

GLOBAL SECURITY AND SOVIET NATIONALITIES*

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The crisis of Soviet nationalities is related in many ways to world security. The problem of stability has been manifest in the violent clashes between national groups in the southern republics, in the mass rallies of hundreds of thousands of people, in the constitutional conflicts between the parliaments of the various Soviet republics and the Supreme Soviet in Moscow, in the demands by popular fronts and other democratic forces to rearrange the Soviet army, establishing national territorial military units, and in the openly secessionist public statements by various national movements. The crisis has fueled speculation about a coming disintegration of the Soviet multinational empire, which is of concern to Western strategic analysts because the crisis of a superpower with thousands of nuclear warheads has a direct impact on the United States and the world in this interdependent age.

The importance and real crisis-creating potential of the Soviet nationalities problem always have been underestimated. Not only U.S. Sovietologists but also the Kremlin leaders have not been able to understand the complexities of Soviet society, which contains more than 120 different nationalities.¹ On September 19, 1989, General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev acknowledged in a speech to the plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CC CPSU) that the Soviet leadership did not comprehend the seriousness of the nationalities crisis when it started *perestroika* in April 1985.²

Although it is impossible to predict in detail the future course of political events in the Soviet Union, general developments that will shape the framework of actions of the various political forces may be identified. General trends have a major role to play in the historical process and, in this sense, the crisis of Soviet society is not an exception. If the political forces attempt to reverse the natural course of history, they only will have temporary and limited effect. On the other hand, an artificial acceleration of developments also may produce negative effects, create additional tensions, deepen the crisis, and induce backlashes by conservative forces.

* Originally published in *The Washington Quarterly*, 1990, 13, 2, 37–47.

THE SOVIET DILEMMA: UNITY OR REFORM?

An endless number of political analysts from across the ideological spectrum have described a phenomenon that seems to be the major contradiction of the multinational Soviet society. This contradiction is between the need to reform and the desire to maintain the unity of the Soviet Union; between the natural wish to acquire modern technology and to achieve a more developed economy and, at the same time, a strong will to preserve the rigid, centrally controlled political system. The increasingly poor Soviet economic and technological performance has been the driving force of *perestroika*. With the reform process, however, the painful dilemma quickly emerged. With reform, there is an uncertain hope for improved economic performance in the future, accompanied by real, concrete political instability in the short run. Without reform, the current political situation may be kept under control, but with meager hopes for economic progress. Put bluntly, there is no hope for economic success if the present unity of the Soviet Union is maintained. Market-oriented economic reforms inevitably mean a greater degree of freedom, which leads to the rise of ethnic movements, national feelings, and, in the end, centrifugal and separatist tendencies.

Gorbachev has been skillful in maneuvering and in maintaining the balance among these circumstances. As time passes, however, the decisions he will have to make will be more concrete in nature, making it increasingly difficult to appease the conflicting interests of the various movements. A solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh problem, for example, will mean quarreling either with the majority of Armenians or with the majority of Azerbaijanis. Similarly, the demands of the Baltic states, especially of Estonia and Lithuania, for economic independence will not be satisfied without annoying the imperial bureaucracy of Moscow's central ministries and its representatives in the Baltic republics. Quite naturally, the bureaucrats are afraid of losing their privileged positions if the command economy system is replaced by a more flexible system with local control and market regulation.

The Soviet nationalities problem will become increasingly aggravated in the future. If the democratic movement continues, then, in four to five years, the Soviet Union as a federation will be quite different from what it is now. Some of the current constituent republics may come to enjoy some sort of semi-independence, on the basis of special agreements with the Soviet Union. The remaining constituent republics may gain a greater degree of sovereignty, while some autonomous republics and other autonomous territorial units may achieve the status of Union Republics. A larger number of autonomous areas may emerge within the Soviet republics, and the borders between the Union Republics and other constituent parts of the Soviet Union may be rearranged to a considerable extent.

As was indicated above, the key to the future of the Soviet federation lies in the prospects for democratization of Soviet society. The main questions are: How stable is the process? Is it irreversible, or not? At present, the democratization process still may be reversible, although it is becoming increasingly difficult to stop the current momentum for change. Several factors contribute to the irreversibility of *perestroika*, *glasnost*, and democratization.

- There is a growing understanding that a return to a society of the Leonid Brezhnev type is not a solution because the country still would face the same grave economic and environmental problems. In the likelihood of a setback, such as that of Poland in 1981, the long-range historical movement toward a democratic society would not be reversed. Instead, after five to ten years, a new process of *perestroika* would recommence, only from a worse position. Against this background, it would be increasingly difficult for Soviet political leaders to return to nondemocratic methods of government because they correctly would assume that in the future they could face grave accusations and even be tried under the conditions of the next *perestroika*.
- In spite of its limitations and restrictions, the March 1989 election of a new Soviet parliament, the Congress of the People's Deputies, marked the arrival of a new situation that contributes to the irreversibility of the reform process. The democratically oriented minority in the new Soviet parliament makes it increasingly impossible to stop *perestroika* simply with some Politburo decisions. Only the use of brute force, or a full-scale coup d'état can silence the democratic members of the Soviet parliament. Furthermore, relatively independent behavior is being exercised by the Supreme Soviets, local governments, and Party organizations in a number of Soviet republics, while informal political groups are emerging and enlarging their structures.

Despite these trends, it is still possible that *perestroika* could be reversed, stopping the democratization process in the Soviet Union. One of the most likely scenarios would be the collapse of the command economy system without the proper transformation to a market-oriented economy. Such a collapse would result in economic chaos—unbelievable inflation, rocketing crime rates, black-marketing, shops empty of all the primary consumer goods and food items, and the disintegration of the principal economic stabilizers and controls. Such a situation likely would result in the appearance of a “savior with an iron hand.” Furthermore, a series of major, sanguinary national conflicts could provide the necessary pretext for the taking of hard measures to restore order, again placing society under “control.”

* Originally published in *The Washington Quarterly*, 1990, IX, 2, 37-47.

SOVIET NATIONAL MOVEMENTS

Specific contradictions contribute to the formation of national movements. Vertical contradictions are those that have emerged from the colonial exploitation of local resources by the central government bureaucracy in Moscow, while horizontal contradictions are those that have emerged from conflicting economic, political, cultural, and other interests of the various nationalities. Estonian protests against Moscow's plans to open a new phosphorite mining industry in the republic are a good example of the first kind of controversy, while the Armenian-Azerbaijani dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh is representative of the second type.

One side effect of the vertical contradictions is anti-Russian sentiment. Because people in various republics often consciously or subconsciously identify the central power of the Soviet Union with Russia, their antibureaucratic feelings sometimes are associated with anti-Russian attitudes. This tendency likely will weaken in the future when the democratic movement in Russia, which has been connected with the activities of the congressional deputies Yuri Afanasyev, Boris Yeltsin, the late Andrei Sakharov, and others, strengthens.

There is, perhaps, a great element of truth in saying that tomorrow's Uzbekistan will differ politically from today's Estonia. There are great differences among the actual situations of the various Soviet republics, but constantly repeated elements in the process of national awakening can be underlined. At the initial stage, environmental disasters and dangers are the main objects of protest and, therefore, the peculiar consolidating factors for national democratic movements. Then, popular fronts begin to emerge. An ideology of republican economic independence and self-management is formed. Soon after, the main local language is established as a state language of the given Soviet republic, attempts are made to introduce special citizenship requirements, anti-immigration laws are introduced, and protectionist measures are undertaken to provide for the local markets the consumer goods that often are scarce under the inefficient command economy. In a parallel manner, so-called internationalist movements and similar neo-Stalinist groups emerge in the various Soviet republics, with their ideology of a unitary and undivided Soviet Union. Finally, the latter groups stage or threaten political strikes, attempting to contain the changes in the various Soviet republics.

This entire scheme is not strict, but tentative and impressionistic, the phases just constituting elements that continue to appear in various combinations in the different Soviet republics. Their sequence may vary with some elements, such as local leadership changes, emerging many times and not just once. The overall basic tendency—the awakening of an environmental consciousness developing into subsequent local legislative initiatives—appears to be more or less regular.

The characteristic phases of the initial periods of emerging national movements in the Soviet republics merit some elaboration. The first stage may be called *environmental*, when public political debates mostly are

focused on environmental issues. In Estonia, for example, the start of that period was during the first months of 1987. The second phase, connected with an *emancipation of political thinking*, is marked by heated public debates on previously restricted or forbidden subjects, and is an ideological preparation for future organizational steps. In Estonia, one of the landmarks of the emancipation stage was the discussion on republican self-management that started in September 1987. The next phase may be called a *popular front period*, when the democratic forces reach the initial maturity to organize. Aside from the form of a classic popular front, the consolidation of democratic forces may also emerge in other organizational structures. In Estonia, the Popular Front was established in April 1988. The next phase may be called the "*official*" *response period*, and it usually is connected with changes in the local republican Party and government leadership. By and large, such reshuffling of the local official elite represents a joint attempt by the Moscow leadership and the more flexible and democratic forces of the local Communist Party (CP) to regain the Party's control over events. In Estonia, the shift from Brezhnevite to new and flexible leadership started in June 1988 with the election of Vaino Väljas as First Secretary of the Central Committee of the local Communist Party.

Ironically, the rigid, weak, and old Brezhnevite leadership in certain republics may play a positive role as major catalysts in the consolidation of opposition forces. Such leaders are too weak to suppress popular discontent, but shortsighted and strong enough to irritate the democratic forces, constantly putting minor obstacles in their way, thus becoming the symbolic objects of public hatred. In this sense, a precipitate removal of the old guard may not be necessarily in the interests of the democratic forces.

The "official" response period logically is followed by a *legislative period*, when democratic aspirations are transformed into quite radical laws that are passed by local republican parliaments, the Supreme Soviets. In cases such as the Estonian Declaration of Sovereignty, the November 1988 changes in the republican Constitution, or the August 1989 Election Law, bitter quarrels and constitutional conflicts developed between the local and central lawmakers.

If the democratic movement in the Soviet Union continues, then it would be logical to expect the next major change to occur during and after the elections of new local parliaments of the Soviet republics and of other local representative organs. In politically dynamic areas, it is likely that these elections will mark the beginning of a real multiparty democracy.

FROM OKRUG TO REPUBLIC

The Soviet Union comprises 15 republics, 20 autonomous republics, 8 autonomous *oblasts* (provinces), and 10 autonomous *okrugs* (regions). Most of the autonomous units (16 autonomous republics, 5 *oblasts*, and 10 *okrugs*) exist within the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic

(RSFSR), which is the largest among the Soviet republics. About 51.7 percent of the RSFSR territory and only 16.7 percent of its population belong to various autonomous units.

A tendency in various parts of the Soviet Union is to achieve higher state status. In some of the constituent Soviet Socialist Republics (Union Republics), movements are calling for complete independence and secession from the Soviet Union. In the autonomous republics, certain political forces would like the republics to be granted the same status as the constituent Union Republics. In the autonomous *oblasts* and *okrugs*, some nationalist movements want their autonomous units to gain at least the status of the autonomous republics.

A potential source of conflict may be that many populous nationalities do not have national territorial units. Among them are Germans, Poles, Kurds, Greeks, Turks, Koreans, Hungarians, Uighurs, and all are interested in achieving at least some autonomy. In addition, many nationalities suffered heavily from the deportations and repression of the Joseph Stalin era. The nationalities that already enjoy some autonomy try to transform that autonomy into a higher form of self-determination.

In his speech to the September 1989 CC CPSU plenum on national policy, Gorbachev stressed that the demands for the transformation of existing autonomous units are unrealistic, instead claiming that the most important task is to widen the rights of the existing autonomous units.³ The plenum of the Central Committee did indicate that it would be possible to create new national *raions* (districts) for the nationalities without national autonomous territorial units and to develop other possible forms of national self-government. It appears that although the CPSU leadership is determined not to change the existing territorial-national structure of the Soviet Union, the pressure for substantial revisions is growing and will be more and more vivid after the elections of local legislative bodies and councils.

SECESSION AND THE BALTICS

If the democratic process in the Soviet Union continues, it will lead inevitably to growing secessionist demands in various Soviet republics. The Soviet Constitution guarantees in Article 72 the right of secession to every constituent republic of the Soviet Union. For years, this right was considered merely theoretical, perhaps because Soviet lawmakers never thought that a republic seriously would consider exercising the right. As many other human rights in the Soviet Union, the right of secession was guaranteed formally, but was impossible to exercise practically. The purely declaratory nature of the right of secession also could be demonstrated in the colossal contradictions between that right and a number of other rights of the Soviet republics. Although the republics have had a theoretical right to secede from the Soviet Union, they have not been able to establish the price of a movie ticket, or to arrange a foreign trip for a scholar, without Moscow's approval.

Although still rather weak, political forces demanding national self-determination in radical forms are emerging in Georgia, Armenia, Moldavia, the Ukraine, and in other republics. In Russia, some modest developments along these lines also are surfacing. Secessionist forces are strongest in the Baltic republics of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. In Estonia, certain political groups, among them the Estonian Independence Party, the Past Preservation Society, and the Estonian Christian Union, unconditionally demand complete independence. In other Baltic republics, similar groups exist. The strength of the secessionist forces likely will continue to grow, either through the expansion of their political organizations, or through the radicalization of popular fronts that currently have a more centrist position, believing that complete independence is a more distant goal.

Historically, the Baltic situation is quite specific. The three independent Baltic states, which were members of the League of Nations, were forced to conclude in 1939 mutual assistance treaties with the Soviet Union, following the division of Eastern Europe into spheres of influence between the governments of Adolph Hitler and Joseph Stalin. In accordance with the treaties, substantial contingents of the Red Army were stationed in the Baltics. In June 1940, with strong additional forces, the Soviets invaded, occupied, and annexed Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, forcefully incorporating them into the Soviet Union. The United States and a number of other Western countries never recognized the Soviet incorporation of the Baltic states.⁴

The radical, pro-independence forces in the Baltic states emphasize a return to the legal status of the prewar Baltic states, attempting to organize the citizens and descendants of the formerly independent Baltic states, and aiming to restore the prewar republics. More moderate movements seek national self-determination, trying to renew radically and democratize the *de facto* legal and political structures in the Baltic states, which were created over the last 50 years.

In the Baltic states, attempts to achieve independence will become increasingly vigorous. At the same time, the question of independence likely will emerge on the realpolitik level only after a real revolutionary breakthrough in Russia, in the Ukraine, and, perhaps, in Central Asia. Only when the central power is devolved, substantially more democratized, or too occupied with events elsewhere, can the Baltic states gain their independence.

POPULAR FRONTS AND THE QUASI-MULTIPARTY SYSTEM

A simple and crude classification would list three political trends in the various Soviet republics. The extreme, radical secessionist movements usually are represented by the dissidents of the Brezhnev period. The conservative neo-Stalinist forces are dominated by middle-level bureaucrats, industrial workers, and Party and army veterans. In the Baltic republics and in Moldavia, the conservative tendency is represented by

internationalist and other similar movements that support the concept of a unitary and undivided Soviet Union. In the Baltics, the center of the political spectrum is occupied by the popular fronts, while in other republics, where the whole political spectrum is more conservative, the popular fronts represent a radical wing.

Perhaps one of the most interesting phenomena in the course of the present changes in the Soviet Union is the emergence of the popular fronts. The first, established in Estonia in April 1988, was followed by the emergence of similar movements in Lithuania, Latvia, Georgia, Moldavia, Azerbaijan, Byelorussia, Russia, and elsewhere.

Although substantial differences exist among the ideologies of the various popular fronts, general elements include ideas from Communist pragmatism as well as from social democratic and liberal theories. One of the leaders of the Estonian Popular Front, Edgar Savisaar, stated recently that the Front's ideology is influenced primarily by classic liberalism and social democracy, but because the Front is not a party its doctrine is not formulated clearly.⁵ Nevertheless, the important and integrating roles in popular front ideology are the experience of national awakening and the concept of liberation.

The popular fronts emerging in the Soviet Union appear to be a specific form of oppositional political activity in a society that officially has not permitted the establishment of new political parties, and in which the majority of the intellectual elite for years has been integrated into the CPSU, the single official party. Popular fronts are not actual parties, but a means for the democratic elements in the Communist Party to manifest distinct forms of political activities, without necessarily breaking with the Communist Party. Popular fronts have united a large number of different interest groups in the society, but it is not likely that they will endure in their current form. Still, other political organizations such as the conservative internationalist movement and the Greens have organized along the lines of the popular fronts. The radical independence groups, such as the Estonian National Independence Party, are posed to constitute themselves as political parties. Their activists generally never belonged to the Communist Party, do not have to break with it, nor do they need await official approval to form a party.

Inevitably, Soviet political society will develop into a multiparty system. In the politically most advanced republics, such as the Baltic states, where a movement-based, quasi-multiparty system already functions, the multiparty system is likely to emerge first. Such a transformation assumes that there will be no violent end to *perestroika*.

The historical trend toward a multiparty system in the Soviet Union is connected with the decline of the role of the Communist Party. The two tendencies in the Party toward "parliamentarization" and federalization are particularly relevant to the nationalities question. The "parliamentarization" of the CPSU means that the Party is transforming into a peculiar miniparliament that contains many different political movements including the intermovements, popular fronts, and Greens. Therefore, it is becoming increasingly difficult to expect consensus on important political

issues within the Communist Party, or that the Party members will vote as a single bloc in the real parliament, the Supreme Soviet. For example, the leaders of the local Estonian CP on sensitive national issues, such as the language law and election census, have voted in the republican Supreme Soviet as if they were representatives of different interest groups, and not as if they were representatives of the same party. The "parliamentarization" trend of the CP transcends the smaller national republics, making it difficult to believe that Boris Yeltsin and Yegor Ligachev are representatives of the same political party.

The federalization trend of the Communist Party means that a future CPSU will be more like a federation of semi-independent parties than a single united party. The Soviet republics will have achieved the right to decide political matters for themselves, and, correspondingly, the republican Communist Parties will demand more independence, putting forward their own programs, etc. That different communist parties will emerge in the various Soviet republics—some of them functioning like divisions of the CPSU, others having a more independent nature—also is possible.

The breadth of the actual quasi-multiparty system in some republics may be illustrated by various public opinion polls. In Estonia, for example, the polls have aimed at answering questions such as "Which political movement, organization, or party would you vote for in parliamentary elections?" Responses have included more than 10 distinct movements, organizations, and parties, with the Popular Front usually getting the support of more than 30 percent of the voters and the Communist Party faring with less than 20 percent. Among Estonians alone, who form about 60 percent of Estonia's population, the Popular Front usually achieves more than 50 percent of voter support.

SOCIETY IN TRANSITION

In the near future, a number of other trends likely will shape the development of the Soviet multinational state. The republics increasingly will call for the right of so-called economic independence. The Baltic states again have been the most radical in their demands, and their plan for independence starts January 1, 1990. The concept of economic independence for the republics, although unsophisticated, is an important and indispensable phenomenon in the Soviet Union. The concept is a peculiar transitional theory, a model whose objective function is to help transform a nearly collapsed command economy system into a market economy within the framework of a unique multinational empire. Economic reform will not be without its dangers, but there seems to be no alternative other than to introduce market mechanisms. The transition from the old, rigid forms of the Soviet economy toward more flexible market structures will be painful, causing setbacks and contradictions. Although in different ways, Poland, Yugoslavia, China, and Hungary are instructive in this respect.

The Baltic and other Soviet republics increasingly will attempt to establish ownership rights over the natural resources of their republics. They will push for the right to issue their own money or, at least, some sort of special checks or bonds. They will press for the right to have budgets that are relatively independent from the central Soviet budget. The republics will aim to develop their own relations of economic foreign trade and cooperation, to introduce wide-scale, private economic initiatives and market regulations, and to develop direct horizontal trade links with other Soviet republics.

Aside from the Communist Party, many other political, professional, and social organizations, which have been all-Union, are undergoing the federalization process, even more rapidly than the CPSU. Trade unions, the *Komsomol* (Young Communist League), and professional writers and artists unions are vivid examples. The likelihood of partial disintegration of the all-Union structures of the *Komsomol* may be one of the most controversial issues in the near future.

While many traditional structures are loosening the ties between their constituent parts, some others are moving toward consolidation. Many newly established informal political movements, such as the popular fronts, are moving toward establishing some sort of working alliance, although they are not attempting to become centralized, all-Union organizations.

In the near future, two problems that likely will continue to cause controversies in the Soviet Union are the questions of republican citizenship and state language. Citizenship laws will be introduced in various Soviet republics that in most cases will grant citizenship to all people living in the particular republic at the time the legislation takes effect. Soviet citizens with all-Union citizenship who settle in one republic or another will not receive automatically the citizenship of that republic. Although the CPSU platform on national policy is quite explicit, granting citizenship to all people living in the Soviet republics, individual republics likely will attempt to introduce a time limit on republican citizenship. For example, a draft Estonian citizenship law would have it that only those who have lived in Estonia for 10 years and know the Estonian language would be eligible for citizenship. Instituting the republican citizenship may be a tool for local authorities to defend their areas against immigration, making it more difficult for the central authorities in Moscow to rotate cadres—that is, to arrange for changes in local political leadership, sending people from other republics in order to take up key posts in the local power hierarchy.

Most Soviet republics have declared their main indigenous language as a new state language of their respective republic. These decisions have caused anxiety among the Russian-speaking populations of such republics, especially in the Baltic states and in Moldavia, but the more difficult problem may be the attempts, by some representatives of the central authorities, to give to Russian a status of the all-Union state language. Such attempts probably will cause protests in various republics because

the widespread feeling among many non-Russians there is that Russian is already a dominant language in the Soviet Union, and making it an official all-Union state language will simply maintain the present, second-rate status of the other languages.

A most sensitive question for Moscow will be the increasingly vigorous demands by local national movements—principally, by those in the Baltic states—to reorganize the army, creating local territorial forces where draftees from the given area can serve. The environmental issue also has unified people with varying world views against the army presence in their communities. In various areas, the local press has reported on pollution scandals that have been connected with the army. The peace movement, which for years has been orchestrated officially and mainly aimed at influencing favorably Western public opinion, is undergoing fundamental changes—at least, in the Baltic states—increasingly protesting against the Soviet nuclear and other military activities. A growing number of pressure groups are demanding voluntary military service, or the right for young men to choose the civil service, instead of compulsory service in the Soviet army. These trends will continue in the future and will impact on the security policy of the Soviet Union.

SOVIET NATIONALITIES AND U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

There may be an element of truth in the notion that “Soviet Communism is decaying, but Western resolve may evaporate faster.”⁶ The U.S. government appears to be having trouble defining concrete foreign policy tactics toward *perestroika*, in general, and toward the crisis of Soviet nationalities, in particular. Exaggerated U.S. support for national movements in the Soviet Union may endanger the reformist leadership in Moscow and help the neo-Stalinist forces strike back. Equally, a weak or ambiguous U.S. reaction also may bolster conservative circles in the Soviet establishment, making it easier for them to end the democratization process. In each particular situation, in order to draw the fine line between what is desired and what is not, clear-cut criteria must be established and constantly updated.

Two other foreign policy factors that will shape the present world are important. The first is the present level of openness in Soviet society. The second is the simple truth that a further increase of that openness cannot be counterproductive. The significance of the present level of openness in Soviet society is that every U.S. move in relation to the nationalities problem quickly will become known inside the Soviet Union and will function as a factor in local decision making. The case of Estonia is illustrative. The remarks of Vice President Dan Quayle in 1989 that the United States will react negatively to the Soviet use of force in the Baltics were reported carefully in Estonian newspapers, as were the promises of Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze to U.S. Secretary of State James Baker III that the Soviet government will not use force in the Baltic states.⁷

In addition, statements by and letters from members of the U.S. Congress on the Baltic issues generally are being reprinted or reviewed in Estonian newspapers.⁸

Further opening of the Soviet society and a real implementation of agreements on human rights, such as the Helsinki Final Act of 1975 and the Vienna agreements of 1989, would be positive for Soviet and U.S. security interests and world stability, for the reformist leaders in the Kremlin, and for the nationalist movements within the republics of the Soviet Union. The only group that may suffer from having more human rights are the neo-Stalinists. In this context, the civil liberties comprising the freedoms of thought, conscience, and religion; the freedoms of opinion and expression; the right to leave one's country and return to it; and the freedoms of peaceful assembly and association are among the human rights issues that always have been hostages of different realpolitik interests in the foreign policies of various countries. Liberty is the issue of our times, and there is no better recipe for efficient, long-term strategic policy than that of taking human rights seriously.

Finally, it would be useful for the United States to design a new and selective approach to various Soviet republics, taking into account their differing historical and geopolitical backgrounds and also their efficiency in implementing democratic reforms. The development of direct relations between the Western world and the Soviet republics helps also the liberal leaders in Moscow to defy conservatives and to push further the dismantling of the rigid, centralized economic and political systems. The case of the annexed Baltic states also can be interpreted in this context—greater and more explicit Western support for Baltic independence would be conducive to further reform in the Soviet Union in general.

The views expressed in this manuscript are the author's and do not reflect the official viewpoint of the Estonian Academy of Sciences.

NOTES

¹ A. B. Zubov and A. M. Salmin, in *Rabochii klass i sovremennyi mir* (1989, No. 3, pp. 78–81), give a list of 127 nationalities living in the Soviet Union.

² *Pravda*, September 20, 1989, p. 2.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ W. J. H. Hough III, "The Annexation of the Baltic States and Its Effect on the Development of the Law Prohibiting Forcible Seizure of Territory," *New York Law School Journal of International and Comparative Law* 6:2 (Winter 1985), pp. 301–533.

⁵ *Reede*, September 22, 1989, p. 2.

⁶ Charles Fairbanks, Jr., "Gorbachev's Cultural Revolution," *Commentary* 88:2 (August 1989), p. 27.

⁷ For example, *Eesti Ekspress*, October 6, 1989, p. 2.

⁸ See for example the texts of the letters by Congressman Don Ritter in *Noorte Hääl*, August 25, 1989, p. 3.