarian states that had enjoyed stunning rates of growth in harnessing the scientific-technological revolution. For the most part, Soviet economic modernizers envisaged the state as continuing to play the dominant role in economic reconstruction, thereby putting them at odds with proponents of greater decentralization of decision-making authority closer to Western capitalist models.

85. The hardest blow came with Yuri Andropov. A pragmatic conservative whose long-standing contact with liberal reformers and early admission of serious domestic and foreign policy problems gave rise to expectations for meaningful change, he proved incapable of seeing that the causes of the Soviet Union's predicament were systemic.


87. Personal interviews with Yakovlev, Chernyaev, G. Arbatov, Bogomolov, Shakhnazarov, Oleg Grinevsky, Zagladin, and others.

88. Translating ambitious ideas into concrete policy would take time. The new leadership first had to consolidate its position, which it did beginning with an enormous turnover of personnel at the upper echelons of the party and state apparatus. See Thane Gustafson and Dawn Mann, "Gorbachev's First Year: Building Power and Authority," Problems of Communism 35, no. 3 (May/June 1986): 1—19; Jerry Hough, "Gorbachev Consolidating Power," Problems of Communism 36, no. 4 (July/August 1987): 21-43; and Parrott, "Soviet National Security Under Gorbachev." 89. The West's initial response to Gorbachev's New Thinking was far from uniform. It ranged from outright dismissal by Reagan administration hawks to
varying degrees of enthusiasm in the German elite, including some in the conservative Kohl government; see Risse-Kappen, "Ideas Do Not Float Freely."

90. The West was quick to dismiss both steps as propaganda gambits rather than good faith overtures. In the case of the unilateral halt to nuclear testing, nato governments did not appreciate the political capital expended by Gorbachev to override the intense objections of the military establishment. Accounts of the military's opposition are based on interviews with officials who participated in high-level policy meetings, including Yevgeny Velikhov, Oleg Grinevsky, and Aleksandr Yakovlev.

91. Author's interview. Gorbachev's personal foreign policy adviser, Anatoly Chernyaev, similarly stressed to me the significance of the "moral dimensions" of the revolution in Soviet international policy, citing both the desire to eradicate nuclear weapons and the commitment to forgo armed force in favor of negotiated agreements in Eastern Europe and in the developing world.

92. For an account of the summit proceedings, including the controversy over this elusive disarmament agreement, see Don Oberdorfer, The Turn: From Cold War to a New Era, 1983—1990: The United States and the Soviet Union (New York: Poseidon, 1991).

93. "Central Cornmirree of rhe cpsu Political Report to the Twenty-seventh Party Congress," Kommunist 5 (March 1986). According to interviews with participants in the drafting sessions and related discussions, including A. Yakovlev, G. Arbatov, V. Zagladin, and A. Grachev, there was intense infighting over the portions of the report dealing with foreign and military policy. One of the major battles concerned the war in Afghanistan. A preliminary draft contained an explicit call for the withdrawal of Soviet troops, but the final version was watered down considerably.

94. While the document did not abandon the notion of rivalry between the two social systems, it did transcend the ussr's signature zero-sum view of international politics, summed up in the perennial Russian question "Kto - kogo?" or Who prevails over whom? Similarly, in discussing economic interdependence, "global problems affecting all of humanity," and the primacy of nonclass values, the Gorbachev team was unceremoniously jettisoning Marxism-Leninism's Manichaean worldview, which had structured Soviet thinking since the Bolshevik Revolution. The ussr was casting aside its historically self-regarding view of the world in affirming a global commonality of interests. One measure of the Kremlin's earnestness was the alacrity with which it moved to bolster the effectiveness of international institutions, most prominently the United Nations, by deepening multilateral cooperation.

95. Garthoff, Deterrence and the Revolution in Soviet Military Doctrine, esp. pp. 101-8. In May 1987 at a meeting of Warsaw Pact defense ministers, it was announced that defensive operations would henceforth be the primary means to repel aggression. They also proposed that the two blocs reduce their forces to levels that would preclude the capability to mount offensive operations; see "On the Military Doctrine of the Member States of the Warsaw Pact," Pravda, May 30, 1987.

96. Contrary to civilian experts' conception of New Thinking, in which the ussr would escape the parity trap by restructuring its forces based on the notion of sufficiency, Defense Minister Dmitri Yazov held fast to the view that "military strategic parity remains the decisive factor in preventing war at the present time." Yazov amplified on his views in Na strazhe sotsializma i mira [On guard for socialism and peace] (Moscow: Voyenizdat, 1987).

97. Following the near-momentous meeting in Reykjavik, a group of experts met with Gorbachev to persuade him to seek a separate deal on inf. Meanwhile, institute specialists wrote a number of zapiski urging the Soviet leader to seek the lead to alter the course of East-West relations. One, which was prepared by jemss and, Yakovlev confirmed, discussed by members of the Politburo ("Thoughts on the Agenda of the Upcoming Session of the Political Consultative Commission of the Warsaw Pact," March 2, 1987), outlined with unusual bluntness the need for the ussr to dismantle the Soviet threat to Western Europe through unilateral and negotiated reductions in military forces and the adoption of a strictly defensive posture.


99. Soviet support for intrusive on-site inspections was first evidenced in the 1986 Stockholm Agreement of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. Gorbachev was eager to demonstrate Moscow's greater openness for two reasons. First, he and his civilian advisers knew that excessive secrecy had been extremely counterproductive, since it lent credence to Western hawks' assessments of Soviet intentions. As Foreign Minister Shevardnadze observed, comprehensive verification measures were vital to promote trust and "a norm of political reliability." Second, they believed that openness was a hallmark of democratic systems and a practice that the "new" Soviet Union should
emulate. My thanks to Ann Florin for her comments on emerging norms of transparency in international arms control.

100. Soviet moderates were not necessarily opposed to the INF Treaty. Most were firmly supportive of efforts to control the arms race. However, they distrusted the Reagan administration and were concerned about establishing a precedent of asymmetrical reductions in Soviet forces; author's interviews with high-ranking Foreign Ministry officials Georgi Kornienko, Viktor Komplektov, Mikhail Zamyatin, and others.

101. Gorbachev's speech on the occasion of the seventieth anniversary of the October Revolution provided further stimulus in signaling a more permissive attitude on the part of the leadership toward critical, public examination of foreign policy issues past and present; "October and Restructuring: The Revolution Goes On," Kommunist 17 (December 1987), speech delivered at a special joint session of the Central Committee and Supreme Soviet, November 2, 1987.

102. In the spring of 1988, Aleksei Arbatov, the IMEMO defense analyst who by virtue of director Yevgeny Primakov's close relationship with Gorbachev and his own links to the Foreign Ministry had lines to top decision makers, published a comprehensive two-part article in the institute's journal ("Deep Reductions in Strategic Arms," MEIMO 4 and 5 [April and May 1988]; reprinted in Steve Hirsch, ed., MEIMO: New Soviet Voices on Foreign and Economic Policy, pp. 435—52 and 453-70 [Washington, D.C.: Bureau of National Affairs, 1989]). Arbatov outlined deep cuts in superpower nuclear arsenals and implicitly argued for greater flexibility by Moscow in ongoing negotiations. A few months later, Arbatov upped the ante. He directly contradicted the military and challenged the political leadership in arguing that reasonable sufficiency did not mean the ussr should endeavor to preserve nuclear parity. Contending that the West was pursuing a competitive strategy of embroiling the Soviet Union in a resource-depleting arms race, Arbatov insisted that the ussr should "proceed "on the principle of reasonable sufficiency and drop out of the West-imposed race for parity" ("Parity and Reasonable Sufficiency," International Affairs 10 [October 1988]: 75—86. A number of specialists offered parallel prescriptions for conventional forces. Among the most influential was Andrei Kokoshin; see A. Kokoshin and V. Larionov, "The Confrontation of Conventional Forces in the Context of Ensuring Strategic Stability," MEIMO 6 (June 1988): 23-30.


104. Foremost among the relevant books and reports was the classified vezda project on which progressive specialists from iskan, IMEMO, and iemss collaborated with colleagues from the respective Academy of Sciences institutes of the various Warsaw Pact nations. The comprehensive report consisted of five volumes issued over several years, beginning in the mid-1970s.

105. Author's interviews with Yakovlev, Shakhnazarov, Zagladin, Bogomolov, and Chernyaev.


107. Throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, iemss analysts were touting reform experiments in Eastern Europe, most notably in Hungary, whose leader, Janos Kadar, was a personal friend of institute director Bogomolov. In secret zapiski and classified reports, including the comprehensive Zvezda project series, iemss pushed for greater autonomy for the Warsaw Pact allies. One of the most radical specialists was Vyacheslav Dashichev, who by 1987-1988 was advocating an end to Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe and later was among the first commentators to call for the reunified German state to be integrated into NATO.

108. This was the general vision held out in most of the entries in the Zvezda project series, particularly numbers II, "Countries of the Socialist Commonwealth and the Restructuring of International Relations" (1979), and IV, "Concrete Problems in the Policies of Countries of the Socialist Commonwealth in Relations with Developed Capitalist States in the 1980s" (1984).


110. This extraordinary conference witnessed some of the most candid attacks yet on Soviet international policy, past and present. It began with Shevardnadze's keynote address, in which he all but disowned the Brezhnev Doctrine and called for a constitutional mechanism providing for the use of force outside Soviet borders. For Shevardnadze's speech and excerpts from conference proceedings, see "Scientific and Practical Conference at die Ministry of Foreign Affairs," International Affairs 10 (October 1988): 3-35.

111. After the Gorbachev regime's modest first phase of reform, roughly April 1985 to late 1987, failed to produce the anticipated turnaround in the economy or in relations with the West, Gorbachev and his allies pushed through a more radical program. The plan was approved at the Nineteenth All-Union Party
Speaking passionately about the need to humanize and de-ideologize international relations, Gorbachev said, "Our idea is a world community of states based on the rule of law which also make their foreign policy activity subordinate to the law." He went on to discuss the "revolutionary transformation" under way in the USSR in which "under the badge of democratization, restructuring has now encompassed politics, the economy, spiritual life, and ideology" (M. S. Gorbachev's speech at the UN Organization, Pravda, December 8, 1988). Here was the head of the world's first socialist state and frequent pariah telling the international community that the Soviet Union was reinventing itself based on the principles and ideals that had provided the original inspiration for the UN. Gorbachev advisers Yakovlev, Shakhnazarov, Chernyaev, and especially Petrovsky vigorously conveyed to me this last point.

Kremlin actions included pressure on Polish Communist Party bosses to cooperate in the transfer of power to a new non-communist-led government! headed by Solidarity intellectual Tadeusz Mazowiecki; preapproval of Hungary's decision to open its borders with Austria, allowing thousands of East German "tourists" to flee; and Gorbachev personally urging Eric Honecker's beleaguered successor, Egon Krenz, to open up the gdr's borders. See Ronald Asmus, J. F. Brown, and Keith Crane, Soviet Foreign Policy and the Revolutions of 1989 in Eastern Europe (Santa Monica, Calif: RAND Corporation, 1991).

Government spokesperson Gennadi Gerasimov half-jokingly hailed the arrival of the "Sinatra Doctrine," in which Warsaw Pact states were free to do things their own way.

The term and the complementary analysis belong to Coit Blacker, Hostage to Revolution.

While Gorbachev and Shevardnadze felt strongly that the Bush administration was not moving fast enough to consummate a prospective post—Cold War partnership, they did not see U.S./nato as the fierce threat they had previously. Specifically regarding the issue of the West and turmoil in Eastern Europe, Bush's efforts to reassure Moscow that the U.S. would do nothing to exploit the ussr's potential vulnerability were another factor in the Soviet decision to permit the collapse of its security buffer. On the role of U.S. reassurance, see Michael Beschloss and Strobe Talbott, At the Highest Levels: The Inside Story of the End of the Cold War (New York: Little, Brown, 1993).

It is beyond the scope of this paper, but a parallel argument about Soviet identity and rejection of force in Eastern Europe could be made concerning the dissolution of the ussr itself. The decision not to use force to keep the Soviet Union together in the aftermath of the failed coup in August 1991 went to the core of the Gotbachev cohort's conception of self and of the nation. As Shevardnadze explained to his American counterpart, James Baker, following the first explosion of separatist-related unrest (April 1989 in Tbilisi): "If we were to use force then it would be the end of perestroika. We would have failed. It would be the end of any hope for the future, the end of everything we're trying to do, which is to create a new system based on humane values. If force is used, it will mean, that the enemies of perestroika have triumphed. We would be no better than the people who came before us. We cannot go back" (cited in Beschloss and Talbott, At the Highest Levels, p. 96).

Writing in the journal International Affairs, Andrei Kolosovsky, then an assistant deputy minister for foreign affairs, eloquently drew the connection between shared values and security: "Much is being said today about the affirmation of the priority of universal values in world politics as one of the ways to build a secure world. For us, this slogan means we are stating our readiness to accept anew the values of European civilization, many of which we vigorously rejected over the past seventy years, alluding to class interests... Discarding democratic traditions and norms of morality developed in the depths of Western civilization over centuries led to a lag in development and had serious consequences for people's lives and freedom" ("Risk Zones in the Third World," International Affairs 8 [August 1989]; 39-49).

Shevardnadze put it this way: "Universal security cannot be dependably safeguarded as long as nations reject common humanist values and common respect for human rights."

The need to transform the East-West relationship from one of cooperative-competitive coexistence to partnership (i.e., detente to entente) was a core tenet of the idealist perspective. See Shevardnadze, The Future Belongs to Freedom, and assorted articles by Soviet authors in a Soviet-American collaborative volume sponsored by the Beyond War Foundation: Anatoly Gromyko and Martin Hellman, eds., Breakthrough: Emerging New Thinking (New York: Walker, 1988).
121. The Western orientation of the Gorbachev cohort is a major reason that the so-called Chinese model was rejected for the Soviet Union, even though it appeared to hold great promise for making the transition from a centrally planned economy to a free-market one. They were committed to political reform, which they judged to be incompatible with the Chinese path, particularly after the massacre in Tiananmen Square—shortly after Gorbachev's visit to Beijing brought cheers of "Gorby, Gorby" from pro-democracy students. Repudiation of the Chinese model was tied to the question of Soviet identity in another way that had little to do with principles and values. In the eyes of the Soviet leadership, the USSR was a superpower and an advanced industrial state that should look to its equal-status Western competitor for useful techniques and practices rather than to a great power wanna-be like China.

122. Glimpses into these personal, intellectual, and philosophical journeys can come from Cohen and Katrina vanden Heuvel, *Voices of Glasnost: Interviews with Gorbachev's Reformers* (New York: Norton, 1989). My argument also draws heavily on my own extensive interviews.


125. Few radical reformers anticipated that ending the Cold War and altering the basic shape of world politics would prove far easier than transforming the Soviet Union.

126. The cold reception accorded the Asian model by the Gorbachev leadership raises the important but frequently neglected question of why certain ideas lose. For realists, the defeat of the Asian option would be attributed to its projected failure to advance the material interests of influential segments of the political establishment. This is an unconvincing explanation because the statist paths pursued with such encouraging results by several developing countries in Asia would seem to hold considerable attraction for a Soviet leadership committed to economic reconstruction but still uneasy about scrapping the central planning apparatus. The ideas and identity framework suggests that whether an idea generates a politically consequential constituency depends on more than the material concerns of its addressing actors. As stated elsewhere in this paper, the Chinese or East Asian model lost in Soviet debates largely because key elements of the Gorbachev regime viewed it—perhaps erroneously—as incompatible with democratic political reform, particularly in the wake of the Chinese government's brutal crackdown on the democracy movement. In short, the values content of ideas can matter enormously in the competition for supremacy.


128. Refinements in the Slavophile-Westerner typology have been numerous. One that seems particularly relevant today centers on a third general perspective that some have termed Eurasianist. Proponents see the country's geographical location as a compelling metaphor for Russia, and they advocate borrowing from East and West to form a unique hybrid. See S. Neil MacFarlane, "Russia, the West, and European Security," *Survival?* (Autumn 1993): 3-25.


130. Western policy makers did not appreciate the fact of divisions within the New Thinker camp. Interviews conducted by the author beginning in 1990 revealed growing anti-idealist sentiment among foreign policy moderates. One of the most outspoken of these commentators has been former iemss analyst and former chairman of the Congress of Peoples Deputies Foreign Affairs Committee Yevgeny Ambartsumov, who has written widely on the need for a less pro-Western policy orientation.


132. Just as New Thinking was not the inevitable outcome of Soviet decline, those who see a nationalist turn in Russian foreign policy as a foregone conclusion misjudge the degree of support for such a shift. While there exists in Russia a widely shared sense of dismay and resentment regarding the
country's diminished role and influence in international affairs, there is no popular groundswell in favor of an aggressive anti-Western or expansionist strategy. For instance, surveys show that citizens want Russia to maintain a firm hand in dealing with the new independent states (especially over the treatment of ethnic Russians) but have little interest in reconstituting the Soviet Union. Surveys also reveal that whatever Russians' disappointment or anger toward the West (e.g., over the failure of assistance to prevent tumbling living standards), relatively few view the West as a threat. The situation is not dissimilar in the domestic sphere, where the common wisdom has Russians ready to give up political freedoms for the security of the old days. Yet despite the hardships associated with the transition to a market economy that have given rise to a nostalgia for the certainties of the past, they do not seek a return to the Stalinist system that produced those certainties.