CHAPTER V

CHANGING POSITION UNDER THE NEW

SOVIET LEADERSHIP (POST BREZHNEV)
Brezhnev's death in November 1982 led to an interregnum in Soviet politics. His death provided impetus for broader re-examination of policy in all areas. Though his successors Andropov and Chernenko respectively knew that the country was heading towards crisis and it needed immediate corrective measures, they were unable to show any tangible results. But when Mikhail Gorbachev took over in 1985, his new political style and departure from the traditional cliche showed some potential to change the existing state of affairs. This obviously aroused a lot of passion and excitement in the Soviet Union and all over the world. Consequently, Moscow became the most interesting centre of politics which drew the attention of entire world. Gorbachev not only turned his country upside down but also brought about tremendous changes in world politics, the political map of the entire eastern Europe and the Soviet Union itself has changed beyond recognition. Germany has been reunified, the Cold War has been ended, Warsaw pact has become defunct. Undoubtedly Gorbachev was the architect of this new reality. How did all these changes come about? Were reforms inevitable? What did Gorbachev's reform signify? What did it imply for Soviet-U.S. relations? These are some of the issues we would deal with in this chapter.

After Brezhnev's death Yuri Andropov, the former chief of the K.G.B., took over as general secretaryship of the CPSU. With his accession to power the Soviet Union entered a
radically new phase. He criticized his predecessors for "irrationally managing the Soviet economy". This had created enormous problems which accumulated over the years. This he expressed in his article that appeared in Kommunist in 1983, on the eve of Karl Marx's death centenary. In his article, Andropov had argued that even "non-antagonistic contradiction" might attain great intensity. Earlier it was never considered to be a cause of serious concern. There is no denying that his apprehensions have been vindicated by the series of subsequent developments in the Soviet Union.

Andropov inherited a crisis ridden system. There was all around stagnation in Soviet life; corruption, bureaucratic, inertia, cliquery, general inefficiency, shortage of consumer goods, and excessive use of liquor had become the common features. Largely because of adherence to an old style of working. This is what Andropov had diagnosed as the main cause of stagnation. In order to cope up with this situation he initiated limited reforms in industry and


agriculture. It is believed that Andropov's position as head of the K.G.B. enabled him to understand the state of the economy and the problems caused by the downturn in economic growth. However, he could not do anything substantial, in terms of altering the "sluggish system". Hardly any change for the better could be registered on the domestic front or in foreign affairs. There was actually a deterioration in the situation. 4 In any case, fourteen months in office hardly gave Andropov sufficient time to effect far-reaching reforms.

Andropov was opposed to "the militarist course" because it heightened international tension. In order to reverse the process he attached utmost importance to Soviet-U.S cooperation. Because much depended on the Soviet-U.S. attitude 5 towards peace and disarmament. That is why he was hopeful even in the period of the new cold war. Andropov himself expressed his willingness to freeze nuclear arsenal and called for a quick and fruitful completion of the Soviet-U.S. talks on limiting and reducing strategic arms. 6 Though he expected this to be carried out on the basis of reciprocity.

Interestingly, after that Reagan's tone also changed and became more positive on relations with Moscow in sharp contrast to his previous portrayal of the Soviet Union as an 'evil empire'. In fact, earlier Reagan's characterization was matched by toughening Soviet attitude. Of course it humiliated Soviet leaders, they believed that Reagan was determined to deny the Soviet Union status as a global power. Many observers were wondering whether President Ronald Reagan really changed his approach in dealing with the Soviet Union. Admittedly, Andropov's succession ended a period of exceptional stability in Soviet foreign policy.

After Andropov's death, Konstantin Chernenko succeeded him. One of his preoccupations was the "explosive nature of the nationalities" problem in the Soviet Union. He suggested the need of perfecting relations between nationalities. Another most alarming problem he hinted at was the complete alienation of the CPSU from the masses. Evidently, history


8. See International Herald Tribune, January 30, 1984, see also International Herald Tribune, February 11, 1984. Reagan sent a message to the Soviet leadership and that message had an entirely different tone "we don't refuse to talk when the Soviets call us "imperialist aggressors" Reagan said, the fact that neither of us likes the others system is no reason to refuse to talk. Living in this nuclear age makes it imperative that we do talk", see International Herald Tribune, February 15, 1984.


has vindicated him too. It is to be noted that Americans opinion about Chernenko was that he was a man they could work with to improve East-West relations. Moreover, Reagan was facing pressure from Congress to call summit talks with Moscow.\textsuperscript{11}

Both Andropov and Chernenko were indeed dissatisfied with the performance of the "socialist system". Even in their respective short tenure, both leaders had shown remarkable willingness to bring about some changes within the socialist framework. Incidentally, both leaders had similar views on issues like the need for economic reform, the need to improve agriculture and the food supply, the need for reasserting the party's authority and the continuing need for heavy expenditure for the military\textsuperscript{12}, while showing readiness for arms talks with the USA. Both maintained that "developed socialism" should remain the theoretical basis for policy on all fronts. As regards the course of action, Andropov placed the need for economic reform at the top of the priority list, while Chernenko wanted that the authority and legitimacy of the Party should be restored first and called


\textsuperscript{12} However, Chernenko's support for the military was not as strong as Andropov's. Before assuming the power, he in fact, used to advocate a reduced level of defense spending and, instead, for increased consumer goods production. For further analysis, see March D. Zlotnik, "Chernenko Succeeds", \textit{Problems of Communism}, (Washington), March-April 1989, pp.26-27. Chernenko had proposed to take urgent measures to prevent the militarization of outer space. See, \textit{CDSP}, May 2, 1984, p.7. See also, \textit{CDSP}, July 25, p.7.
for a greater glasnost in informing the public of the leadership activities and plans.\textsuperscript{13} Thus a new political ambience was being created in the Soviet Union.

Andropov's statement that there were "many urgent problems" which he said "have no solutions"\textsuperscript{14} really tells a pathetic story about a country which was not just a nation but a superpower. The only solution he suggested was the mobilization of the masses because he did not want to do it at the expense of military defense.\textsuperscript{15} After Andropov, Chernenko continued this process. He, however, encouraged the debate on economy.\textsuperscript{16} Evidently both leaders had come to realize that the country was heading towards severe crisis. A country, which was supposed to be guided by communist ideology, had lost its total vigour; communist ideology had been fossilized and reduced to empty phrases which had no connection with existing things. Hence, they felt, change was necessary.

By closing the door on the Brezhnev period, the ground

\textsuperscript{13} Thompson, n.10, p.150. See also Kommunist (Russia), 9, 1983, pp. 6, 13. For Chernenko's speech to the June 1983 Plenum and his presentation to the control commission in 1984. See, Kommunist, 9, 1984, pp.14-20. See also, Kommunist, 1984, pp.4-8.


\textsuperscript{15} See Kommunist, 9, 1983, p.11.

was prepared for Gorbachev to act differently. To many political observers, Gorbachev’s coming to power in March 1985 was a mandate for change, to vitalize the economy and to reshape Soviet foreign policy along a less confrontationist line.\(^{17}\) To a great extent it was historical necessity to adopt a new refreshing political style that was strikingly in contrast with his predecessors. However, it was not a change of mere style; it represented substantial change in Soviet domestic and foreign policy. The most striking difference was that now the ideology was no longer used to celebrate the achievements of the past.

Ever since World War II, at the heart of the international problem has been the relationship between the Soviet Union and the USA. It was coincidental that Gorbachev took over on the eve of the much-awaited arms limitation talks in Geneva. His initial gesture was heartening. He offered a unilateral freeze on development and deployment of nuclear weapons in space.\(^{18}\) US welcomed the summit call by Gorbachev but said his announcement of freeze on Medium range missiles was an old proposal.\(^{19}\) However, the Americans perceived it as a hope for a new beginning. Now they were also giving second thought to their policy towards the Soviet Union. Robert Sims, White House spokesman, said, "It is not that our position has changed, it’ss that the nature of their

\begin{footnotes}
\item[17.] Thompson, n.10, p.154.
\item[18.] See, \textit{Telegraph} (Calcutta), March 13, 1985.
\item[19.] See, \textit{Indian Express} (New Delhi), April 10, 1985.
\end{footnotes}
leadership has changed". It seems that everybody was expecting substantial changes. The 27th CPSU Congress gave a new boost to these hopes.

A. 27th CPSU Congress and Gorbachev's Reforms

After the 20th Congress, perhaps the 27th CPSU Congress was the second most crucial turning point in the history of the Soviet Union. This Congress, which was held in February-March 1986, was also a milestone of Gorbachev's career. It laid ground work for the ensuing reforms which ultimately culminated in the demise of the very socialist system. However, the reforms which Gorbachev had introduced were not simply whims and fancies of a single mind. It was a result of profound analysis of the situation that had developed in the Soviet Union by the middle of the eighties, and at some stage in the latter half of the seventies. This had emerged as a result of the initial stagnation which was so prevalent that even the scientific and technological revolution was


unable to revitalize the economy, especially the slowing growth rate. Understandably, Gorbachev's first priority was to accelerate Soviet economy. This necessitated the need to learn to work in a new way, which he had mapped out at the April 1985 plenary meeting and then at the 27th Party Congress. Actually, Gorbachev's reform package was an integral part of a broader democratization process. In order to operationalise the reforms, there was a need for fundamental structural change. Khrushchev and Brezhnev-Kosygin's reforms were a failure because they were not backed by broader democratization process. Gorbachev felt that the Soviet society had reached a level of maturity. And now a new approach to its governance was needed if everything was to be corrected. In order to make radical internal changes, access to more advanced technology was considered to be necessary. He started his reform programme with a lot of shake up by reshuffling his personnel, though this was primarily done to consolidate his own power base. Initially, he made an emotional appeal for "humane democratic socialism", as the final aim of reform. This was certainly a fascinating phrase.

22. See, Political Report of the 27 Congress, February 1986, Soviet Review p.27. See also Mikhail Gorbachev, Selected Speeches and Article (Moscow), pp.439, 466, 530-533.


In short, Gorbachev's reforms can be classified broadly into three categories: (1) democratization - election, glasnost, freedom of the press; (2) economic privatization, marketization, this also includes Soviet desire to join the world Bank, IMF and GATT; and (3) restructuring Soviet foreign policy. These three streams were interlinked aspects of Gorbachev's agenda.

B. New Thinking and Changing Soviet Theoretical Perspective of Interdependence, 'Imperialism', and Peaceful Coexistence

Gorbachev's 'New Thinking' symbolizes the end of Marxist orthodoxy'. His new thinking on international affairs was inseparable from glasnost and democratization of the foreign policy process. This phrase was officially applied in the Soviet Union to an integrated set of ideological concepts about the modern world. It aimed at giving a 'new creative thrust' and innovative slant to all major global issues. One of the most important objectives was to restructure Soviet-American relations. An ambience conducive to debate and re-examination of the fundamental premises of Soviet foreign policy was thus created. The first and


foremost change was the ending of the Cold War which had dominated the world politics and consumed the wealth of nations for nearly half a century. As a result of this transformation, the entire focus shifted from confrontation to cooperation, from arms race to "non-violent nuclear weapon free world". It was natural and logical that the profound restructuring that was going on in the Soviet Union also included a new intellectual theory about the categories of world politics, security and military policy.

Basically, Gorbachev's 'new thinking' had much to do with his approach to foreign policy - essentially Soviet-US relations. However, he defined his new thinking in terms of "methodology" of action. It is to be noted that the so-called 'new thinking' was neither solely his brainchild nor a mere mental exercise. It emerged not only as a result of the Soviet efforts but also from the experience of the West as well as of the East. In Soviet academic literature it had developed during the early to mid 1980s moving to centre stage under Gorbachev. Stephen White, argues that Gorbachev's new thinking was admittedly, was not necessarily


new. The central proposition was being discussed by Soviet specialists for some time, and the term itself appeared to be derived from Betrand Russell's 'New Thinking for the Nuclear Age' published in the 1960s. Gorbachev however popularised the term and made it into the policy objective of his government.

**Gorbachev's Concept of Security**

One of the primary concerns of Gorbachev was that as long as nuclear weapons existed in substantial numbers, every state would remain vulnerable to nuclear annihilation. In a nuclear age, he argued, security could no longer be assured by military means neither by the use of arms or deterrence. There was no way for a state to protect itself. Even the Soviet-US nuclear balance could not provide security though it provided stability. Military parity no longer represented a viable guarantee of peace. The so called nuclear deterrence had actually made "population of entire countries nuclear hostage". Hence this require a common effort and for that he proposed an "all human goal of saving mankind" and even suggested the adoption of an "above class approach". Because, he argued, "security cannot be


32. Gorbachev, n.23, p.

33. Wetting, n.29, p.1. The Soviet Union achieved the superpower status at enormous cost. Ironically, immediately after having achieved it, this proved to be irrelevant. Because superpower status per se was not a...
unilateral, only for the US or only for the Soviet Union. It can only be mutual on an international plane, only universal." Because all countries are interconnected by "mutual dependence". This necessitates mutual cooperation for total and universal disarmament. Probably the USA had also recognised that they were forced to cooperate and to move from a situation of mutually assured destruction to a state of mutually assured security. It had become unavoidable, in view of deadly capabilities of both sides.

Interdependence:

Gorbachev's other important contention was that the world is increasingly moving toward interdependence and integration mainly due to the scientific and technological revolution and the burgeoning world economy. This implied that the problems have to be resolved in an interdependent and integrated manner. "All of us in the present day world are coming to depend more and more on one another and are becoming increasingly necessary to one another". Soviet substitute for security. Even it was not helpful in promoting Soviet influence and ensuring alliance for socialist principles in the 1980s. For further reading see Gorbachev, n.21, p. 36

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34. See, Reprints from the Soviet Press, September 15, 1987, p.43.
academician, Georgi Arbatov, regrets that for a long time Soviet understanding of the world was simplistic. They saw it split into two hostile camps - capitalist and socialist, and believed that an irreconcilable struggle between them would determine the main direction of the world's development. But the reality turned out to be much more complex than this scheme. Now they think that such a division was flawed because it transferred, mechanically and with over-simplification, the theory on internal development to international relations. At the same time, the most important features of the modern epoch were ignored; "today they see the world differently and think that it is one, despite the existing contradictions, differences and disagreements, it is a single whole and moreover, very fragile and even more independent world". They also rejected the division of the world into so-called three worlds, Yevgeny Yevtushenko wrote in Literaturia Gazeta (22 July, 1987) that this perspective was unnatural. Three worlds were actually three ways of seeking the future. These changed beliefs/perceptions by Soviet analysts and leaders showed also their need to be integrated into the dominant world system, rather than being in constant opposition.

37. Melville and Lapidus, n.25, p.273. Even Shevardnadze said, the "Struggle between two opposing systems was no longer the defining tendency of today's world", see CDSP, August 24, 1988, p.13.

38. Ibid., p.266.
This understanding led Gorbachev to reject the old practice of examining regional conflicts from the angle of Soviet-US rivalry. He believed that it hindered their just solution. If we accept his logic, certain questions would remain unanswered. For example, could we explain Cuban missile crisis had more ramification than just the Soviet-US stake in Cuba? The Vietnam war involved numerous issues and intricacies for South East Asia than just Soviet-US relations or for that matter the recent Afghan issue?

Unlike his predecessor, Gorbachev appeared more realistic in his assessment of the changing world reality. A realist like Gorbachev could not afford to ignore the fact that the world was a multipolar entity and power was becoming increasingly diffused rather than concentrated in so-called superpower states. A significant shift from the bipolar base of the great contest towards a more flexible, multipolar dynamics, provided the basis of discarding the "two camp theory" and the class approach to international relations. Until Gorbachev came to power, the Soviet

39. Gorbachev, n.21, p.


41. Shevardnadze argued that the Soviet Union needed new theory because the notion that the highest priority must be given to peace rather than to the class struggle is not self-evident from Marxism-Leninism principles. Quoted in Alan B. Sherr, The Other Side of Arms Control (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1988), p.5.
the Soviet foreign policy had advocated the dual goal of advancing the class struggle and leading the world to a classless society under communism. Under Gorbachev the Soviet Union's new role in international relations was principally to guide the capitalist world into a cooperative direction rather than aspiring to replace it. This amounted to a fundamental revision of the traditional Marxist-Leninist doctrine. Having discarded the class approach, he favoured cooperation instead of antagonism and class conflict. Gorbachev refused to view the world in black-and-white. All this indicated a radical departure from the traditional theoretical perceptive. As a result, many popular Marxist jargons became outdated and anachronistic in Soviet political-academic vocabulary.

It is not that there was no ambiguity, dilemma and confusion in Gorbachev's thinking. He insisted that the Soviet Union would have to break away from old concepts and methods, if it had to play a key role in international affairs. But then he himself was unable to give up the old methods of justifying his thinking, policies and programme by quoting Lenin's classic works in order to prove himself right. For example, he argues that his "above class approach" is essentially based on Lenin's idea of interdependence. It is nothing but just overemphasizing one aspect of Lenin's argument. It is really ironic that Gorbachev continued to call himself a "convinced communist" even after he had embraced economic reforms based on

Another important thrust of Gorbachev's new thinking was that he focussed on de-ideologization of interstate relations. For this a necessary precondition, he suggested, was that an "all human approach" must take precedence over others in policy making.\footnote{43}{Getting, n.29, pp. 8, 10-11.} There is no doubt that, through his concept of de-ideologization, Gorbachev found it possible to respond to challenges which had been evaded by Brezhnev and others before him. To him, ideological differences were no obstacle to humanitarian cooperation. In fact, under Gorbachev, Soviet foreign policy philosophy was ultimately aimed at humanising international relations, and that implies, above all, efforts of morality and to create moral guarantee for the preservation of peace.\footnote{44}{Anatoly Dobrynin, "Soviet Foreign Policy: Basic Principles and New Thinking", Problems of Peace and Socialism, March 1988, pp.24-25.} In this sense, Gorbachev's new thinking was primarily peace oriented.

While, in the past, peaceful coexistence between the two social systems was defined by Soviet ideology as "a specific form of class struggle between them" - a struggle in which ultimately "the socialist world system" must be the outright winner.\footnote{45}{Zdenek Mlynar, Can Gorbachev Change the Soviet Union? (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990), p.122.} The concept itself underwent changes. In
the beginning it was justified primarily by the need to create the minimum external conditions for the construction of a new society in the country of the socialist revolution. In the nuclear age peaceful coexistence was transformed into a condition for the survival of all mankind. It became a programme of democratization, demilitarization and Humanization of the entire international system. 46 At this juncture the Soviets realized that their international strategy was based on obsolete and flawed assumptions. For example, they believed that the global correlation of forces was constantly shifting in the Soviet Union’s favour. 47 It was only in the mid 80s that Soviet scholars almost rejected this cliche. The things really started changing in the Soviet Union. The initial results were very exciting. Gorbachev succeeded in weakening the Cold War structure and the long cultivated "enemy image" of the Soviet Union. Suddenly, it appeared that the elimination of massive nuclear arsenals and conventional arsenal was practical. 48 This really enhanced Gorbachev’s prestige in the Western countries. However, his critics have sharply attacked him for praising imperialism. Because he had made the differences between capitalism and socialism almost meaningless. According to his critics, "new thinking" is

nothing but new conformism and collaborationism. Even though "new thinking" argued that the scientific and technological revolution united common life, it is also a weapon of domination in the hands of advanced countries. Over the past seven years, the Soviet Union had lost the initiative in the international arena. They have only been reactive in their policy, reacting to what other countries did or wanted to do, basically, to catch up with the dynamism and creativity of the West. Whereas Gorbachev had supposedly broke away from the old concept of playing the key role in international affairs. However, one cannot write off Gorbachev's enormous contribution. He, in fact, brought about a revolution. We would argue that was a second revolution. This kind of transformation was attempted only once before in Russian history in 1917. His democratization and perestroika acted as a catalyst for the collapse of socialism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union itself. This has exposed the "hollowness" of the claims of socialist regime to represent the people or even the working

49. For a detailed critical analysis of Gorbachev's new thinking, see Tet Suzo Fawa, "The Point Reached by the New Thinking", The Marxist, (New Delhi), 4 October-December 1990, pp.42-52.


But then again should Gorbachev be blamed for the hollowness which could not bear the brunt of glasnost and democratization?

Gorbachev’s Peace Offensive for a ‘Nuclear Free World’ and Reduction of Tension: INF Talks and Soviet Withdrawal from Afghanistan

Although arms control has always played a part in Soviet foreign policy, Gorbachev’s new thinking gave a new thrust to it, especially his peace offensive for a nuclear free world. The basic idea was to reject any right for the leader of a country... to pass a death sentence on mankind.

He believed that the nuclear disarmament is an integral part of the over all process of disarmament, including the prevention of an arms race in space, the elimination of chemical weapons and reduction of conventional and armed forces. His proposal for reducing conventional weapons and the size of the armed forces and military budget were not for the sake of propaganda but serious and concrete measures for disarmament.

Though the Reagan Administration initially


dismissed the new Soviet initiatives and ignored all Soviet calls for a comprehensive ban on nuclear tests, this did not have a negative impact on Gorbachev. He continued to stress the need for better Soviet-US relations and called for an 'honest dialogue' to ease tensions and for searching for a realistic solution. To begin with, he set a moratorium on Soviet Euro missile deployment and asked US to follow suit.\(^{55}\)

Arms control has come to occupy its singular place in world politics partly by default. The Soviet Union and the US were adversaries because of the political differences between them. Their military rivalry was the outward manifestation of the essentially political conflict. But this rivalry was so dangerous, and the cost of a conflict between them potentially so high, that there was a tremendous pressure on both of them to reach agreement on the issue that divide them. Because nuclear weapons are so powerful and unpredictable that the two sides not only frighten and deter each other, they also frighten and deter themselves.\(^{56}\)

Especially the Soviet Union seemed to have realized that the balance of terror arising out of parity in nuclear weapons was in no way a guarantee to avoid nuclear war and ensure

\(^{55}\) See, CDSP, May 1, 1985, p.5. See also, International Affairs, 3 March 1986, p.3.

peace. Hence nuclear disarmament was on the top of the agenda.

It is interesting to note that Western scholars had anticipated that the Soviet leadership must sooner or later undertake a reappraisal of its ossified foreign policy, not because its leaders had become particularly more peaceful but because circumstances would require it. They saw the best prospect for easing East-West tension in the crisis of the Soviet government and economic structure. Marshall D. Shulman maintained that Gorbachev's priority to concentrate on modernization of the Soviet economy, gave him interest in better relations with the USA. It seems that objective conditions of the Soviet Union required a relaxation of tension and arms control, in order to carry out his programme of reform at home. After all, foreign policy is nothing but an extension of domestic policy.

Due to sheer domestic compulsion, Gorbachev suggested to the US government to conduct matters in such a way that it would be obvious to everyone that the political course of the Soviet Union and that of the US were oriented not toward hostility and confrontation but toward a search for mutual


understanding and peaceful development. Because, the fact is that "whether we like each other or not, we can survive or perish only together".\textsuperscript{59} Evidently, there was no guarantee of peace without eliminating nuclear arms build up. Hence they had a series of talks.

Though in the Geneva Summit (1985) "serious differences" remained, the two leaders (Reagan and Gorbachev) reaffirmed their commitment to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and to the new interest in strengthening it together with other countries.\textsuperscript{60} Basically, Reagan's "star wars" blocked any accord on nuclear space arms. Once again, the same factor prevented any accord in the Reykjavik Summit. While Reagan insisted on continuing his "star wars" programme, Gorbachev insisted on linking his package of concessions to the US' abandonment of its "star war" programme.\textsuperscript{61} No doubt it was a brilliant political thrust. The US, however, did not budge a single inch from its position. This was indeed distressing for Gorbachev.

\textsuperscript{59} See, CDSP, September 25, 1985, p.13.

\textsuperscript{60} See, CDSP, December 18, 1985, p.4. See also CDSP, December 25, 1985, p.9.

On returning from the Reykjavik Summit, Gorbachev criticized the US in mild tones. He had a feeling that there was a view in the West that the Soviet Union cannot bear the economic burden of most sophisticated and costly arms race and, as a result, it would break under the pressure and bow down before the West.  

There is no denying that the West had consciously adopted a strategy to sabotage Soviet economy.

However, this did not delude Gorbachev. He still favoured strong Soviet-US economic ties that would, he believed, promote more responsible policies. This would make easy the strategic arms reduction which has been a "central problem of Soviet-American relations". Gorbachev realized that first he would have to take a bold initiative, thus he would show that his call is not only for the sake of propaganda. At the UN Gorbachev pledged unilateral cuts of 500,000 troops, 1000 tanks set, declared Afghan ceasefire and highlighted the issues of human rights and ecology. His bold initiatives were widely applauded. With this the world entered a new phase of a global anti-nuclear process, a phase not only of hope, but also of realistic plans and the consequent concrete actions.

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63. See, CDSP, June 6, 1988, pp.1-3.
The INF treaty was a major breakthrough, this brought Gorbachev the reputation for being a prime mover and motive force in world affairs. In October 1989, the Supreme Soviet appealed to the US Congress on the question of moratorium on nuclear explosion and termination of nuclear tests and expressed its willingness to do anything "necessary and possible" for the earliest possible attainment of this goal. The following year in June (1990), Gorbachev and Bush signed an accord on chemical weapons, nuclear explosions, and issued statements on 50 per cent strategic arms cut. They also signed a document on trade, the destruction of chemical weapons and the cessation of their production, and a protocol to a treaty on nuclear explosion for peaceful purpose. For the first time in the history of disarmament talks, an agreement was reached on cutting in half the strategic nuclear arsenals of both the Soviet Union and the US. Stock piles of chemical weapons were to be reduced by 80 per cent and their production was to be banned. The Soviet-US joint line aimed at a transition from constructive mutual understanding to a constructive interaction was bearing fruit. This was a significant achievement, according to Gorbachev, since it was the first sign of emerging partnership between the USA and the Soviet

67. See, CDSP, October 15, 1989, p.43.
Union. The US had certainly moved away from its posture of confrontation, in response to Soviet moves. The package of the new agreement reflected mutual understanding and confidence between East and West, indicating a transition from constructive mutual understanding to constructive interaction. This is what Gorbachev had envisaged.

INF Treaty

On December 8, 1987 Gorbachev and Reagan signed the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty eliminating medium and shorter range nuclear missiles. The lessening of tension between the US and the Soviet Union was first marked by the signing of this treaty. It assisted in efforts towards constructive relations and progress towards nuclear disarmament. There was unprecedented data exchange and a healthy openness, as the two sides agreed to mutual inspection of their nuclear installations. After signing the treaty they entered into three days of discussion at the White House that yielded statements reflecting a significantly softer tone in their relationship. Interestingly, they agreed to keep on talking despite

70. See, CDSP, July 4, 1990, p.2.
73. See, Bangladesh Times (Dacca), December 11, 1987.
continued disagreement over "star wars" and various regional issues. However, Gorbachev had delinked INF from an agreement on space-based weapons and strategic weapons to which he had been linking it since 1985. This indicated that Gorbachev was more flexible, more imaginative and more cooperative than his Soviet predecessors and his American counterpart.

Though differences between the Soviet Union and the USA still remained, this time the nature of the differences between them was somewhat changed. They agreed arms reduction and on the issue of verification but they differed on what to do with the nuclear warheads once these are removed.

According to the provision of the INF treaty, Reagan and Gorbachev agreed to inter alia, eliminate an entire class of forward land-based strategic missiles in two different range categories 500-1000 kilometers and 1000-5500 kilometers. It is to be noted that these missiles were


78. For further see, Times of India, November 13, 1987.

79. See "INF Treaty Main Text", Department of State Bulletin, 88 (2132), March 88, pp.131-40. However, these missiles represent only about three to four per cent of the total U.S. and Soviet nuclear
vigorously opposed by the European peace movement of the early 1980s, which staged the largest demonstration ever seen on any issue, in the whole post war period.

The most important part of the INF was that the 13 year long implementation and verification stage would last until the start of the next century. The treaty established a system of reciprocal and on-site inspection of sensitive military facilities that far exceeded all previous arms treaties. What made the INF significant were its two qualitative aspects. It was the very first accord whereby the two great powers agreed to cut down their arsenals and, more significantly, the two powers were making cuts which were not equal. The Soviet Union agreed to eliminate five times the number of warheads the US would be sacrificing. Because Gorbachev had shown remarkable flexibility, the accord took place.

Roots of Gorbachev's Peace Offensive:

It is believed that Gorbachev's peace offensive had its origins in the weakening of the Soviet global economic position and the stagnation of Soviet society over the past quarter century. Perestroika was meant to revitalize the stagnant Soviet economy. This necessitated reduction in defence budget. But this could be realized only by lessening

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missiles. Two per cent of their nuclear warheads as a mere one per cent of all nuclear fire power. See Bix, n.74, p.3.

80. Bix, n.74, p.2.

the tension with the U.S. Precisely this was the objective of Gorbachev's arms reduction proposals at creating the external condition for vital Soviet reforms. The signing of the INF treaty was an important event in the history of furthering the cause of peace. This lead to a crucial shift in the military thinking of the superpowers. For all practical purposes, anti-Soviet crusade was over. Washington was forced to return to detente. Primarily economic problems compelled both sides towards restraint in military spending and foreign adventures, and towards exploration of new possibilities. However, this is not to suggest that Gorbachev's new thinking was a secondary factor responsible for Soviet-U.S. rapprochement.

Soviet Withdrawal From Afghanistan:

Ever since the Soviet troops landed in Afghanistan, there was severe criticism all around that Russians wanted to dominate Afghanistan for ever and would not leave that country. There have been extensive debates over Soviet aims and motives in going into Afghanistan and their willingness to pay a high price to remain there. The Soviet troops had actually stayed in Afghanistan longer than they fought in World War II. Here the Soviet image got badly tarnished. Washington took the view that the military intervention in Afghanistan was an expansionist action on the part of Moscow.


and that Moscow had to be beaten back. Individual nations, including several in the East-European bloc, had condemned the invasion with different levels of intensity and specificity. There was enormous diplomatic pressure on the Soviet Union to withdraw from Afghanistan. As a result the Cold War heightened. There was, however, a ray of hope when Gorbachev referred to Afghanistan as the Soviet Union's "bleeding wound". Once the Soviet Union accepted that the intervention was a mistake, they had no option but to seek a face-saving way of disengagement.

Gorbachev's accession to power coincided with the Reagan Administration decision in the fall of 1985 to increase support to the Afghan guerrillas. Actually, however, localised the Afghan conflict might have looked, it was fraught with fearful possibilities of history being repeated on a newly enlarged geopolitical scale which could have culminated into a much wider conflict. Because, the global powers, Russia and America, had a direct stake in Afghanistan, they were pursuing diametrically opposite aims. Of course, the Soviet Union failed in their mission. In fact, the very presence of Soviet troops in Afghanistan had become an economic liability on Soviet Union.

84. See Times of India, April 14, 1988.


It steadily stepped up the quantity and quality of its weapons supply to the Muzahideen to a point where the Kremlin had no choice but to accept that it just could not win against the guerillas. Having realized that it was important to change Afghan policy, Gorbachev started slowly distancing him from the rigid ideological and political-military posture of the Brezhnev years. Finally, he decided to withdraw Soviet forces from Afghanistan. He was willing to withdraw his forces without any accord. However, the U.N.-sponsored agreement paved a face-saving way for the withdrawal of Russian forces. The agreement was signed by Pakistan and Afghanistan and guaranteed by the U.S.A. and the Soviet Union. This can well be interpreted as a corollary of Gorbachev's new thinking whose impact began to be felt. Essentially, Gorbachev wanted to establish a lasting peace on this planet and to make it really a non-violent world. This was a necessary collateral for the survival of the Soviet union. Thus he required an immediate solution to regional conflicts which entangled the Soviet Union. The success of the superpowers in framing an agreement over Afghanistan provided two important lessons and guidelines for the solution of other regional conflicts, first, that superpowers can deal with each other rationally and pragmatically to achieve solutions; and second, that the Russians should be

88. See *Hindustan Times* (New Delhi), May 11, 1989.
believed when they stated, that they intended to seek solutions to these conflict.\textsuperscript{90} Earlier, the Western countries were also skeptical about the Soviet moves. During the Gorbachev period not only did Soviet attitude towards USA change but the US attitude towards the Soviet Union also changed significantly since Gorbachev had proved his intentions. The end of confrontations was marked by the beginning of collaboration and partnership.

D. Analysis of Increasing Soviet-US Relations

The Soviet-US relations have dominated the international and domestic environment for more than forty years. Though this relationship has not been static in the past, their dynamics have operated within fairly well defined limits of hostility which came to be known as the Cold War. The post Second World War international system came to be known as a bipolar global system, with the US and the Soviet Union each leading a power bloc; and a vast area of developing countries in the process of decolonization acted as the playground for influence and control.\textsuperscript{91} The international order in the Cold War years was conditioned to a notable extent by the two countries abilities to pressure the internal sources of their strength and influence in the


world and thus to meet their commitment as "superpowers". 92

Due to their mutually adversarial relationship, both superpowers have been a subject of policy concern for each other, though it should be noted that before the October Revolution the USA and Russia enjoyed exceptionally good relationship. But after 1917, their relationship was marked by hostility and distrust, except for a short term discordant alliance during World War II. However, the remarkable events of the Gorbachev years have given substance to the idea that "a new age of international relations" was emerging. 93

As the decade of the 1980s closed, the US and the Soviet Union appeared to have finally mastered their forty year old conflict. At the Malta Summit between George Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev, the convergence of American and Soviet positions on agenda items was unprecedented. Their relationship developed within minimum tension, 94 because both of them realized that they can do more than any other two powers to assure world peace. In fact, in a bipolar world order, there could be no peaceful international order without a constructive relationship between the US and the Soviet Union. Because the global power structure was dominated by

92. For their underlying sources of might see Malashenka, n.87, p.1.


the two superpowers. Although with the new centre of powers the bipolar world was gradually transforming into a multipolar world.

In the late 1980s, the superpowers' attitude changed significantly. Perhaps for the first time since the post-war period, they found themselves in exactly the same boat in that their interests, as regards the present international system, had apparently come closer and, as a result, the forty years old Cold War came to an end. Primarily, because they had come to realize that there can be no victorious in the Cold War.

95. Peter, F. Ducker, however, maintains that, there is no more economic superpower. No matter how big, powerful and productive a country might be it competes everyday for its world market position... There is no more superpower... there are only competitors. See, The New Realities, (London: Mandarin, 1990), p.22.


97. For the first time any Soviet leader was invited by NATO. This indicated the significant change in the attitude of the NATO members. See CDSP, August 1, 1990, p.2. In his New Year message to the American people, Gorbachev himself said: the Cold War has gone, there is no immediate threat of nuclear disaster. The chances of peace have improved”. Reprints from the Soviet Press, February 28, 1991, p.51. See also Fred Halliday, "The End of Cold War", New Left Review, (London), March-April 1990, p.11. Gorbachev's radical diplomacy and drive for democratisation at the domestic level brought the second Cold War to an end. The bipolar system of international relations began to fall rapidly apart, after changes inside the Soviet Union went deep enough to alter the very nature as a power centre. The symbol of bloc rivalry parallel organization - the Warsaw Pact and COMMECON has become defunct. See, Shushil Kumar, "Gorbachev's Reforms and International Changes: Towards an Interpretation", Mimeo, 1990, p.1.
This led them to a series of summits and unprecedented decisions which ultimately opened up broad prospects for cooperation between the two nations. The international political scene began to change rapidly from the middle of the 1980s.

Gorbachev was invited for the NATO meeting, and Soviet Union was given observer status in GATT. Within two years, more than 1,500 joint ventures were registered in the Soviet Union of which about 150 were set up with American partnership. The objective was to integrate the Soviet Union into the world economy. The Soviet Union was economically lagging far behind the USA and this economic backwardness brought to the fore many complicated problems, which Gorbachev had pointed out at length. Admittedly, he succeeded in dispelling the climate of hostility and mistrust within a couple of years, completely transforming the American image of the Soviet Union. Now the Soviet Union was no longer an enemy, or an "evil empire" but a new partner. Hence his policies had to be endorsed.


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In his speech, spelling out a U.S. policy of engagement with the Soviet Union, U.S. Secretary of State, James A. Baker said that not only would the U.S. support Perestroika, but the Administration had concluded that Gorbachev's success was itself in America's fundamental interest and was prepared to provide Moscow with advice and technical assistance to help restructure the Soviet economy. 100

**Eastern Europe**

Gorbachev's reforms apparently accelerated the crisis that was "waiting to happen" in Eastern Europe; reforms which were at the top of the East European policy agenda. Ever since the establishment of the "socialist regimes", the indigenous interests of the East European countries have often been at odds with those of Moscow which had resulted into a popular discontent against the Soviet dominance. The popular mass upsurge against the Communist regimes in 1989-90 was a logical culmination of that. In the first free elections the Communist parties lost their monopoly of power in one country after another. The Berlin Wall, the symbol of political, economic and military division of Europe, was finally pulled down. Unlike his predecessors, Gorbachev had shown greater flexibility by giving East European countries a free hand. He not only adopted a policy of non-interference, but also welcomed these developments. This obviously had a positive impact on the U.S. as it had been long demanding the same. This further brought the Soviet

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100. Horelick, n.94, p.591.
Union closer to the West. Their friendliness was clearly evident during the Gulf War. Immediately after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990, the Soviet Union and the United States, in a joint statement, condemned the aggression and demanded unconditional withdrawal of the Iraqi forces from Kuwait. This was an unprecedented occurrence in the history of regional conflicts. The Soviet Union cooperated with the U.S. by supporting the U.N. resolutions. It observed trade embargo against Iraq and stopped arms delivery to Iraq even though it had to bear substantial losses. This can only be explained in terms of Soviet desire to continue the momentum of cooperation and to benefit from its improved relationship with the U.S.

The changes in Eastern Europe were accompanied by the end of the bipolar system and, in particular, the system dominated by the so-called superpowers. Even before the disintegration of the Soviet Union, it had been reduced to a continental power without a supporting alliance system.


There is no denying that the end of the Cold War has left the Americans in the fortunate position of being without an obvious major adversary.\textsuperscript{104} Kenneth Galbraith has rightly commented, "Capitalism is no longer afraid of Communism ...." One no longer talks of the military inferiority or superiority of the U.S. or Russia. They have apparently discovered the "limits of their influence".\textsuperscript{105} Now we hear about a post Cold War world order. This indicates that the era of Soviet-American relationship is closed for ever.

CONCLUSION:

In the 1980s, specially after Brezhnev's death, there was a re-examination of Soviet policies in all areas. Basically, what compelled Brezhnev's successors to re-examine their policy was the emerging crisis in Soviet society. There were many problems which had really no solutions. However, with Brezhnev's death, the Soviet Union entered a radically new phase. The new leadership was opposed to the manner in which their predecessors had managed the country's economy which has caused enormous problems. Now even "non-antagonistic contradiction" had become a cause of anxiety. The Society was demanding a fundamental change. Though Andropov initiated limited reforms, these were unable to gear-up the stagnant economy and things continued to deteriorate in the Soviet Union.

\textsuperscript{104} John Lewis Gaddis, "Towards the Post-Cold War World", \textit{Foreign Affairs}, Vol.70, no.2, Spring 1991, pp.102-03.

\textsuperscript{105} See \textit{Hindu} (Madras), Jan. 20, 1989.
Konstantin Chernenko, who succeeded Andropov, insisted on perfecting the relations between nationalities. He was fully aware of the explosive nature of the nationalities problem and the alienation of the CPSU from the masses. It was not surprising that both Andropov and Chernenko had similar views on many issues and both had shown the willingness to reform the system within a socialist framework. One of the important facts of this period was that American attitude started slightly becoming more positive on relations with Moscow.

After Gorbachev's accession to power, the Soviet domestic and foreign policy changed significantly. In fact, the ground was already prepared for him to act differently.

The 27th CPSU Congress was a turning point in the history of the Soviet Union. It was an important Congress which prepared ground to operationalize fundamental-structural reforms. In this Congress, Gorbachev introduced his reforms package as an integral part of a broader democratisation process. Though a new strategy of socio-economic re-structuring was first mapped-out at the April 1985 plenary meeting. Gorbachev's entire reform package, his vision of democratic international restructuring, became known as what he called 'New Thinking'. This new-thinking in international affair was itself inseparable from Glasnost and restructuring of Soviet domestic and foreign policy. One of the most important objectives was to restructure Soviet-American relations. During Gorbachev's period the entire
focus shifted from confrontation to co-operation. In view of this change, his New Thinking amounted to an end of the 'Marxist orthodoxy'. His interpretation of security, two camp theory, peaceful coexistence, etc., signified a sharp break with the Soviet past.

Gorbachev believed that in modern times security cannot be unilateral. It can only be universal, because military parity or 'balance of terror' no longer represented a viable guarantee of peace. The only thing that can guarantee peace was total and universal disarmament. It was all the more important, in view of increasing global interdependence and integration. Scientific, technological and economic factors acted as catalysts to this change. Due to this kind of world-view, the Soviets discarded the two camps theory because, they argued, it was a simplistic understanding of world reality. While the world was much more complex and despite many differences and disagreements, it remained a single, interdependent world. They also argued that the bipolar world order was fast becoming multi-polar. It was in this changed context that Gorbachev strongly favoured de-ideologisation, democratisation, demilitarisation and humanization of the entire international system. This was his interpretation of peaceful co-existence. They had also realised that their international strategy was based on flawed assumptions which needed to be discarded. This ultimately culminated in the demise of the system itself.
Gorbachev’s peace offensive and proposals for a nuclear free world undoubtedly gave a new thrust to arms control. It is to be noted that his peace offensive had its origins in the weakening of Soviet global economic position and the stagnation of the Soviet society over the last three decades. In order to revitalise its economy, a reduction in its defence budget was necessary. But this could only be realised by lessening the tension with the U.S.A. Evidently, his arms reduction proposals aimed at creating the external conditions for vital Soviet reforms. His priority to concentrate on the modernization of the Soviet economy was actually the primary reason that gave him interest in better relations with the USA.

The strategic arms reduction preoccupied the Soviet American relations. However, the Geneva Summit (1985) and the Reykjavik Summit were failures because of Reagan’s unwillingness to give up the "star-war" programme and Gorbachev’s insistence on linking his package of concessions to the U.S. abandonment of the star war programme. But, after that, Gorbachev realised that he would have to take bold initiatives. This was evident at the UN when he pledged unprecedented unilateral military cuts. The signing of INF treaty was a major breakthrough. This was the first stepping stone towards constructive relations between the two superpowers. However, this was clearly not enough. Gorbachev had to prove his intentions. He then turned to the area of regional conflicts, i.e. Afghanistan.
Ever since the Soviet troops landed in Afghanistan, there was enormous diplomatic pressure to withdraw them. Both the Soviet Union and the USA had a direct stake in Afghanistan which made the situation really more complicated. Gorbachev did not hesitate in accepting that intervention was a mistake. The Soviets were actually looking for a face-saving device to withdraw their army from Afghanistan. Of course, economic liability on the Soviet Union was another important factor to rethink their Afghan policy. At last, the UN-sponsored agreement paved the way for the withdrawal of the Russian forces.

It is obvious that, in the changing circumstances, Soviet-American relations have been influenced by the geostrategic and ideological factors, which have eventually altered the entire structure of power equations in the world politics. The genesis of the two rivals bloc phenomenon lies in the difference of their ideological cultures propagated by both countries. And the spiral of conflict they generated. The collapse of the totalitarian regime in Moscow paved the way to halt the old rivalry, ending the Cold War. The rivalry ended along with Soviet disintegration. Moreover, the emergence of the newly independent countries with varied political systems in the erstwhile Soviet Union, and the existence of a unified powerful Germany, demand more and more cooperative approach with each other.
CONCLUSION:

In the 1980s, specially after Brezhnov's death, there was a broader re-examination of Soviet policies in all areas. Basically what compelled Brezhnev's successors to re-examine their policy was the verging crisis in Soviet Society. There were many problems which had really no solutions. However with the Brezhnev death the Soviet Union entered a radically new phase. The new leadership was opposed to the manner in which their predecessors had managed the country's economy which has caused enormous problems. Apart from economic problems there were many other alarming pointers; e.g. non-antagonistic contradiction had become a cause of anxiety. Perhaps the society was demanding a fundamental change which is why Andrapov's limited reforms were unable to gear-up the stagnant economy and things were rather deteriorating in Soviet Union.

Konstantin Chernenko, who succeeded Andrapov, insisted on perfecting relation between nationalities. He was fully aware of the explosive nature of the nationalities problem and the alienation of the CPSU from the masses. It was not surprising both Andrapov and Chernenkov had similar views on many issues. But leaders had shown the willingness to change the system within socialist framework. One of the important fact of that period was American attitude started slightly burning more positive on relation with Moscow.

Ever since Gorbachev accession to power he had shown
remarkable willingness to reform Soviet domestic and foreign policy. The ground was already prepared for him to act differently. It is interesting to note that with his take-over American becomes hopeful because the nature of Soviet leadership had changed.

The 27th CPSU Congress was a turning point in the history of Soviet-Union. It was important for Congress in the sense it prepared to operationalize fundamental-structural reforms. In this Congress, Gorbachev introduced his reforms package as an integral part of a broader democratisation process. Though a new strategy of socio-economic re-structuring was first mapped-out at the April 1985 plenary meeting. Gorbachev's entire reform package, his vision of democratic international restructuring is known as what he called 'New Thinking'. His new-thinking in international affair was inseparable from Glasnost and restructuring of Soviet foreign policy. One of the most important objective was to restructure Soviet-American relation. As a result the entire focus shifted from confrontation to co-operation. In view of this change his New-Thinking amounts to an end of 'Marxist Orthodoxy'. His interpretation of security, two camp theory, peaceful coexistence and etc. signified a sharp break from Soviet past.

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His priority to concentrate on modernization of the Soviet economy was actually the primary reason that gave him interest in better relation with USA.

The strategic arms reduction has been a central problem by Soviet American relation. Though Geneva Summit (1985) and Reykjavik Summit were failure because of Reagan’s unwillingness to give up his star-war programme and Gorbachev’s insistance on linking his package of concession to the U.S. abandonment of star war programme. However, after that Gorbachev realised that he would have to take bold initiative. This was visible at UN when Gorbachev pledged unprecedented unilateral military cuts. The signing of INF treaty was the major breakthrough. This was the first stepping stone towards constructive relations between the two superpowers.

Ever since the Soviet troops landed in Afghanistan there was enormous diplomatic pressure to withdraw their troops. Both the Soviet Union and USA had direct stake in Afghanistan which made the situation really more complicated. Gorbachev did not hesitate in accepting that intervention was a mistake. They were actually looking for a face-saving device to withdraw his army from Afghanistan. Of course economic liability on Soviet-Union was the another important factor to rethink their Afghan policy. At last the UN sponsored agreement paved the way for withdrawal of Russian forces.

Over the last few years there was a significant change
in the attitude of Soviet and U.S. towards each other. They ended the cold-war. Perhaps they realised in futility. It was a continuous was in which there was no victory for either side. This realisation ultimately opened up broad prospect for cooperation between them. Their hostility and mistrust gradually waned. But the end of cold-war has certainly left American in the fortunate position of being without any obvious major adversary.