

Political-Ideological Warfare in Integrated Strategy, and its Basis in an Assessment of Soviet Reality¹

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At the heart of the Reagan policy toward the USSR was a strategy to address squarely and ultimately eliminate the causes of tension between East and West. Despite little consensus in the American foreign policy establishment about these causes, the Reagan Administration proceeded from an unambiguous interpretation of what they were: nothing less than the nature of the Soviet regime. From this view, it followed that U.S. policy had to find a way to change that nature, and do so, if possible, without risking total war.

Whereas in previous Administrations, U.S. policy toward Moscow was principally reactive and defensive, the Reagan strategy proceeded from a fundamentally offensively-oriented premise: the identification of the principal weaknesses of our adversary. To identify weaknesses required a proper understanding of the nature of the Soviet system -- again, a matter over which there was no consensus among experts in the field. Once these were identified, the Administration set forth a multifaceted strategy whose ultimate goal was to bring about regime change from within.

Identifying the Sources of East-West Conflict

The Reagan strategy was based on the premise that the source of the conflict between the two powers was neither the existence of nuclear weapons -- if it were, then we should also have had cold wars and arms control negotiations with other nuclear powers such as Britain, France, China, and Israel -- nor economic rivalry, nor any other material factor. Such elements were not causes of the conflict, they were its symptoms. The Cold War, rather, was political in nature, and it would not end until its political causes were addressed.

So what were the political causes? From the American perspective, they had to do with the USSR's domestic policies -- particularly its treatment of its own people -- and its aggressive, subversive, and expansionistic foreign policies. And what was the foundation of these policies? It was the political system of the Soviet state that had been established by its founding ideology of communism. If the ideological nature of the Soviet system could be changed, then the source of tensions could be eliminated.

Similarly, from the Soviet view, their concerns were not so much with capitalism which their propaganda could more easily attack, as with the nature of Western democratic republicanism and its founding philosophy of consent of the governed -- a philosophy, which, if

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ignited in the minds of the peoples of the Soviet empire, threatened the seemingly unchangeable monopoly of Communist Party rule.

The Assumptions Underlying Previous U.S. Policies toward the USSR

The absence of consensus about these matters within the U.S. foreign policy community-- both in government as well as in the academic and research communities -- lay at the root of the inability of the United States to conduct a coherent, long-term U.S. policy to resist Soviet expansionism. After years of consensus that underlay the policy of containment, large swaths of the foreign policy community had come to believe that the nature of the Soviet regime had changed at one time or another. Some believed that its fundamental genetic code changed with the death of Stalin and with Soviet Communist Party chief Nikita Khrushchev's "secret speech" at the 20th party Congress in 1956 on the "crimes of Stalin." This initiated a gradual rejection by the American Sovietological community of the "totalitarian model" as an accurate description of the nature of the Soviet regime.

By the late 1960's and early 1970's, the new conventional wisdom held that the USSR was moving in a more liberalized direction, as some authorities began to describe it as an "authoritarian welfare state" and an "administered society." Some scholars like Jerry Hough of Duke University and the Brookings Institution went so far as to describe the Soviet Union as a "pluralist" society. The logic behind this analysis was that there existed "interest groups" in the USSR, each competing for its own influence and resources.² Not everyone agreed with this assessment, however. Indeed, after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the new President of post-Soviet Russia, Boris Yeltsin, declared that the USSR *under Soviet Party chief, Mikhail Gorbachev*, was none other than a "totalitarian" system. What then could it have been twenty years earlier under the leadership of Leonid Brezhnev? If Brezhnev's USSR was a "pluralist" society, then the same could be said for every political system in human history, including that of the Pharaoh, Genghis Khan, and even Adolph Hitler, under all of whom existed "interest groups" as defined by the Sovietologists who rejected the totalitarian model.

The corollary to the rejection of the totalitarian model and the subscription to one of the more optimistic interpretations of the nature of the Soviet system was a general acceptance of the unspoken but nevertheless operational assumption that the underlying ideology of the Soviet system was in such a state of decay that hardly anybody -- even among the ruling Soviet elite -- believed in it anymore, and thus that ideology could no longer be operational within the system, except as an atavistic window dressing. In effect, this assumption led to a subsequent assumption that the Soviet system had thereby changed to such an extent that it no longer necessarily possessed the attributes of a "communist" system, especially those attributes which, as a matter of genetic necessity, required it to maintain unlimited global strategic objectives. And what were those objectives? They were to transform the world into as much of its own image as necessary for that world to recognize the Soviet regime as a legitimate regime. Once this assumption had taken root, two conclusions became possible:

² See, for example, one of the fashionable books of the day: H. Gordon Skilling and Franklyn Griffiths, (eds.), *Interest Groups in Soviet Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971).

1. that Soviet goals were now limited, and in contrast to the unlimited goals that prevailed before, they could be at least partially accommodated. Hence, it became possible to believe that a "spheres of influence" policy could be shared with Moscow, and that other arrangements of ostensibly mutual interest could be realized, such as arms control agreements with which both sides complied.
2. that Moscow's intentions might indeed have changed significantly enough that the West no longer needed to be concerned about the putative Soviet "threat" and there may even have been no need to worry about containing any expansionism.

During the 1970s, U.S. policy toward the USSR operated to one degree or another based on these assumptions. Presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford insisted on a policy of "détente" that was premised on the possibility of long-term peaceful coexistence with the Soviet system. President Jimmy Carter epitomized the regnant assumptions underlying detente when he castigated many Americans' "inordinate fear of communism."

The Assumptions Underlying the Reagan Policy

With the election of President Reagan, U.S. policy could change based on new assumptions -- principally that the Soviets still were communists and that their policies proceeded from this central fact. Underlying this analysis was the assessment, shared by many on his team (but by no means all), that, however much the Marxist-Leninist ideology may have been in a state of decay, and however fewer people in the USSR accepted all its tenets, it still remained operational in the Soviet system and thus remained as both a guide and a constraint to policy.

It was this assessment alone that could explain the persistence of political tensions between East and West. But how could a decaying ideology still be operational, especially if fewer and fewer people even in the Party could accept all its dogmas? How could it still impel the Soviet regime to pursue tyranny at home and aggression abroad? And what difference did all this make for U.S. policy?

The answer to these questions lay in a proper understanding of the role of Marxist-Leninist ideology within the Soviet system. That ideology originally served as the animating force that brought together the Bolsheviks to prosecute their coup d'état against the weak, democratic, Provisional Government in post-Tsarist Russia. It served as a guiding theory of knowledge, of history and historical change, of economics, of politics, and of society. Less understood was the fact that it also served as a theory of the use of power, which included maxims of how to advance, remain steady, or retreat, as dictated by a "scientific" measurement of the "correlation of forces."³ Vladimir Lenin also used the ideology as an instrument to enforce conformity of thought among the revolutionaries, as this ensured conformity in the realm of action, which, in turn, was the only way by which a minority could seize power over an unorganized majority. Once in power, Lenin used this strategy to address the principal weakness that his Bolshevik government suffered: its internal security problem, which fast became the most important fact of political life in the new USSR and which dogged it throughout its

³ See Nathan Leites, *The Operational Code of the Politburo* (New York, NY: The RAND Corporation, 1951).

existence. This internal security problem was the central weakness that the Reagan strategy first identified and then succeeded in exploiting.

The internal security problem derived from one essential reality: the lack of legitimacy of the regime. The Bolsheviks knew that if the peoples of the new Soviet Union were free to give their consent as to who governed them, they would not choose the Bolsheviks. This fact was made manifest with the loss by the Bolsheviks to the non-communist Socialist Revolutionary Party in the first post-revolution elections to the Constituent Assembly. The Bolshevik reaction to this loss was summarily to execute the various delegates who assumed their seats in elected office.

The extent of the internal security problem can be usefully measured by the actions the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) took to address it. These can be briefly summarized as follows:

- the Party's monopoly of information and communications, including its vast propaganda system, its monopoly of printing, copying, paper, newspapers, radio, television, etc.;
- its jamming of foreign radio broadcasts;
- its monopoly of education;
- its monopoly of entertainment and culture: books, music, art, film, theater, etc.;
- its monopoly of economic power and its control over: employment, promotion, job transfer, production and distribution, and the enforcement of "parasitism" laws;
- the KGB and its various structures and methods, such as block committees, forced recruitment of citizens to be informants, and pervasive surveillance;
- the various other organizations with police-type functions that would monitor the lives of individuals and enforce Party policy throughout society, including local Party organizations, "trade union" organizations (which were Party-controlled bodies that had nothing in common with trade unions as understood in the West), the internal security *militiia*, the armed forces, etc.;
- the Gulag Archipelago, its slave labor camps, its death camps, and its "psychiatric clinics" as well as various lesser punishments;
- the Party's control over and penetration of religion;
- its arbitrary use of the legal system to serve its political ends;
- its control over all internal travel, through the internal passport system and other required documents;
- its control of the borders and all external travel; and
- its penetration of all organized social bodies -- including clubs, fraternal organizations, hobby groups, sports organizations, and even the family -- to prevent them from becoming fronts for organized opposition;
- creating such an atmosphere of distrust (due to the pervasive coercive cooptation of people as secret police informants) that it produced the atomization of society -- i.e., the separation of each individual from all others so that he or she was isolated and incapable of organizing with others in resistance to the regime; and finally,
- the use of the ideology and the attendant use of foreign expansionism. This deserves further explanation, for even after all our historical experience with communist rule, it is still little understood how the ideology was not only the prescription for how to achieve

the radiant future and a guide to the exercise of power, but also, arguably, the most important element of the internal security system.

First and foremost, the Party promoted Marxist-Leninist ideas, and discredited competing ideas, particularly those having to do with democratic republicanism and those philosophical and religious ideas that posit the existence of a transcendent, objective, universal moral order that exists independently of the will of those (here, the Communist party) who would use force to impose their ideas of moral order upon society. The metaphysical (or even theological) element of this ideological strategy was key: if there exists an authority higher than the Party -- say, for example, God -- then those whose primary allegiance is to God represented a threat to Party control. Such people were, from the very beginning, non-conformists upon whom the Party could count neither for loyalty nor submission. This explains the pervasive, intensive, and necessary focus on atheistic propaganda and why the existence of 700,000 churches in pre-revolutionary Russia was reduced to 7,000 by the Gorbachev era.

At a less profound level, the ideology had to demonstrate the legitimacy of the regime by showing that there was a practical, rational, or moral reason why the Communist Party deserved to be in power. This was the first step in creating a psychological attitude of public acceptance of the regime. The Marxist doctrine of the worldwide inevitability of communism then served to bolster this attitude. If the laws of history were inexorable, if no act of human will could stop the march of history toward the final establishment of communism, then any attempt to exercise such will was futile. Thus, the ideology served to induce among the people not just acceptance of the regime but a sense of "futile resignation" -- a fatalistic attitude that resistance to Communist rule was impossible.

How exactly did the ideology justify the Communist Party in power? It did so by a doctrine that was summarized by the Marxist axiom, "freedom is comprehended necessity." As the Party argued, one frees oneself from the consequences of phenomena in nature by understanding the laws of nature. Hence, by knowing that dark clouds portend a rain storm, one can free oneself from the consequences of the storm by seeking shelter and then, through this knowledge, harness the power of flowing water to run a mill or generate electricity. Similarly, by understanding the "laws of history," the Party can free itself from the consequences of historical developments -- such as suffering oppression at the hands of the ruling class -- and then harness the forces of history in order to help guide it to its "inevitable" goal. This is the meaning of Marx's explanation of the role of "true philosophy": "Philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it."⁴ In other words, since philosophical theory without the test of praxis is useless and unverifiable, that philosophy which is true is that which, having properly understood the "laws of history," verifies its validity by the praxis of working to change the world in the direction of communism. The Party, thus, justified itself in power because it understood the laws of history better than anyone else. With this special knowledge, it could help guide the force of history by serving as the "vanguard" of a working class that was too ignorant of its own oppression to be able to do anything about it.

⁴ Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach," in Robert C. Tucker (ed.) *The Marx-Engels Reader* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1972).

This ideological justification of the Party's rule was simply another form of Gnosticism; "we possess unique, esoteric knowledge and therefore we have earned the privilege of ruling society and ultimately the world."

Just as the ideology was used as a method to establish a "Party Line" to which the Bolshevik revolutionaries had to conform in order to overthrow the *ancien regime*, so was it used as an instrument to enforce conformity of thought and action throughout the Soviet system.

Internal security was achieved in this way because ideological conformity served as an analog to a drum beating for soldiers marching: it set the standard against which deviationism could be measured. Among its most effective methods was to insist that everyone -- from Party member to ordinary subject of the regime -- repeat falsehoods that were a key element of the Party Line. In many respects, it was easier to establish conformity with a falsehood than with the truth, which could have different shades of valid meaning.

This system was analogous to Hans Christian Andersen's story of the "Emperor's New Clothes"; everyone in the court had to proclaim that the naked emperor was wearing beautiful clothes, and they did so either out of loyalty or out of fear. Anyone who stated the truth could be immediately identified as a deviationist and the threat to the established regime that he in fact was.

The Lie of the clothed emperor in the USSR could be understood in several ways. At one level, it could be understood as the steady stream of misrepresentations of daily and past realities.

But on a more profound level, the Lie lay at the root of the ideological foundations of the regime. At this level, the Lie could be understood as the central premise of Soviet socialism: that there is no transcendent universal moral order in the world, and that what moral standards exist are determined entirely by man, specifically by his personal preferences, and more specifically by those with the greatest power, will, and ruthlessness to enforce those preferences. In dialectical materialist terms, this idea was expressed by Lenin when he denied the existence of objective moral standards and posited instead that whatever aids the revolution is good whereas whatever hinders it is evil.⁵ Although this theory is said to mean that "history makes right," the fact is that the making of history -- and whether it moves in the direction of revolution or not -- is under the control of willful men. Thus, all moral standards are established by man and not by any transcendent source whether it be nature or God. As a practical matter, this means that society determines moral standards by power struggle: whoever has the greatest number of votes or, when things get serious, the biggest guns and the greatest will to use them, determines the morals of society. This is nothing less than the doctrine of "might makes right." So, whatever the Party said is just was just, and there was no independent justice -- no natural moral law -- to which dissidents could appeal to seek redress in the case of arbitrary and capricious administration of man-made "law." In other words, there was no basis upon which to claim that a law might be unjust.

The Lie also took a corollary form: that man's capacity to do good or evil is determined by his material environment and not by individual moral choice. According to this vision, rooted in 18th century thought, man is an empty vessel with no permanent human nature and thus the capacity to be molded and perfected into the "new Soviet man" as his sculptors saw fit. Thus, according to

⁵ See Vladimir Lenin, "The Tasks of the Youth Leagues," (1920) in Robert C. Tucker, *The Lenin Anthology*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1975) pp. 667 ff.

the communist vision, the human person has no transcendent dignity, and he or she can be manipulated, used, experimented with, degraded, and destroyed according to the needs of the revolution, which, as a practical matter, meant the needs of the Party.

Ultimately, the Lie held that the regime was legitimate and should be recognized as such by everyone both inside and outside the empire.

In the USSR, the ideological Lie served many purposes:

- It was a test of loyalty (or submission) to the regime.
- It concealed the ruthless methods used by the state.
- It created "enemies" which were used to justify repressive measures.
- It concealed policy failures.
- It concealed evidence which challenged the ideology and thus the legitimacy of the regime.
- Together with the KGB's system of forced recruitment of informants, it destroyed trust between individuals and among the people as a whole.
- It forced people to live in what Alain Besancon has called a "pseudo-reality" whereby the individual would have to pretend he was living in a society of fully realized socialism and thus adopt an attitude of gratitude and appreciation toward those who had bestowed this "benefit" upon him.⁶
- It served the goals of political socialization and mass mobilization for the purpose of creating the "new man."
- Its pervasive coerciveness then served, in the words of Leszek Kolakowski, "to remind the people who had the gun."⁷

When combined with the historical determinism of the ideology which said: "It is futile to resist the forces of history," the Lie thus served to disarm and demoralize the people.

As Solzhenitsyn explained, the Lie penetrated to the depths of men's souls:

“In our country, the lie has been incorporated into the state system as the vital link holding everything together, with billions of tiny fasteners, several dozen to each man. This is precisely why we find life so oppressive.... When oppression is not accompanied by the lie, liberation demands political measures. But when the lie has fastened its claws on us, it is no longer a matter of politics! It is an invasion of man's moral world and our straightening up and refusing to lie is also not political, but simply a retrieval of our human dignity.”⁸

The Cold War, then, as President Reagan saw it, was not only a conflict between East and West, it was in essence a moral conflict -- even within the Soviet empire and within the West -- which, at its heart, took the form of a war between truth and falsehood.

⁶ Alain Besancon, *The Soviet Syndrome* (New York, NY: Librairie Hachette, 1976).

⁷ Interview with Leszek Kolakowski, 1988.

⁸ Alexander Solzhenitsyn, "The Smatterers," in Alexander Solzhenitsyn (ed), *From Under the Rubble* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1975), p. 275.

Soviet foreign policy was designed to serve the security interests of the regime, the most important of which was the internal security interest. Foreign policy had to demonstrate that the ideology was correct, so that it could continue to serve as the accepted instrument of establishing the legitimacy of Party authority. So long as Soviet foreign policy could help advance the spread of communism worldwide, the ideology could be plausibly presented as correct. And so long as communism advanced, Moscow could show that Soviet power was unstoppable, that it could not be resisted even by U.S. military might, and that therefore it was futile for anyone within the empire even to consider resisting communist rule.

A key element of the Soviet regime's foreign policy was its ability to use nuclear blackmail, intimidation, and manipulation of the atmospherics of tension in East-West relations to demoralize its subject peoples. This was achieved by intimidating the West into silence, thus precluding the possibility of external moral-political resistance to communism. And if external resistance was impossible, then how could internal resistance succeed?

If Western leaders wanted to avoid a barrage of Soviet threats and an atmosphere of Cold War tension that could harm their domestic political fortunes, they had to censor themselves. This was the Soviet price for maintaining peace and quiet. Soviet foreign policy used intimidation and manipulated the truth to compel other states to accept their version of the "truth" as a sign of either loyalty or submission. This was nothing more than the Emperor's New Clothes on an international scale. If the Kremlin could not compel everyone in the "court" to utter the Lie, it demanded, at minimum, that the "courtiers" stand silent. This is what is called "Finlandization," with all due respect to the Finns, who have a proud tradition of resisting totalitarian aggression. The reality of Finlandization was that the shadow of Soviet power was so great that it compelled even such courageous people as the Finns to censor themselves.

Western silence and self-censorship, of course, were seen by the peoples of the Soviet empire as a sign of weakness in the face of Soviet power. If the American President was too frightened to tell the full truth about Soviet human rights violations at home and Soviet aggression, espionage, and subversion abroad, if he was too "prudent" in his management of East-West relations that he could not counter the lies of Soviet disinformation and propaganda with plain truth, then how could the peoples of the Soviet empire even contemplate telling the truth, even about the smallest things? As the empire's subject peoples saw it, if Soviet power was so great that the American President would not publicly reveal the truth about Soviet arms control treaty violations, then, as a practical matter, Soviet power could compel those violations to "vanish" as if they never existed.

The Soviets knew that military and economic strength alone were insufficient to determine the outcome of any conflict. They knew that we lost the Vietnam War, not because of either military or economic weakness, but because of moral-political weakness and vulnerability to North Vietnamese and Soviet propaganda -- i.e., vulnerability to the Lie (see, for example, the almost completely ignored testimony to this effect by the victorious North Vietnamese generals).⁹ Perceiving such weakness in the moral-political realm, and the consequent inability of the United

⁹ See, for example, Stephen Young, "How North Vietnam Won the War" *Wall Street Journal*, August 3, 1995, p. A8.

States to resist the advance of communism, the Kremlin could minimize its internal security threat. This assessment of American weakness in the Soviet calculation of the "correlation of forces" (the systematic measurement of the relative strengths and weaknesses of both sides in the Cold War) prompted Moscow to believe that it could make strategic advances throughout the 1970s in Somalia, then Ethiopia, in South Yemen, and simultaneously with Cuban help in Mozambique, Angola, Namibia, Central and South America, in Grenada and other islands of the Caribbean, and finally in Afghanistan.¹⁰

Ideological warfare was an essential part of Soviet foreign policy. It was based, first, on a recognition that all socio-political order derived from the material, or economic, "basis" of society, which, in turn, produced class struggle.¹¹ In the international arena, this took the form of a "struggle between the two social systems" – socialism and capitalism – and a consequent struggle between two worldviews, and thus two concepts of international relations, international law, and world order.

Soviet foreign policy was thus devoted to promoting a "new form of international relations": "proletarian internationalism." This concept described relations that would no longer be conducted between "states" – since the state, according to Marxism-Leninism, was the instrument of the oppressor class – but rather between "peoples." (Why the Soviet state continued to exist as late as the 1960s rather than "withering away" once the bourgeoisie had been smashed was the subject of considerable ideological contortions during the Khrushchev and Brezhnev eras. The upshot of these exertions was the formulation of a new concept: the "state of the whole people" whose existence was justified by the fact that it was surrounded by threatening "imperialist" states.) *Mezhdunarodnaya otnosheniia*, which is conventionally translated as "international relations," is, in fact, literally translated as "relations between peoples." As a practical matter, for the Soviets, this meant relations between the proper representatives of the people: the communist parties. Hence, the Soviet relations with a communist satellite country such as Cuba were not conducted by the Soviet Foreign Ministry, but rather by the Bloc Relations Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). Similarly, "genuine" inter-people relations between the USSR and the U.S. were conducted between the CPSU Central Committee's International Department and the Communist Party USA. Diplomatic relations with non-communist countries conducted by the Soviet Foreign Ministry were merely a temporary arrangement, designed largely to deceive the West into believing that the USSR was a conventional and not a revolutionary state and thereby into treating it accordingly.

¹⁰ For an examination of how the Soviets analyzed the correlation of forces, see my *Soviet Perceptions of U.S. Foreign Policy*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982).

¹¹ It should be noted that, by the 1970s, Soviet ideology had been forced by the pressures of political realities within the Soviet empire to recognize that "objective, material factors" were not necessarily decisive in establishing the "basis" of socio-political order. The Kremlin's ideologists had to wrestle with the unforeseen and unwelcome reality of a "subjective factor" – viz., weak ideological commitment on the part of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, which, in the "Prague Spring" of 1968, called for "socialism with a human face," thus implying that Soviet socialism was bereft of such a human face. This reality compelled the CPSU to fight this weakness with a heavy dose of subjectivism: more ideological propaganda, combined with the violence of the Brezhnev Doctrine-inspired invasion. For a brilliant, thorough, and neglected analysis of this situation, see R. Judson Mitchell, *Ideology of Superpower*, (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1982).

The International Department was the modern successor to the erstwhile Moscow-directed Communist International (“Comintern”) and the subsequent Communist Information Bureau (“Cominform”). Its goal was to bring about the revolutionary transformation of non-communist states to the Soviet model of communism. These new communist states would then recognize the Soviet Party-state as a legitimate regime, thus ending their potential ideological threat to Soviet rule.

The ongoing attempt to promote communist takeovers required a massive investment in ideological warfare. This consisted of:

- promoting Marxist-Leninist ideology worldwide;
- assistance to various Marxist-oriented revolutionary movements (including education in political ideology, political action, and irregular warfare, as well as assistance in propaganda, communications, intelligence, armaments, and other logistical matters);
- the vilification and subversion of enemy regimes, institutions, and cultures; and
- the isolation of anti-Soviet countries, political parties, organizations, and individuals.

The incremental erosion of the Free World and the addition of new revolutionary states to the Soviet column would thus gradually bring about a new world order. The groundwork for this order would also be laid by continuing Soviet efforts to replace “bourgeois international law” with communist international (or, more properly, inter-people) law. Part of this effort involved matters of a moral tactical nature, such as attempting to rewrite the international laws of war in such a way as to legalize terrorist activity and irregular warfare. And part of it involved a grand strategic effort to establish new “rules of the game” in international relations by creating a psycho-political environment that would define the parameters of legitimate conduct by the respective protagonists in the “struggle between the two social systems.”

The latter strategic effort first involved dividing the world into two zones much in the same way that Islam does: the “war zone” – the non-communist world – and the “peace zone” – the communist world (otherwise known as the “socialist community of states.)”¹² The first derived its appellation from the Leninist theory that the cause of war was “imperialism” – the highest stage of capitalism – wherein advanced capitalist countries resort to war in their rapacious struggle amongst themselves for new markets abroad. The second derived its name from the theory that true “peace” prevails where capitalism has been vanquished and can no longer cause any more war. The new rules (inter-people laws) that derive from this conceptual framework require that anything within the “peace zone” is off limits to the scrutiny of any non-communist state or international organization, while anything within the “war zone” is fair game for any international scrutiny, criticism, interference, and intervention. Thus, to make an analogy with American football, a scrimmage line was drawn, and no one in the West could cross that line. Instead, it was the Kremlin, its allies, and its proxies who would possess the ball, determine the timing of the next play, choose whether to run or to pass, go left or right, shallow or deep, and keep the West psychologically, strategically, and

¹² The Islamic concept (developed by Hanafi jurisprudence) divides the world between the “house of war” (Dar al-Harb) and the house of Islam (dar al-Islam). The latter concept is sometimes also called the Dar as-Salaam (or, House of Peace).

tactically on the defensive and in a reactive frame of mind. Any violation of this scrimmage line would face a threat of nuclear war.¹³

To a remarkable degree, American foreign policy during large parts of the Cold War accepted this conceptual framework. The United States did not want to risk crossing the communist scrimmage line:

- to achieve victory in the Korean war;
- to help the Hungarians in their uprising and their defense against the ensuing Soviet invasion in 1956;
- to stop the construction of the Berlin Wall;
- to achieve victory in Vietnam; or
- to help defend the Czechoslovaks against the Soviet invasion in response to the “Prague Spring” in 1968.

The corollary to this demarcation of the larger battlefield was the systemic effort to define the terms of international political discourse. Here the Soviets made massive investments in semantic warfare. Every imaginable political term with normative connotations was subject to ideological manipulation. In addition to its definition of “peace,” Kremlin worked overtime to ensure that such prominent terms of international discourse were endowed with their own unique communist definitions:

- “Peaceful Coexistence” – a form of struggle between the two social systems where all forms of struggle are permitted except all-out armed struggle;
- “Freedom” – freedom from capitalist exploitation: i.e., those conditions that pertain under communist rule;
- “Security” – security from imperialist aggression: i.e., again, those conditions that are enjoyed under communism;
- “Democracy” – rule by the people: i.e., rule by the people’s true representatives, the Communist Party;
- “Cooperation” – agreeing with the Soviet position in international negotiations;
- “Arms race” – the policy of arms buildup conducted solely by imperialist powers (in other words, it was only the U.S. and its allies which did any “racing,” and never the USSR);
- Etc.¹⁴

The semantic effort was manifested constantly in Soviet official rhetoric as well as in selected theaters of ideological combat. An example was the cataloging system in the library of the

¹³ For the classic analysis of this and other key elements of Soviet strategy, see Robert Strausz-Hupé, William R. Kintner, James E. Dougherty, and Alvin J. Cottrell, *Protracted Conflict: A Challenging Study of Communist Strategy*, (New York, NY: Harper & Brothers, 1959). The reader will note the similarity of the Soviet concept of the division of the world and that of Islamic jihadism: (the House of War and the House of Islam).

¹⁴ There have been numerous Soviet lexicons of political terms as well as Western dictionaries of Soviet semantics. See, for example, Ilya Zemtsov, *Lexicon of Soviet Political Terms*, Gay M. Hammerman (ed.) (Fairfax, VA: HERO Books, 1984); Raymond S. Sleeper (ed.) *A Lexicon of Marxist-Leninist Semantics* (Alexandria, VA: Western Goals, 1983); and A. M. Rumyantsev (ed.) *A Dictionary of Scientific Communism*, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1984).

United Nations. Here Soviet agents of influence engineered the entire subject catalog of the UN library to conform to Soviet terminology and concepts. A search literature on “imperialism” or “colonialism” would reveal books solely on Western imperialism both genuine and alleged, with no references to Soviet/Russian imperialism, whether in the Caucasus, the Baltic states, Central Asia, or elsewhere in the extended system of communist states.¹⁵

Pursuant to these ideological semantic efforts came policies such as the Soviet proxy efforts by Cuba to raise U.S. “imperialism” in Puerto Rico before the U.N. Decolonization Committee – this, in spite of the fact that regular referenda in Puerto Rico revealed that 49 percent of the people wanted to maintain the existing “commonwealth” status, 49 percent wanted Puerto Rico to become a full state of the United States, and only 2 percent sought national independence.

Soviet ideological warfare initiatives found their way into every imaginable theater of potential subversion, whether by direct Soviet agents or their socialist or “New Left” “fellow travelers” – i.e., those with similar or shared ideological roots:

- Efforts to indoctrinate, alienate, and coopt ethnic and religious minorities within the West.¹⁶
- Efforts to subvert religion, not only among the churches within the communist realm but throughout the non-communist world. This included the promulgation of “liberation theology” among Christian churches worldwide.¹⁷
- Efforts to promote sexual libertinism and narcotics usage to undermine traditional mores and to substitute license for liberty.¹⁸

¹⁵ See Juliana Pilon, “The United Nations Library: Putting Soviet Disinformation into Circulation,” Heritage Foundation *Backgrounders* 487 February 18, 1986.

¹⁶ See, for example, former Soviet KGB chief Yuri Andropov’s memorandum to the Politburo reviewing KGB financing and influence over the Black Panther Party in the United States: Vladimir Bukovsky, *Moskiewski Proces* (Warsaw: 1998), p. 37. This book, published as *Judgment in Moscow* in English, is not widely available but has been translated from Russian into French in 1995, German in 1996, and Polish in 1998, the last of which this writer used.

¹⁷ See documentary evidence of the use of “liberation theology” as an instrument of subversion in the documents of Grenada’s ruling communist party – the New Jewel Movement. Here, the chief of Grenada’s secret police recommends inviting Cuban and Sandinista authorities on liberation theology to come to Grenada to undermine the theological integrity of churches on the island. See Keith Roberts, “Analysis of the Church in Grenada,” cited in Herbert Romerstein and Michael Ledeen (eds.) *The Grenada Documents: An Overview and Selection* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State and U.S. Department of Defense, 1984), p. 5-5 (this is a selection of documents from the larger Grenada Archive which resides in the National Archives). See also U.S. Department of State, Soviet Active Measures: The Christian Peace Conference, May 1985, cited in Sven Kraemer (ed.), *The Soviet Union Fights the Cold War*, a collection of primary source documents of the Reagan Administration published as a CD-ROM (Washington, DC: American Foreign Policy Council, November, 1999); U.S. Department of State, *Soviet Influence Activities: A Report on Active Measures and Propaganda, 1986-87* (Washington, DC: August 1987), p. 7.

¹⁸ See, for example, the extraordinary account of Soviet bloc promotion of narcotics in the West in Joseph D. Douglass, Jr., *Red Cocaine: The Drugging of America* (Atlanta, GA: Clarion House, 1990). As this writer can testify from personal experience, no U.S. government agency, when confronted with the powerful defector testimony presented in the Douglass book, was willing to verify it or collect further information on it. Corroborating the material in this book was evidence that emerged from: the Italian investigation of the assassination attempt on Pope John Paul II, where the Bulgarian state corporation, Kintex, was found to be involved in this activity; testimony from East German intelligence official, Alexander Schlalck-Golodkowski, on East German involvement (See, for example, Rachel Ehrenfeld, “The Drugs and Terror Connection,” The Sagamore Institute, September 1,

- Insertion of agents of influence in the media, philanthropic foundations, the film industry, and the literary and artistic communities of non-communist countries.¹⁹
- Infiltration of and promotion of ideological propaganda in schools, colleges, and universities, and their various educational materials. Included in this effort was the lowering of educational standards and the rewriting of history, with heavy emphasis on: promotion of “class-based” perspectives on social history, emphasis on the victimhood of oppressed groups within the capitalist world, distortion of diplomatic history so as to put the blame for the Cold War on the West, etc.
- Infiltration and cooptation of the labor movement in the West.
- Cooptation of Western business leaders to serve Soviet interests, and in some cases, the use of business leaders, such as Occidental Petroleum Chairman, Armand Hammer, as agents of influence.²⁰
- Etc.²¹

The Resultant Policy: Demonstrating the Falsity of the Ideology, the Illegitimacy of the Regime, the Possibility of Successful Resistance, and the Bankruptcy of the Soviet Worldview

The overall strategy to “contain and reverse Soviet expansionism” and to “weaken the sources of Soviet imperialism” became codified in National Security Decision Directive 75 (NSDD-75), on “U.S. Relations with the USSR” and several other Presidential directives. NSDD-75 began by observing that “Soviet aggressiveness has deep roots in the internal system” and therefore U.S. policy must “promote...the process of change in the Soviet Union toward a more pluralistic political and economic system in which the power of the privileged ruling elite is gradually reduced.”²² The NSDD contained a specific section on Political Action (later in the text described as a “major political/ideological offensive”) which prescribed the necessity of “an ideological thrust which

2001) ; and evidence on Nicaraguan Sandinista involvement as well (See <https://www.cia.gov/library/reports/general-reports-1/cocaine/contra-story/append.html>). The Soviet policy of promoting sexual libertinism proceeded from Bolshevik strategy to use this instrument in the years immediately following the October Revolution to break down the traditional social structures of society. See Alix Holt, (trans. and ed.) *Selected Writings of Alexandra Kollontai* (Westport, CT: L. Hill, 1977) and Gregory Carleton, *Sexual Revolution in Bolshevik Russia* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005).

¹⁹ For an account of the communist cultural subversion, see Stephen Koch, *Double Lives: Spies and Writers in the Secret Soviet War of Ideas Against the West* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1994). For a first-hand defector account of Soviet use of agents of influence, see Stanislav Levchenko, *On the Wrong Side: My Life in the KGB* (Washington, DC: Pergamon-Brassey’s International Defense Publishers Inc., 1988).

²⁰ See, for example, Joseph Finder, *Red Carpet*, (New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1983).

²¹ For an overall examination of communist subversion, see William Kintner, *The Front is Everywhere*, (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1950); and Peter Collier and David Horowitz, *Destructive Generation: Second Thoughts About the ‘60s*, (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1996); and the considerable literature on Soviet front organizations, James L. Tyson, *Target America: The Influence of Communist Propaganda on U.S. Media*, (Chicago: Regnery Gateway, 1981); Clive Rose, *The Soviet Propaganda Network: A Directory of Organizations Serving Soviet Foreign Policy*, (London: Pinter Publishers Limited, 1988); Maria Leighton, *Soviet Propaganda As a Foreign Policy Tool*, (New York, NY: Freedom House, 1981); Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Soviet Active Measures in the United States, 1986-1987* (Washington, DC: June 1987); and Juliana Pilon, “At the U.N., Soviet Fronts Pose as Nongovernmental Organizations,” Heritage Foundation *Backgrounders* 549 (Washington, DC: December 1, 1986).

²² NSDD-75 “U.S. Relations with the USSR,” January 17, 1983, p. 1.

clearly affirms the superiority of U.S. and Western values of individual dignity and freedom, a free press, free trade unions, free enterprise, and political democracy over the repressive features of Soviet Communism.” It then directed U.S. policy to: 1) support democratic forces within the Soviet Union; 2) highlight Soviet human rights violations; 3) strengthen U.S. broadcasting to the Soviet Union; 4) expose the double standards used by the Kremlin in dealing with its own domain and the capitalist world (the treatment of labor, policies toward ethnic minorities, the use of chemical weapons, etc.); and 5) prevent the Soviet propaganda machine from seizing the semantic high-ground in the battle of ideas through the appropriation of such terms as “peace.”²³

A key element of the NSDD was its directive to exploit weaknesses within the Soviet empire, including efforts to “encourage Soviet allies to distance themselves from Moscow in foreign policy and move toward democratization domestically.”²⁴ This meant “loosening Moscow’s hold” on Eastern Europe and putting greater pressure on the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and Soviet-Cuban designs in the Western Hemisphere and Africa.

As a practical matter, following the directive to weaken the sources of Soviet imperialism by promoting the process of change within the USSR toward a pluralistic political-economic system in such a way that diminishes the power of the ruling elite meant that U.S. policy had to counter all these methods by which the Soviet regime and its satellites prevented internal political competition and resistance to their rule. This required undermining the Marxist-Leninist ideology, its ability to provide plausible legitimacy for the regime, and ultimately the ability of the regime to induce that sense of “futile resignation” among the peoples of the Soviet empire. To do this, U.S. policy had not only to prove that the ideology was false, but to show the peoples of the Soviet empire that resistance was indeed possible. The strategy to achieve these objectives had both material and non-material components.

The Material Dimension: How It Had Strategic Effects in the Political-Ideological War

The material elements of the Reagan strategy were designed first to discredit the Party's claims that “scientific socialism” was the most advanced form of social-political-economic organization. Since the Bolshevik revolution, the Party had maintained that the communist system would produce the greatest wealth for the greatest benefit of society as a whole. Khrushchev, for one, predicted that the Soviet economy would outrank that of the U.S. by the 1980s. In response, the Reagan policy set out to put strains on the Soviet economy that would undermine both these ideological claims and also the ability of the Soviet economy to maintain militarily competitiveness.

The inability of the Soviet economy to be innovative meant that for decades it depended on the purchase or theft of Western technology. The Reagan policy of technology security and export controls made it increasingly harder for Soviet industries to produce modern goods, particularly military equipment. The Reagan strategy of sabotaging the technology that it permitted Moscow to purchase or steal exacerbated this situation.

²³ Ibid., p. 3

²⁴ Ibid., p. 4

The Reagan arms buildup put increasing pressure on the Soviet military economy to maintain military competitiveness. The creation of revolutionary new technologies, such as the computer systems that enabled President Reagan to propose the Strategic Defense Initiative, demonstrated a sprint capability in the West that was a lethal challenge to the Soviet military economy. The dual strategy of stopping the Soviet gas pipeline to Europe and cooperating with the Saudis to increase oil production and lower world oil prices deprived Moscow of its ability to earn hard currency that could enable it to purchase foreign goods in general and Western technology in particular.

The Soviet civilian economy began its ongoing crisis in 1917. Soviet consumer goods production always lagged far behind the immense output of Western economies. For years, the peoples of the USSR made enormous sacrifices in hopes that the radiant future of socialist prosperity would be just around the corner. The failure of the Party to overcome the permanent systemic crisis became clear during the Brezhnev era -- the "era of stagnation" -- and it was at this time that even the loyal Soviet intelligentsia began its gradual slide toward alienation from Soviet socialism. By the time of the Andropov and Chernenko Administrations, each of which was subjected to the pressures of the Reagan economic strategy, that alienation was virtually complete.

In effect, that alienation was an enormous internal symptom of a crisis over the very legitimacy of Communist Party rule. If the Soviet economy could not produce the benefits to society as a whole that Marxist-Leninist ideology promised, then perhaps the ideology was wrong. And if the ideology was wrong, then how could the regime justify itself in power?

A similar purpose was served by the Reagan military buildup and the policies of technology denial, technology sabotage, and economic warfare (e.g., stopping the Yamal gas pipeline and lowering world oil prices to deprive Moscow of hard currency) -- all of which struck major blows to the Soviet military economy and thus Soviet military competitiveness. These policies prevented Moscow from advancing the communist cause worldwide with impunity. They prevented the Kremlin from issuing such threats that could amount to nuclear blackmail. They undermined the ability of the Soviets to use military power and threats to show that communism was the wave of the future, that it was able to overcome all foreign "imperialist" resistance, and that it was an inexorable force propelled forward by nothing less than the "laws of history." If the advance of communism could be stopped by human will -- in the form of Ronald Reagan's defiance of the accommodative policies of détente -- then, once again, perhaps Marxism-Leninism was wrong and there was no plausible ideological basis for Soviet Communist Party legitimacy.

Stopping the advance of communism was the central tenet of the longtime policy of "containment." And while the essence of that policy was sound as a method of undermining the claims of Soviet ideology, Moscow could avoid a crisis of legitimacy by setting the parameters of the worldwide "struggle between the two social systems" in a timeframe of sufficient length. Thus, with a strategy of "protracted conflict," Soviet theoreticians could argue that the march of history always has a dialectical nature, takes unexpected turns, and thus can be seen as a process of "two steps forward, one step back."²⁵

²⁵ See Robert Strausz-Hupé, et al., *Protracted Conflict*, op.cit.

In the face of such logic, the Reagan strategy had an answer: the "Reagan Doctrine" of support for anti-communist resistance movements. This policy, pursued in theaters throughout the world, put further strain on the Soviet system. While, on the one hand, it put pressure on Soviet "imperial overstretch," on the other hand, it showed that the "forces of history" could be reversed and that, once again, the claims of the ideology were false.

The Reagan Doctrine had a further logic to it: it was designed to demonstrate to the peoples of the extended Soviet empire that resistance to communist rule was not futile, that, on the contrary, it was very possible indeed. If Nicaraguan *campesinos* could stop the consolidation of communist rule in Managua on their own and without the intervention of the U.S. military, if Afghan *mujaheddin* could drive out the Red Army and its *spetsnaz* troops, if Angolan guerrillas could resist the communist regime in Luanda that was supported by Cuban troops and Soviet bloc counterintelligence, then perhaps the peoples of the East-Central European satellite states and the Soviet peoples themselves could eventually cast off the communist yoke as well.

The Non-Material Dimension

The Reagan Doctrine reached its zenith in the case of Poland. But here, for all the material support given to the Solidarity movement, the non-material support may well have been more strategically decisive than any other element of the Reagan strategy. This dimension of the Reagan Doctrine took the form of public diplomacy, "political warfare" and "ideological warfare" -- tools that had been utterly neglected by the foreign policy establishment, both in its official incarnation and in the academic and think tank communities. It was these arts of statecraft, targeting the publics of East-Central Europe and the inner Soviet empire, that spurred the chain of revolts against Soviet rule that would prove decisive.

Before examining the specific case of Poland, it is necessary to review the entire scope of the public diplomatic effort and its centrality to President Reagan's strategy. While methods of information policy and strategic communications were essential, the President recognized that the content and spirit behind the messages he wished to convey lay at the heart of his overall strategy:

"While America's military strength is important, let me add here that I've always maintained that the struggle now going on for the world will never be decided by bombs or rockets, by armies or military might. The real crisis we face today is a spiritual one; at root, it is a test of moral will and faith.

"Whittaker Chambers, the man whose own religious conversion made him a witness to one of the terrible traumas of our time, the Hiss-Chambers case, wrote that the crisis of the Western World exists to the degree in which the West is indifferent to God, the degree to which it collaborates in communism's attempt to make man stand alone without God. And then he said, for Marxism-Leninism is actually the second oldest faith, first proclaimed in the Garden of Eden with the words of temptation, 'Ye shall be as gods.'

"The Western World can answer this challenge,' he wrote, 'but only provided that its faith in God and the freedom He enjoins is as great as communism's faith in Man.'"

“I believe we shall rise to the challenge. I believe that communism is another sad, bizarre chapter in human history whose last pages even now are being written. I believe this because the source of our strength in the quest for human freedom is not material, but spiritual. And because it knows no limitation, it must terrify and ultimately triumph over those who would enslave their fellow man.”²⁶

The Reagan strategy in the non-material realm proceeded further from the President's recognition that the political-spiritual heart of the Cold War had just undergone a strategic turning point: the election of a Polish pope, John Paul II, whose election and subsequent visit to Poland galvanized the Polish people as had few other developments in their thousand-year history. It was thanks to his witness to the truth and his use of the words of Jesus to inspire and encourage his Christian countrymen to "Be not afraid" that made possible the poetic justice of a workers' movement in the "workers' paradise." His electrifying appearances brought literally millions to the streets and to public celebrations of the Mass in a new spirit of hope for both earthly deliverance and spiritual salvation.

Building on what he knew was a revived movement for freedom, President Reagan adopted a public diplomacy strategy that amounted to a war of ideas resting, above all, on moral witness and conviction. It first took shape in his own rhetoric and was then supported by various programs in public diplomacy and political warfare which, in coordination with the other elements of the President's integrated strategy, were designed to: connect with the peoples of the Soviet Empire to show them that they were not alone; combat the falsehoods of Soviet propaganda, discredit communist ideology, totalitarianism and aggression; promote a positive alternative set of ideas and political solutions; and assist the efforts of individuals, groups, and movements that were adopting these ideas and resisting Soviet and communist rule.

Presidential Rhetoric The rhetorical dimension of the President's role in the war of ideas involved using the spoken word to combat the Lie and all its effects by telling the truth -- i.e., giving the peoples of the Soviet empire that for which they hungered even more than food. Telling the truth was a sign of moral resistance to the fear-laced system of enforced conformity -- a system that pertained not only domestically within the Soviet empire, but internationally as well. The man who had the impertinence and the nerve to buck not only the Party line as enforced by Moscow, but the "party line" of self-censorship dictated by the foreign policy and media elites of the West, demonstrated his moral courage not only to those elites but to the ordinary people in both East and West. From the beginning, alongside Pope John Paul II, Ronald Reagan proved to be one of two Little Boys in the Emperor's Court.

Presidential rhetoric was not something done either spontaneously or without design; it was carefully crafted for strategic purposes. As a memorandum to the President requested by National Security Advisor William P. Clark and composed by this author in early 1983 noted:

“The Soviet system depends for its survival on the systematic suppression of the truth...The key element in Soviet assessment is the adversary's strength of moral-political conviction -- i.e., his will to use force if necessary to defend his vital interests. In practice, as the Soviets

²⁶ Speech to the National Association of Evangelicals, Orlando, Florida, March 8, 1983.

see it, this means the willingness of their opponent to speak plainly about the nature and goals of communism....The key feature of “Finlandization” is for the target country to censor itself – if not to lie outright, then at least to remain silent....As the Soviets see it, to tell the truth about the USSR is to risk igniting their internal security threat – the threat of mass popular resistance to the ideology, as in Poland. When stating that the Soviets will “lie,” “cheat,” and “commit any crime” to further their goals, you lifted a partial veil of self-censorship we had imposed on ourselves for some 15 years. Thus, by simply telling the truth, you incalculably strengthened the credibility of our military deterrent.”²⁷

The President emphasized the spiritual dimension of the “twilight struggle” and how truth was the critical element:

“We in the West must do more than merely decry attacks on human freedom. The nature of this struggle is ultimately one that will be decided not by military might, but by spiritual resolve and confidence in the future of freedom, especially in the face of the decaying and crumbling dreams of Marxism-Leninism. Lenin advocated resorting to all sorts of stratagems, artifices, maneuvers, illegal methods, evasions and subterfuges. Well, we in the West have at our command weapons far more potent than deceit and subterfuge. We have the power of truth – truth that can reach past the stone and steel walls of the police state and create campaigns for freedom and coalitions for peace in Communist countries.”²⁸

The power of truth and moral witness was effective for three major reasons: 1) it comported with the natural sense of justice of oppressed peoples; 2) it respected and elevated their human dignity; and 3) it formed a natural bond with people who possessed the same fundamental moral sense that underlay the founding of all free societies – that virtue, and therefore self-control, is the prerequisite for a people to be self-governing and, therefore, ultimately free.

The President recognized that the Cold War was going on within the Soviet empire itself, between those whose souls were enslaved – those who had developed moral calluses and who had successfully suppressed over time their inner voice of conscience for purposes of personal gain – and those whose enslavement was only external as they possessed an “inner freedom.” This inner freedom consisted of a refusal to submit to the false moral standards imposed by the regime – constantly shifting standards that did not comport with the Natural Moral Law – the “Law of Decent Behavior” that is written on the human heart and that endows the human being with a transcendent dignity. Those possessed of this inner freedom never lost sight of the fundamental injustice inherent in the violation of their natural rights by the Communist state -- rights endowed not by man but by their Creator. That inner freedom, then, was the continued possession of the conviction that there is such a thing as justice no matter what the laws of the communist system said – because there exists a transcendent, objective, universal moral order in the world by which they would live no matter what external injustices were imposed upon them.

²⁷ Memorandum to the President: “The Truth and the Strength of America’s Deterrent,” January, 1983, cited in Richard Reeves, *President Reagan: The Triumph of Imagination*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2005), pp. 139-140.

²⁸ Ronald Reagan, Remarks on Signing the Captive Nations Week Proclamation, The White House (Washington, DC: July 19, 1982). Available on-line: <http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1982/71982b.htm>

The task of this central moral dimension of President's Cold War strategy was to connect with those people who had not sold their souls, to connect with them at the most profound level of human existence – the spiritual. It meant helping them reclaim their human dignity through such moral witness as could be inspired by spiritual solidarity from abroad.

Presidential Press Conference At his first press conference, President Reagan shocked the world by telling a truth that the world had long since decided to suppress: that the Soviets had a different morality than ours. He then added that according to that morality, Soviet leaders reserved the right “to commit any crime, to lie, to cheat to further the goals of communism.”²⁹ The President, of course, was exactly, clinically, correct. Communist morality is different as was made amply clear in the classic statement of that morality in Lenin's speech to the Youth Leagues in 1920 cited earlier -- a speech that was required reading for every Soviet school child.³⁰

What did the President's statement accomplish?

1. It told the world that there was an elephant in the room which nobody saw or wanted to see.
2. It combated the main theme of Soviet disinformation and propaganda: i.e., that "We, the Soviets, are not communist anymore."³¹

This deceptive theme was designed to induce, and then sustain, the very analysis that had taken hold in American Sovietology: the idea that the USSR had changed to such an extent that its ideology was either: no longer believed and thus no longer operational in the Soviet system; or believed only by retrograde Stalinist "hawks" who were gradually being overshadowed in Kremlin politics by "moderate, pragmatic, doves" who had long since rejected doctrinaire Marxism-Leninism. Of course, if the Soviets could persuade us that they -- or at least the most important of their officeholders -- were no longer communist, then, by definition, their goals would no longer be unlimited and revolutionary, and thus we in the West could let down our guard. In the face of the many ways Moscow was conveying this theme, the President reminded the world of the truth of the matter.³²

²⁹ Ronald, Reagan's Presidential Press Conference, on January 29, 1981 covered in, Hedrick Smith, "News Analysis: Reagan Putting his Stamp on U.S. Policies: at Home and Abroad, a Change, of Course. New York Times, January 30, 1981. Available on-line: <http://www.nytimes.com/1981/01/30/world/analysis-reagan-putting-his-stamp-us-policies-home-abroad-change-course.html>.

³⁰ Vladimir Lenin, "The Tasks of the Youth Leagues," cited in Tucker, *The Lenin Anthology* op.cit.

³¹ See this author's chapter, "Themes of Soviet Strategic Deception and Disinformation" in Brian D. Dailey and Patrick J. Parker (eds.) *Soviet Strategic Deception* (Lexington, KY: Hoover Institution Press, 1987) p. 55-75.

³² One of the contemporaneous examples of this theme was the *Washington Post's* portrayals of former KGB chief and new Communist Party General Secretary and former KGB chief Yuri Andropov as a modern, moderate liberal, "the first intellectual" in the post of General Secretary," who enjoyed modern art, theater, jazz, scotch whisky, and even talking to dissidents. See, for example, Dusko Doder, "Andropov Shows a Talent For Consolidation of Power," The Washington Post November 21, 1982, p. A1, and Idem, "Andropov Seen Bringing New Decisiveness" *Washington Post*, December 12, 1982, p. A1

3. The President's statement was the first step in reconnecting America with the millions of people suffering under communism -- people whom the West had for all practical purposes abandoned for two decades.

Project Truth Initially, this "project" began without being so named. It first consisted of a stream of Presidential speeches, radio addresses, proclamations (such as those for Captive Nations Week), reports, and public statements telling truths about the Soviet empire that had been suppressed for years.

One of its earliest products was the El Salvador White Paper issued by the State Department. This described the extension of Soviet-Cuban subversion from Nicaragua to El Salvador and communist support of the Farabundo Marti Liberation Front guerrillas in that country. (Having successfully convinced larger numbers of Americans that it was merely a party of agrarian reformers committed to setting up day-care centers in the countryside, the FMLN was in fact a communist movement named after the founder of the Salvadoran Communist Party.)³³

Another major initiative was the publication of an annual report by the Defense Department: *Soviet Military Power*. This annual book-length report was filled with declassified military intelligence on Soviet military capabilities and included photographs and "intelligence art" depicting Soviet weapons systems.³⁴

This publication was followed the next year by the President's televised speech to the nation on the enormous Soviet military buildup.³⁵ His various statements about this buildup had the strategic effect of mobilizing a domestic consensus in support of his own program of rearmament.

A related product was the unprecedented public revelation of Soviet arms control treaty violations. The first of these reports was issued by the Administration's General Advisory Commission on Arms Control and Disarmament (GAC). This report was designed to alert the public to the dangers of neglecting compliance with arms control treaties and to minimize the political warfare and strategic benefits that the Soviets could reap from concluding treaties and violating them without compunction.³⁶ The arms control industry both in and out of government had long manifested such a strict self-censorship and willful blindness with regard to such violations that ignorance about Soviet purposes underlying these violations was pandemic in the larger foreign policy community. As a result, most people in official positions relating to arms control

³³ U.S. Department of State, "*White Paper on Communist Interference in El Salvador*" (Washington, DC: February, 1981).

³⁴ U.S. Department of Defense, *Soviet Military Power*, 1981, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, and 1987 Reports, cited in Sven Kraemer (ed.), *The Soviet Union Fights the Cold War*, a collection of primary source documents of the Reagan Administration published as a CD-ROM by the American Foreign Policy Council, Washington, DC.¹

³⁵ Ronald Reagan, Address to the Nation on Strategic Arms Reduction and Nuclear Deterrence, The White House (Washington, DC: November 22, 1982).

³⁶ General Advisory Commission on Arms Control and Disarmament, *A Quarter Century of Soviet Compliance Practices under Arms Control Commitments, 1958-1983*, December 1983 (released to Congress in October 1984). Subsequently, the Administration submitted annual reports to Congress on Soviet compliance practices.

negotiations were unaware: that Moscow had a strategy to violate arms treaties; that it would plan such violations even before signing a treaty; that violations were designed not only to secure incremental strategic advantages but also to gain intelligence, the transfer of technology, and to achieve counterintelligence objectives.³⁷ The Administration's reports on these violations were the first step in a process of educating not only the public but the larger foreign policy community about Soviet violations. Given the Soviet negotiating tactic of accusing the U.S. of not being serious about arms control as a way of mobilizing the peace movement in the West to pressure the U.S. into making concessions to Moscow, these reports helped level the playing field by putting the Kremlin slightly more on the defensive than it was accustomed.

If the reader is curious as to why the arms control industry suffered from willful blindness and self-censorship concerning treaty violations, it can be explained as follows. Self-censorship served an important diplomatic purpose that derived from the prevailing understanding about Cold War tensions. This understanding, in contrast to that of President Reagan and those in his administration who shared his perspective, maintained that the USSR would be a permanent feature of the international political landscape, and thus, it was incumbent on the United States to learn to get along with it. The policy of *détente* followed from this assessment. If anyone were to make a public issue of Soviet treaty violations, such an individual would be ostracized from respectable society (and from any serious participation in the arms control policy making process) on the grounds that he was destroying arms control. When, in response, one asks: who is destroying arms control: the violator or the person who points out the violations? The arms control industry's answer is the latter. Why? Because if one follows the recommendations of the accuser, namely, to eschew any new treaties until the Soviets comply with existing ones, the arms control *process* must necessarily be suspended. According to the logic of the "arms controllers," if the *process* does not continue, then the chances for peace diminish severely. The process itself was the highest diplomatic priority. "Peace," according to this logic, has nothing to do with the substance of agreements – specifically, the mutual honoring of arms limitations – or the reduction of political concerns that produce Cold War tensions; rather it is understood to be the sustaining of dialogue which is better than war. Needless to say, those who had a different understanding of the sources of tension, the prospects of change in the Soviet Union, and the formula for true peace did not share this assessment.

Increased publicity for Soviet human rights violations was another essential element of Project Truth. This took the form of public statements, Presidential radio addresses, increased focus on such violations in the State Department's annual reports on human rights, and editorials and news reports on U.S. international broadcasting stations such as the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty.³⁸ An example was a statement on Soviet human rights violations by the President in October 1983:

³⁷ See Joseph D. Douglass, Jr., *Why the Soviets Violate Arms Control Treaties* (Washington, DC: Pergamon-Brassey's International Defense Publishers Inc., 1988).

³⁸ Although the Carter Administration had issued reports on human rights violations, it diluted the strategic significance of Soviet violations by morally equating with them those of authoritarian regimes which both opposed the USSR and supported the United States. This policy of "moral equivalence" was reversed by the Reagan Administration on the grounds that the number, scope, and systematic character of Soviet violations made those of such authoritarians as the Shah of Iran, who had been targeted by the Carter Administration, pale in comparison. For a critique of the Carter policy see, Jeane Kirkpatrick, "Dictatorships & Double Standards," *Commentary*, November, 1979.

“Barely a month after attending an international conference in Madrid and joining 34 nations in a commitment to respect human rights, the Soviet Union has gone back on its word, launching a new campaign of repression against human rights activists...”

Putting a human face on the phenomenon, he then raised an alarm about the arrests of specific victims such as Soviet Jewish refusenik Joseph Begun, Father Sigitas Tamkevicius, a Lithuanian Catholic priest active on behalf of religious freedom, and Oleg Radzinskiy, a member of the unofficial Soviet peace organization, Group to Establish Trust Between the U.S. and USSR.

He then issued the following condemnation, typical of statements in solidarity with such victims:

“Soviet policy toward Jewish emigration and dissident movements has sunk to a new low of brutality and repression. Antisemitism has escalated dramatically, as has harassment of other human rights defenders.... The inability of Soviet authorities to tolerate any activities by those who are not members of their government-controlled, “captive” peace groups illustrates the hypocrisy of their statements. There is a night and day contrast between aggressive Soviet efforts to encourage peace demonstrations in the West and their brutal arrests and exile of peace activists in the East. We condemn these illegal and inhumane acts. We hold the Soviet Union accountable for its violations of numerous international agreements and accords on human rights to which it is a party. We call upon the Soviets to reverse their inhumane policies and to prove to the world they will back up their words with action and start living up to their agreements.”³⁹

Project Truth became institutionalized within the U.S. International Communication Agency (USICA, later renamed the U.S. Information Agency, USIA) under the vigorous leadership of Charles Wick. The agency launched a stream of publications widely distributed abroad and designed to compete with Moscow for people’s hearts and minds both within the Soviet empire and worldwide. Among these were reports on Soviet-Cuban support for subversion and guerrilla war in Central America, the Afghan people’s struggle against the Soviet occupation, and the efforts of the Solidarity Movement to challenge communist rule in Poland.⁴⁰

³⁹ Ronald Reagan, “Statement on Soviet Human Rights Policies,” October 18, 1983. Available on-line: <http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1983/101883b.html>.

⁴⁰ These reports by the USIA (formerly called the U.S. International Communication Agency – USICA) were not distributed within the United States, pursuant to the Smith-Mundt Act, and hence are very difficult to find. One source of some of the most prominent of these reports is Kraemer, *The Soviet Union Fight the Cold War*, op. cit.. Some relevant reports on the CD-ROM include, “Afghanistan: The Struggle to Regain Freedom,” (Washington, DC: US Information Agency, 1982); “Afghanistan: The Struggle in its Fifth Year,” (Washington, DC: US Information Agency, June 1984); “Poland: A Season of Light and of Darkness,” (Washington, DC: US International Communication Agency, 1982); “Cuba’s Renewed Support for Violence in Latin America: a Special Report,” (Washington, DC: US International Communication Agency, December 1981); and “Cuban Armed Forces and the Soviet Military Presence,” (Washington, DC: US International Communication Agency, 1982).

In the face of the Soviet-induced imposition of martial law by the Polish communist government in December 1981, President Reagan spoke to the nation expressing his and America's moral support for the Solidarity movement that was being suppressed in Poland. He called on the Polish communist government to lift the martial law or risk suffering economic sanctions. In the wake of this, USICA/USIA Director Wick launched a special initiative: a television program to be broadcast globally called "Let Poland Be Poland." In this program, he mobilized the prime ministers of Canada, Great Britain, France, West Germany, Luxembourg, Japan, Norway, and Turkey as well as prominent celebrities such as Henry Fonda, Charlton Heston, Bob Hope, Glenda Jackson, Paul McCartney, Frank Sinatra, Max von Sydow, and Orson Welles, each to speak in support of the Poles and in condemnation of the Polish puppet government's repression. The program was broadcast worldwide by satellite as well as in audio versions over the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. It had a powerful impact in calling global attention to the plight of the Poles and putting Moscow and its Polish puppets on the defensive.

Counterpropaganda and Counter-Active Measures A huge part of the Soviet effort in the Cold War consisted of communist propaganda targeting audiences both within the larger empire and everywhere else in the world. Soviet bloc domestic propaganda, as mentioned earlier, was a major element of the internal security system, designed to shape domestic perceptions and induce a psychology of fatalistic acceptance of the regime.

Soviet propaganda was also designed to discredit the West, blacken its reputation, and demonstrate its "internal contradictions" which were leading to its "inevitable" demise. America was portrayed as a rapacious, exploitative, imperialistic, and aggressive power that harmed both its own people and countless millions abroad. Special efforts were made to target minority groups within the United States and the West to aggravate any grievances they harbored and alienate them as much as possible from the system of representative government, rule of law, and political-economic liberty.

Oftentimes, the propaganda crossed into the realm of the fantastic. The United States was accused of developing the AIDS virus as a weapon to use against third world peoples. It was similarly charged with developing an "ethnic weapon" specially designed to kill black and brown-skinned people. Americans were also accused of arranging the killing of Latin American babies to harvest their body parts for organ transplants.⁴¹ And if the reader is tempted to question the usefulness of such absurd accusations, the target of such propaganda was not the educated peoples of Western democracies, but rather the peoples of the third world – particularly those in regions which were host to intensive ideological and proxy wars.

When it came into office, the Reagan Administration was well aware that such propaganda was being undertaken by the Kremlin. But it discovered, that for years, almost no information on such Soviet activities had been collected by the government. Administration officials thus worked to modify the information collection taskings for both the intelligence and diplomatic communities to raise the priority of this subject. Early on, the Administration had the benefit of the testimony of a former KGB official, Stanislav Levchenko, who had been in charge of Soviet "active measures"

⁴¹ See: U.S. Department of State, *Soviet Influence Activities: A Report on Active Measures and Propaganda, 1986-1987*, (Washington, DC: October 1987) in Kraemer, *The Soviet Union Fights the Cold War*, .op. cit.

operations in Tokyo. As a result, larger numbers of executive branch officials were introduced to the existence of such “active measures” – a KGB term of art to describe disinformation, forgeries, and covert political influence operations.

In response to the cascade of intelligence information collected on such active measures, the Administration formed an interagency group dedicated to analyzing and declassifying this intelligence, disseminating the analysis publicly, and dispatching “truth squads” to brief foreign governments and media organs about these Soviet activities. The very act of exposing these operations had the effect of discrediting the Soviet government and its information sources.

Meanwhile, Moscow and its international communist network, connected by the various institutions and mechanisms of the old Comintern – now run by the International Department of the Soviet Communist Party’s Central Committee – organized and ran the various campaigns of the “peace movement” as part of Moscow’s arms control strategy.⁴² This movement was designed to instill fear in Western and foreign publics so as to put constant pressure on the United States to limit its arms acquisitions and deployments. Moscow saw the entire arms control process not as an arena of mutual compromise but as a theater of political warfare where one side would win and the other would lose. But the field of battle was uneven: because the Kremlin could target Western publics, which could pressure their governments on arms acquisitions, while the reciprocal pressure on the Soviet public was effectively useless, since it had no effect on Soviet government policies.

A major battle in the arms control propaganda war took place in Europe over the matter of the deployment of intermediate-range (or “theater”) nuclear forces (TNF, and later INF). In the late 1970s, European members of NATO lost confidence in the credibility of the U.S. nuclear guarantee of their security. Given the obsolescence of U.S. theater forces, mainly the FB-111 fighter-bomber, as compared to Soviet intermediate-range ballistic missiles, the Europeans perceived that several rungs were missing on the ladder of escalation options. Hence, they did not believe that Washington would launch its ICBMs against the USSR in retaliation for a Soviet attack on Western Europe: for such a retaliatory salvo risked a Soviet attack on the United States itself.

If the U.S. would not deploy modern, credible intermediate-range nuclear weapons to restore the credibility of the U.S. deterrent in Europe, then individual allies of the U.S. would feel compelled to split from NATO and reach their own security accommodations with Moscow. Based on this scenario, which many NATO countries saw as completely plausible, the Europeans requested Washington to deploy the necessary deterrent forces. In response, the U.S. developed

⁴² Part of the Administration’s effort to expose Soviet influence operations was its release of several publications on the apparatus of subversion and political action. These included: U.S. Department of State, *The International Department of the CPSU Central Committee*. See The Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Soviet Active Measures in the United States 1986-1987*, (Washington, DC); U.S. Department of State, *Active Measures: A Report on the Substance and Process of Anti-U.S. Disinformation and Propaganda Campaigns*, (Washington, DC: August 1986); U.S. Department of State, *Soviet Influence Activities: A Report on Active Measures and Propaganda, 1986-1987*; United State Information Agency, *Soviet Active Measures in the Era of Glasnost*, A Report to Congress by the United States Information Agency, March 1988; U.S. Department of State, *Soviet Active Measures: Forgery, Disinformation, Political Activities*, (Washington, DC: October 1981); and the U.S. Department of State’s shorter reports on Soviet active measures, some of which came under the title of a Foreign Affairs Note (many of these appear in Kraemer, *The Soviet Union Fights the Cold War*, CD-ROM).

Pershing-2 ballistic missiles and both ground-launched and air-launched cruise missiles (GCLMs and ALCMs).

In anticipation of the deployment of these missiles in Europe, Moscow launched an estimated \$100 million propaganda campaign in Europe to stop the deployment. The campaign was designed to persuade European publics that the deployment was an American imperialist initiative that was increasing the danger of Europe becoming a nuclear battlefield. The campaign was so effective that public opinion polls revealed that referenda or parliamentary votes in several countries would veto the deployment.

The Reagan response to this constituted one of the most effective counterpropaganda efforts in modern American history. In the Department of State, it was led by Deputy Assistant Secretary Mark Palmer who formed a path-breaking interagency group entitled “Shaping European Attitudes.” The group was the forerunner of a series of public diplomacy interagency groups on various subjects which mobilized, for the first time in three decades, an effective, “whole of government” approach to the wars of information and ideas. On the ground in Europe, the counterpropaganda campaign was led by Ambassador Peter Dailey, with the active mobilization of USICA/USIA. Individual European countries were targeted and major efforts were made to disabuse their publics and parliaments of the Soviet disinformation.

This information effort was accompanied by a major diplomatic initiative: the proposal by the United States that both the U.S. and the USSR eliminate the most modern of these INFs – the Pershings and cruise missiles on the American side, and the newly deployed SS-20 intermediate-range ballistic missiles. This negotiating ploy assisted the U.S. information effort by showing the Europeans that the U.S. would not be interested in any such deployments if it were not for the enhanced Soviet missile threat to the continent. Armed with this negotiating position, the American counterpropaganda effort succeeded in one country after another and the political groundwork was laid for the eventual deployment of the necessary missiles.

The Modernization of the Freedom Radios and the President's Direct Communication to the Peoples of the Soviet Empire Radio Free Europe (broadcasting to the satellite states of East-Central Europe), Radio Liberty (broadcasting to the various major national groups within the Soviet Union), and the Voice of America (VOA) were arguably the most powerful weapons wielded in the political war against Soviet communism. The importance of the radios to the liberation of the peoples of the Soviet empire, which remains misunderstood and underestimated by American observers to this day, was fully recognized by the most prominent representatives of anti-communist resistance within the bloc.

In 1980, Nobel laureate Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn described the radios as “the mightiest weapon that the United States possesses to create mutual understanding (or even an alliance) between America and the oppressed Russian people.” But, referring to the détente period of the 1970s, he blasted the U.S. government for failing miserably to utilize these strategic assets properly. Specifically, he charged the VOA with ineptitude, self-censorship (in the interest of avoiding offense to the Kremlin), and broadcasting “frivolous,” “worthless, and irrelevant

twaddle” that serves to repel and alienate the sympathies of the thoughtful Russian listener.⁴³ He concluded by recommending that Washington “open a propaganda offensive as powerful and effective as that conducted against your country by the communists for the last sixty years,” especially by harnessing “the mighty non-military force which resides in the airwaves and whose kindling power in the midst of communist darkness cannot even be grasped by the Western imagination.”⁴⁴

President Reagan and key members of his team recognized this power and voiced a commitment to strengthening them during the 1980 presidential campaign. In early 1982, in response to the crackdown on the Solidarity Union in Poland -- a crackdown that came under threat of a Soviet invasion -- the President launched a new policy intimately related to his strategy of truth. This was the modernization of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) and the VOA. The logic underlying this initiative and its timing was that a way had to be found to sanction the Polish communist regime – and the Soviet regime that had pressured it into this repression – without harming the oppressed people, and indeed, by *helping* the people.

In one sense, these radios were arguably the greatest threat to Soviet rule. Why?

First, they were the most prominent method of connecting with the peoples of the Soviet empire and showing them that they were not alone in their struggle against communist oppression. The VOA would disabuse the captive peoples of the illusions about America and the West that had been inculcated into their minds by Soviet propaganda. Meanwhile, RFE/RL served as a "surrogate domestic free press" supplying people with information about their own countries. They transmitted the truth and unfiltered information directly to millions of people. This included: domestic news; alternative ideas; their own country's true history that had been eviscerated and revised as a way of destroying each nation's identity; religious programs ; and even music. They exposed the misrule of the communist authorities and the falsity of communist ideas. Among the alternative ideas they promoted were those of representative government and the institutions of civil society necessary to sustain it.

All this enabled millions of secret listeners to share with one another their special secret: their knowledge of the truth. Sometimes the mere whistling of a song that could be heard only over Radio Free Europe was a public, yet "secret" signal to others that you were a listener. And when others joined you in whistling the song, or discussing forbidden information, something of decisive strategic importance occurred:

- People reconnected to one another;
- Trust was restored; and
- Political organization in defiance of the regime began or was immeasurably enhanced.
- In other words, the radios, as vehicles of the truth, undermined one of the linchpins of the internal security system: the atomization of society.

⁴³ Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *The Mortal Danger*, (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1980), pp. 50-53. (This was first published as “Misconceptions about Russia Are a Threat to America,” *Foreign Affairs*, Spring 1980.)

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 129. (This quotation appeared also in “The Courage to See,” in the Fall 1980 edition of *Foreign Affairs*.)

One aspect of the radios was particularly threatening to the internal security system of the state: they transmitted information instantaneously -- which confounded the regime's ability to suppress dissent and civil disturbances.

The usual way by which communist regimes suppressed civil disturbances -- demonstrations, strikes, riots -- was by isolating them and cutting off all communications to the affected area. If the rest of the country learned about the event a few weeks later, it mattered little to the regime: the news was that the unrest was successfully suppressed and contained.

When a cell of internal resistance realized that it could communicate with millions of fellow countrymen, a vital new strategic tool became possible: it could develop underground lines of communication to the freedom radios and thus to their own people.

This is what happened with the Solidarity Union when it went on strike at the Lenin shipyard in Gdansk. As usual, the regime cut off communications to the city, claiming that "high winds" knocked down telephone lines. But through underground lines of communication, Radio Free Europe learned of the strike and transmitted the news within hours to millions of Poles. The strike was contagious. Within a matter of days, Solidarity had hundreds of thousands of new members. And within weeks, it had 10 million members: practically the entire working-age population of the country. This was "solidarity" at work: the ability of millions to join the movement before it could be crushed and while it was still alive.

The radios and the messages they conveyed thus served as an expression of U.S. solidarity with the millions suffering under communism. By showing them that they were no longer alone, the radios and their message of truth helped embolden resistance to the regime.

In subsequent years, President Reagan would use the radios to communicate directly to the peoples of the empire. In 1985, in an interview over RFE/RL, the President explained his strategy of emboldening resistance⁴⁵:

"I believe that the principal thing that we in the U.S. and the Western democracies can do to overcome this artificial division of Europe is to stand for the principles of freedom, democracy, rule of law, unconditional individual human rights and governmental legitimacy by the consent of the governed. By standing firmly for these principles and holding our ground both morally and strategically around the globe, we can demonstrate that communism is in fact not the wave of the future, that it can be resisted. By doing so, we show the captive nations that resisting totalitarianism is possible.

"We should learn the lesson that Vladimir Bukovsky, the Russian human rights activist, taught us: he said that each time the USSR commits an act of aggression abroad, it is sending a message to its own people:

'Look, peoples of the communist world, we can invade Afghanistan, shoot down airliners and deliver arms to Nicaragua under the nose of Uncle Sam and not even the greatest

⁴⁵ Interview of President Ronald Reagan by Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Washington, DC. June 14, 1985.

imperialist power on earth can resist us. So how can you people even contemplate resisting us?'

"But, if we understand this lesson and succeed in preventing the further expansion of communism, the captive peoples will know that there is hope. What the peoples of East Europe choose to do to achieve their freedom, of course, is their own decision. But it is almost impossible to resist oppression without having access to the truth and without being able to communicate with your fellow man. Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty can help the people of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union overcome these problems. They are indispensable -- the closest thing to a domestic free press that outsiders can provide for them."

In that interview, the President also explained how real peace can be achieved and how it requires both telling and facing the truth:

"Totalitarian states do not have the built-in mechanism of popular pressure which compels the governing elite to behave responsibly and to abide by international agreements which their people avidly support. This mechanism of popular pressure, of course, is one of the greatest conflict-resolution mechanisms ever devised by the mind of man and, indeed, if everyone were to comply with the Helsinki Accords and respect the human rights provisions, we would have the prospect of long-term peace in Europe.

"This is because true peace and human rights are not two separate issues. In fact, peace and human rights are indivisible; they are one issue. Because so long as people are not free to speak, worship, or think as they please, they cannot be free to restrain their own rulers from warlike behavior....

"We greatly appreciate the enormous sacrifices the peoples of the East made in the struggle against Nazism. But the great hopes for post-war peace proved so illusory because they were based on an unrealistic understanding of what it took to create real peace. People somehow forgot that real peace is indivisible from respect for human rights. Those hopes were also illusory because people were not realistic about the nature of the forces which occupied Eastern Europe at the end of the war.

"There has been a constant tendency for people in the West to indulge in wishful thinking when viewing unpleasant realities of the world. Sometimes we don't like to admit that these realities exist. But the consequences of not facing up to these realities can be as grave as any visited upon mankind. Because when we fail to look at the world realistically, we can fail to understand the strategic ambitions of aggressors."

Because of the threat posed by the radios, the Soviets did their best to confound their effectiveness. In February 1981, the Munich headquarters of RFE/RL were bombed in an operation that involved the cooperation of several Soviet proxies: the East German, Hungarian,

and Romanian intelligence services.⁴⁶ Moscow and its proxies would use terrorism as a method to silence the radios. RFE/RL employees were threatened and one, RFE Bulgarian Service broadcaster, Georgi Markov, was assassinated. Soviet bloc agents of influence infiltrated the various language services of VOA, RFE, and RL to provoke internal conflict within the individual language services, including inter-ethnic, inter-religious, and partisan political conflicts. Such agents also worked to broadcast programs that would echo Soviet propaganda and thus demoralize listeners who would often risk severe punishment for listening to Western broadcasts.

Perhaps the most effective Soviet bloc response to U.S. broadcasts was jamming. Moscow had some two thousand 500,000 watt jamming stations -- ten times the power of the most potent U.S. clear channel AM stations. Ground-wave jamming made it impossible for people in cities to hear the broadcasts. Sky-wave jamming, designed to interfere with broadcasts over large swaths of territory, were effective most of the time. However, there were times when this form of jamming could not work -- the periods of "twilight immunity" which afforded listeners a window of an hour or two of uninterrupted broadcasts.

In response to these various measures, President Reagan's plan for the radios involved first and foremost devoting national strategic attention to instruments that had been systematically neglected for over a decade. During that period, not only had the radios been broadcasting the self-censored "twaddle" to avoid irritating Moscow, they had also become technologically weaker because of obsolescent equipment, the absence of spare parts, and the debilitation of their transmitter facilities. Efforts by such figures as Senator J. William Fulbright, Senator George McGovern, President Lyndon Johnson, and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger had been made to change the names of RFE and RL, to deprive them of their trademark, to move their headquarters to the United States from Munich, where they enjoyed proximity to their target areas, and even to close them down altogether in the spirit of "detente."⁴⁷ Budgets had been systematically cut, with fewer resources for adequate reporting, program development, or equipment maintenance and modernization. The radios were operating with 1940's vacuum tube technology; rusting transmitter towers; and spare parts which, due to their unavailability, had to be custom built by hand.

The Reagan program would reverse all this. It put new leadership in the various broadcast services -- individuals who had the will and intellectual capacity to challenge Soviet communism on the moral and ideological plane. It secured the appropriation of \$2.5 billion to modernize the headquarters, the studios, and the technology of all three radio stations and to purchase new transmitters and secure new transmitter sites in various countries surrounding the Soviet bloc. These new sites would help overcome the jamming (this included the newly discovered technique of utilizing a period of "north-south immunity"), and would enable broadcasts for the first time to reach Soviet territories east of the Urals. The latter project

⁴⁶ See, for example, Richard Cummings, "Special Feature: The 1981 bombing of RFE/RL" Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Archive, February 9, 1996. See also: "Voices of Hope: the Story of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty," Hoover Institution Archival Exhibit, 2010.

⁴⁷ See Arch Puddington, *Broadcasting Freedom: The Cold War Triumph of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty*, (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2000). See also, Michael Nelson, *War of the Black Heavens: The Battles of Western Broadcasting in the Cold War*, (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1997).

involved a major diplomatic effort with several friendly countries in the Middle East and South Asia. What was noteworthy about this effort was that most of the countries the Administration approached -- *even those who already had U.S. military facilities located on their territory* -- recognized (in stark contrast to the American foreign policy establishment) that the strategic influence of the radios was a matter of such sensitivity and offensiveness to Moscow that they refused our requests.

Notwithstanding the failure to secure transmitter sites for signals east of the Urals, the effects of this overall effort were powerful indeed. As Polish President (and former Solidarity union leader) Lech Walesa testified after the collapse of the empire, Radio Free Europe “was our radio station. But not only a radio station. Presenting works that were 'on the red censorship list,' it was our ministry of culture. Exposing absurd economic policies, it was our ministry of economics. Reacting to events promptly and pertinently, but above all, truthfully, it was our ministry of information.”⁴⁸ When asked at a press conference in Washington about the importance of the radios to the rise and sustenance of the Solidarity movement, he replied: “Would there be life [on earth] without the sun?”⁴⁹ And when Czechoslovak dissident and later President, Vaclav Havel, visited Washington, D.C., he made a pilgrimage to the Voice of America to thank its staff for keeping his national flame alive for half a century.⁵⁰

Support for Anti-Communist and Pro-Freedom Groups Another early Administration initiative was its support of various organizations that could conduct research, analysis, information programs, cultural programs, and political action in opposition to Soviet power both at home and abroad. Some of this was conducted by the Office of Private Sector Programs at USICA/USIA. Among the groups receiving its support were the AFL-CIO, the Claremont Institute (which conducted specialized democracy education programs), and the National Strategy Information Center. The CIA also lent covert support to various organizations.

The Administration, occasionally through the State Department and more often through the National Security Council, supported various national heritage organizations representing the various captive nations of the inner Soviet empire, and resistance groups fighting communist regimes in the outer empire, in such places as Nicaragua, Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, and Vietnam.

The array of these groups was rich and variegated. Some of these groups were composed of, or led by, émigrés. Others, like the Congress of Russian Americans, comprised, and were led by Americans whose families had been in our country for several generations. Rarely before in American history had the White House given such regular and enthusiastic welcome to organizations like the Joint Baltic American Committee, the Polish American Congress, the U.S. Ukraine Foundation, and the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America, and similar groups of

⁴⁸ Michael Nelson, *War of the Black Heavens: The Battles of Western Broadcasting in the Cold War*.

⁴⁹ Lech Walesa, Press Conference at RFE/RL on the Role of the Radios in Poland’s Struggle for Freedom (Washington, DC, 1989), as quoted in A. Ross Johnson, “A Brief History of RFE/RL” (Washington, DC: December 2008), <http://www.rferl.org/section/history/133.html>. From the author’s recollection, the quotation recorded this account is slightly incorrect; hence, the author has added the extra words in brackets.

⁵⁰ Donnie Radcliffe, “Vaclav Havel, Face to Face with the Voice,” *Washington Post* (February 27, 1990).

Czechoslovak-Americans, Bulgarian-Americans, Hungarian-Americans, Romanian-Americans, etc. Indeed, such groups had never found support in official Washington since the early 1960s. Under President Reagan, their representatives were constantly invited for briefings and discussions with NSC staff members about policy issues relating to the nation of their concern. They were inspired by the annual White House statements on Captive Nations Day. They and their constituents were recipients of encouraging messages transmitted from the White House's Office of Presidential Correspondence.

The inclusion of these groups in such briefings, policy deliberations, special events, and White House correspondence inspired their leaders and members to take action in support of the people in their countries of origin that would not have taken place in the absence of such a supportive Administration – actions that would have been seen as less effective, if not futile, under other circumstances.

The Administration also lent moral and tangible support to various international resistance groups which were either born or revived during the Reagan years. One of these was Resistance International, led by the courageous Russian dissident, Vladimir Bukovsky, one of the most effective political warriors of the Cold War. This group was a consortium of anti-communist resistance organizations in each of the countries with active and organized resistance movements. Prominent among these were the Nicaraguan resistance and UNITA in Angola. Another group which received sympathy and support was the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations.

Finally, given the President's recognition of the spiritual character of the Cold War, the Administration demonstrated its support of religious groups and their advocacy of human rights and religious liberty. The Union of Councils of Soviet Jewry was one such group, which sought support for the rights of Soviet Jews, including the right of "refuseniks" to emigrate. Other groups, not always formally organized, also received support. Lithuanian nuns, who took enormous risks to smuggle reports on the plight of the Catholic Church in Lithuania to the U.S. embassy, found help from Edmund McWilliams, the courageous human rights officer who had support from the White House for his intrepid activities on behalf of dissidents and human rights activists. As part of this overall effort, the Voice of America and RFE/RL broadcast religious programs, including full religious services, to adherents of various faiths throughout the Soviet empire. It should be noted that none of these uses of religion as instruments of public diplomacy and ideological warfare constituted a violation of the Constitutional prohibition against establishing a state religion within the United States.

The question naturally arises: how effective were these various groups? Did they make any difference? While it is admittedly difficult to measure their effectiveness, one can say that the knowledge within the extended Soviet empire of their very existence, of the fact that these groups were of concern to the Kremlin and its satellite regimes, and of the moral and tangible support that they were receiving from the United States could not but have been encouraging to the various internal resistance movements: those resistance forces were not alone.

Speech to the British Parliament In 1982, in his historic speech to the British parliament, President Reagan shifted the terms of the entire East-West conflict. Instead of mere containment or detente, he proposed a policy of peaceful political change in the Soviet empire. The concept of this

speech, developed by a Reagan cell in the Department of State, was based on a strategy of fighting communist tyranny not solely with anti-communism, but also with a positive alternative: freedom, democracy, human rights, and hope for a better life. Instead of reacting to Soviet initiatives that pointed to the ultimate goals of world communism, the United States should propose its own vision and political goals that it would like to see achieved – a world of free peoples living according to the consent of the governed. This is what President Reagan set forth in this speech. Instead of tacitly accepting the legitimacy of the Soviet regime as had his predecessors, he challenged it at its very core:

"We cannot ignore the fact that even without our encouragement there has been and will continue to be repeated explosions against repression and dictatorships. The Soviet Union itself is not immune to this reality. Any system is inherently unstable that has no peaceful means to legitimize its leaders. In such cases, the very repressiveness of the state ultimately drives people to resist it, if necessary, by force.

"While we must be cautious about forcing the pace of change, we must not hesitate to declare our ultimate objectives and to take concrete actions to move toward them. We must be staunch in our conviction that freedom is not the sole prerogative of a lucky few, but the inalienable and universal right of all human beings. So states the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which, among other things, guarantees free elections.

"The objective I propose is quite simple to state: to foster the infrastructure of democracy, the system of a free press, unions, political parties, universities, which allow a people to choose their own way to develop their own culture, to reconcile their own differences through peaceful means....

"What I am describing now is a plan and a hope for the long term -- the march of freedom and democracy which will leave Marxism-Leninism on the ash-heap of history as it has left other tyrannies which stifle the freedom and muzzle the self-expression of the people."⁵¹

By challenging the legitimacy of the Soviet regime, once again the President emboldened the peoples of the Soviet empire to resist.

Establishment of the National Endowment for Democracy The outgrowth of the Westminster address was the proposal, again from the small Reagan cell in the State Department, to found the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and its four subsidiary organizations: the Republican Party's National Republican Institute for International Affairs (now called the International Republican Institute), the Democratic Party's National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (now called the National Democratic Institute), the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Center for International Private Enterprise, and the AFL-CIO's American Institute for Free Labor Development (now, having been merged with other AFL-CIO subsidiaries, is called the American Center for International Labor Solidarity).

⁵¹ Ronald Reagan, Address to Members of the British Parliament, London, England, June 8, 1982. Available online: <http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1982/60882a.htm>.

Modeled partly after the German political party foundations, the NED and its subsidiary organizations conducted democratic institution-building programs and made grants to various domestic and foreign organizations for the same purpose. Among the recipients of such grants were various pro-democracy and human rights groups in the Soviet bloc, particularly Solidarity-affiliated organizations in Poland. These included: The Solidarity Coordination Office in Brussels (via AFL-CIO; the Polish American Congress; OKNO; Helsinki Committee; the Aurora Foundation; Freedom House; The Institute for Democracy in Eastern Europe; and The Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in America.⁵² Early NED efforts also funded the "East European Democracy Project" which published books and materials that were smuggled into Poland, along with grants to political prisoners and their families. In Czechoslovakia, the Charter 77 Foundation received NED funds to support dissidents and encourage free speech and communication while another organization was aided in setting up a communications system that would allow several Soviet-bloc countries to produce and share anti-communist material with each other.⁵³ Part of the logic behind NED supplying such aid was that it was overt and, therefore, not subject to being stained and discredited by association with covert intelligence operations. Furthermore, such aid was not directly tied to official U.S. government policy, as the NED organizations were all independent of Executive Branch policy direction. Thus, where appropriate, the United States could proudly demonstrate its solidarity with the cause of freedom in the Soviet empire and encourage forces of resistance that they were not alone.

Speech to the National Association of Evangelicals Perhaps the culmination of President Reagan's rhetorical campaign was his speech to the National Association of Evangelicals in the spring of 1983 (quoted above). After frankly discussing America's own legacy of evil (passages about which almost no one knows), he then noted that "the glory of this land has been its capacity for transcending the moral evils of our past." Then he branded the USSR as an "evil empire" and the "focus of evil in the modern world."

The speech was received with shock by the establishment. But it was greeted with joy by the oppressed millions of the East.

As a policy advisor to the President and as an internal participant in, and witness to, the formulation of U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union, I personally had ambivalent feelings about the use of the term "evil empire." On the one hand, I was glad that the President had told the unvarnished truth. But on the other hand, I had forebodings that, by using incendiary adjectives, he was leaving himself vulnerable to Soviet propaganda and therefore political pressure. How?

Soviet strategy in general was to achieve conquest without war -- or, to put it more precisely, the transformation of its adversaries political systems without war. This eventually required disarming the U.S. physically, but first intellectually, morally, and psychologically. Part of this strategy involved isolating the U.S. in the world, and then isolating anti-communists, such as President Reagan, within the United States. A key part of this strategy -- which was the Number One Tactical Objective of Soviet Foreign Policy -- was to compel President Reagan to silence himself, to censor himself, and thus to Finlandize America. This was done by a ceaseless Soviet

⁵² Source: The National Endowment for Democracy.

⁵³ Peter Schweizer, *Reagan's War* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 2002), p. 187-188.

campaign, conducted, among others, by a stream of Soviet visitors to the United States, to get the President to "tone down his rhetoric in the interests of peace." A critical element of this campaign was the constant and massive drumbeat of threats and warnings of "unpredictable consequences" that could come from the President's "reckless policies" and rhetoric.

The Soviet-sponsored "peace" movement portrayed the President as a "warmonger" and a "nuclear cowboy." It organized massive demonstrations against the President and U.S. policy. One of these, organized principally by the Communist Party USA and various Soviet front groups, mobilized a quarter of a million people in New York on the occasion of the UN's Special Session on Disarmament in 1982. By such activities, Moscow put enormous pressure on our allies and on various constituencies within the U.S. to pressure the President to reverse course.

Because of its massive propaganda and political influence apparatus, Moscow had the power to modulate the entire tone of East-West relations. If we spoke the truth, thus mobilizing a pro-defense consensus in the West as well as internal resistance to Soviet rule, Moscow would turn up the atmospherics of tension. If we censored ourselves, we would be rewarded with summit meetings, agreements, a peaceful atmosphere, sweetness and light. To repeat: self-censorship was the Soviet price for peace and quiet.

By using the term "evil empire," President Reagan accomplished one goal, but left himself vulnerable to being accused of gratuitous name-calling and aggravating tensions. It was now easier for Moscow and its fellow-travelers to call the President a warmonger. In fact, Soviet propaganda to this effect did have an adverse impact on the unity of the Administration on Soviet policy, not to mention the support the President enjoyed in Congress. Efforts were made to have the President deliver another kind of speech -- one in which he would demonstrate clinically and dispassionately the entire record of the Kremlin's behavior at home and abroad. This speech would have had the President present the world with the facts of the entire case, and the global audience could then attach its own adjectives to Soviet conduct. Such a speech would have insulated the President from being accused of recklessness by the members of the "peace" movement both at home and abroad. In the end, suggestions that he make such a speech were not successful.

The effectiveness of the evil empire rhetoric, however, could not be denied. Not only were dissidents behind the iron curtain encouraged and inspired by this moral witness, but the Kremlin was alarmed.

Promoting an Ideological Alternative In the face of the ideological lie that served as the foundation of Soviet power, the President led an ideological counterattack. In the face of the communist denial of a transcendent objective moral order -- standards of justice that are universal and thus the prerequisite of any inalienable rights -- he slammed the Kremlin's "end-justifies-the-means" morality and regularly invoked the founding principles of America as reflected in the Declaration of Independence: that the inalienable rights endowed by the Creator to all men apply not just to Americans but to everyone. As he told his audience at Moscow State University:

"Go into any schoolroom [in America], and there you will see children being taught the Declaration of Independence, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain

unalienable rights – among them life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness – that no government can justly deny... ”⁵⁴

In the face of the communist rejection of the transcendent dignity of the human person, the President constantly reaffirmed that dignity with his constant invocation of the Declaration's principle of the right to life. In the face of Soviet concepts of arbitrary justice, he invoked an independent judiciary. In the face of Soviet concepts of thought and speech control, he invoked American ideas of freedom of speech and conscience.⁵⁵

Altogether, the various ideas of freedom, democracy, human rights, moral order, and the dignity of the human person were promoted not only by the President's rhetoric and personal moral witness but by the Administration as a whole in numerous forms: in VOA editorials, in RFE/RL broadcasts, in articles in USIA-published magazines targeted at Soviet bloc populations (e.g. the Russian language magazine, *Amerika*), on the USIA-run billboard on the sidewalk outside the U.S. embassy in Moscow⁵⁶, in American diplomats' addresses at various international fora, in the distribution of books to Soviet bloc audiences and U.S. libraries abroad, in films distributed abroad, etc.

Splitting the Peace Movement Another tactic that the Administration supported was an effort to split the “peace” movement. Most of this movement was composed of innocent citizens concerned about nuclear war and not committed to the communist ideological agenda. But the majority of these people were naïve about the degree to which their movement had been infiltrated, influenced, and at times, directed by communists and the leaders of Soviet front organizations. One way of reducing the ability of the communist and communist-front leaders to manipulate the larger movement was to expose their radical ideological agenda and diminish their credibility in the eyes of the non-communist membership.

One initiative to achieve this objective was undertaken in Los Angeles County by Soviet dissident Vladimir Bukovsky and Los Angeles lawyer and human rights activist, William Pearl, with the Administration's support. This initiative involved putting a referendum measure on the June, 1984 ballot for approval by County voters. What was noteworthy about the choice of Los Angeles County is that, at the time, its population was larger than that of some 35 states of the union, and thus, any referendum passed there would have a larger than usual political significance. The measure read:

“Shall the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors transmit to the leaders of the United States and the Soviet Union a communication stating that the risk of nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union can be reduced if all people have the ability to

⁵⁴ Ronald Reagan, Speech at Moscow State University, May 31, 1988.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ The Kremlin's fear of the truth was great enough that it went to ridiculous lengths to suppress it – even in the case of this small (3' X 6') billboard. Since it was illegal to tread on lawns in Moscow, the Soviets planted a patch of grass on the broad sidewalk adjacent to the billboard so that passersby had to stand some six feet away from the billboard, thus making it impossible to read the texts displayed there. The USIA retaliated by increasing the print size, albeit at the expense of the volume of text.

express their opinions freely and without fear on world issues, including a nation's arms policies; therefore the people of Los Angeles County urge all nations that signed the Helsinki International Accords on Human Rights to observe the Accords' provisions of freedom of speech, religion, press, assembly and emigration for all their citizens?"

The results of the final vote affirmed the ballot initiative. However, during the campaign in advance of the final vote, the communist and Soviet front leadership of the peace movement opposed the referendum initiative, because it called for freedom of speech in the Soviet Union, while the ordinary membership supported it. Seeing this opposition to freedom of speech, many ordinary, non-communist members of the peace movement found it strange and repellent that their movement's leaders would oppose something as basic as free speech. This ultimately raised many people's consciousness about the radical political agenda of the peace movement's leadership.⁵⁷

The Covert Dimension

Covert Assistance to Poland and Other Central European States A major element of the subversion of the Soviet system was the program of covert support for the resistance movements within the Soviet bloc. The rise of the Solidarity trade union movement in Poland and its suppression by the Soviet-induced state of martial law in December 1981 was the catalyst for this effort. A Presidential Directive, NSDD-32, supplied the official authority for these actions.⁵⁸

Solidarity was not an ordinary union movement, nor did it comport in any way with the existing official trade union structures within the Soviet bloc. Those official trade unions were completely controlled by the Communist Parties of the various bloc states, and were institutionalized fictions designed to give the West the impression that there existed organizations within those states that represented the interests of the working class. In contrast, Solidarity arose as a union fully independent of Communist Party or state control. Its goals were to advocate for the rights of workers, which, as a practical matter, could be realized only by promoting change in the very genetic code of the communist political system. Given the pretensions of Marxist-Leninist states to represent, in their very essence, the interests of the working class, the rise of a workers' movement in the "workers' state" was a matter of poetic justice and the highest historic irony.

The covert action program initiated by Director of Central Intelligence, William J. Casey had four elements:

- Providing cash and equipment to help the movement – particularly to sustain its media operations, from newsletters to radio broadcasts.
- Supplying advanced communications equipment to enable Solidarity members to communicate with each other even under conditions of martial law – a complete C I system. This initially included basic printing equipment and portable radio transmitters. Later, it involved fax machines, computers, and advanced printing equipment. Most of the funds were funneled through the Provisional Coordinating Committee (TKK) which linked conspiratorial networks in various regions of the country. Among the most prominent

⁵⁷ Ted Vollmer, "Human Rights Measure OK'd for County Ballot" *Los Angeles Times*, January 4, 1984, p. C1.

⁵⁸ NSC-NSDD-32 "U.S. National Security Strategy," May 20, 1982.

recipients of media assistance were the underground publishing house, NOW-a, which, from 37 secret locations, published the 50,000-circulation newspaper, *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, and Radio Solidarity. Eventually, the underground movement would publish thousands of newspapers, newsletters, books, and monographs on an annual basis.

- Training selected Solidarity members in the use of that equipment.
- Sharing intelligence information with the movement.⁵⁹

According to former Chairman of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, Glenn Campbell, the funding reached a peak of \$8 million per year.⁶⁰ The transfer required the creation of a complex structure of financial institutions and instruments to maintain the security of the operation. While the Vatican had the capability to transfer such funds, it kept its distance from covert operations of this sort. Instead, Director Casey used various entities in Europe, including several European companies, one of which even established a separate account to accommodate these fund transfers.⁶¹

The program utilized the good offices of the AFL-CIO, which had been supplying its own financial assistance to Solidarity since 1980. Other mechanisms of support included:

- the assistance of the French intelligence service, the SDECE (Service de Documentation Extérieure et de Contre-Espionage), in exfiltrating Solidarity activists;
- the assistance of the Israeli intelligence service, the Mossad, in establishing a covert communications channel into Poland;
- the assistance of the Vatican, despite its refusal to be involved in covert operations, in identifying reliable contacts within Poland, as well as supplying reliable information about conditions there;
- the use of the Voice of America to relay information through code words, phrases, songs, and other devices to Solidarity activists;
- the use of Polish Americans to make contact with Solidarity activists to learn precisely how the United States could best help the movement;
- the use of a Swedish shipping route to transfer communications equipment under several guises, including machine tools for agricultural equipment;
- the establishment of an intensified intelligence collection effort against the Communist Polish government to supply warning of impending actions it was planning to take against the movement;
- providing support for émigré groups in Europe which were assisting the overall effort, among other things by debriefing immigrants from the East bloc; and

⁵⁹ See the details of this covert program as outlined by eyewitnesses in Peter Schweizer, *Victory: The Reagan Administration's Secret Strategy that hastened the Collapse of the Soviet Union*, (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1994). The four parts of the program are cited on p 75. Details of the media assistance effort are cited on pp. 89-90, 146, 225.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

- training of Solidarity activists in intelligence, operational security and counterintelligence so that they could set up an intelligence organizations (the “Bureau of Hygiene and Safety”) to protect the movement from the many efforts to penetrate it by the Polish secret services.⁶²

The operation continued unabated in spite of various penetrations of the movement by Communist agents and the leaking of the Swedish equipment smuggling route by an official in Sweden who was eventually unmasked and discreetly transferred by Swedish counterintelligence. It was accompanied by a sustained program of economic sanctions that severely curtailed Polish trade with the West. Whereas in 1980, the volume of that trade had been \$7.5 billion, in 1986, it had sunk to \$1 billion. Similarly, Poland’s ability to secure credit from the West had mostly dried up. Whereas Warsaw had been able to borrow as much as \$8 billion before 1980, the amount it could borrow by 1985 was reduced to \$300 million.

Under this economic pressure, the Polish Communist regime was forced to submit to American demands: first, to release the many political prisoners it had incarcerated; second, to begin a process of national reconciliation through dialogue with opposition groups; and third, to begin a dialogue with the Polish Catholic Church. On July 22, 1986, a general amnesty was called and most of the imprisoned members of the underground were released. U.S. covert support would continue to the Polish resistance until 1989 when the first, partially free, national elections were held.⁶³

While Director Casey was supervising these operations, he also was looking for opportunities to support other resistance groups elsewhere in East-Central Europe and, if possible, within the Soviet Union itself. The opportunity first presented itself in Czechoslovakia, where dissident groups had been in contact along the Polish-Czechoslovak border with members of the Polish resistance who were dedicated to spreading their opposition movement throughout the Soviet bloc.⁶⁴ Some of these contacts were made and backpacks were exchanged at the summit of the Tatra Mountains between Polish and Czech dissidents who doubled as mountain climbers.⁶⁵ In view of these reports, the CIA asked friendly diplomats in the Vatican, among others, if they had any reliable contacts among dissidents in Czechoslovakia. Eventually, the CIA identified groups in Czechoslovakia that merited support.⁶⁶ These mostly included small groups of intellectuals and human rights activists such as those in Charter 77 and lay Catholic activists. Then, with the help of Czechoslovak expatriates in the West, it established a pipeline to funnel support to the Czechoslovak underground.

Although considerably more modest in scope than the support to Solidarity, these efforts to support the Czechoslovak resistance were eventually followed by similar efforts to funnel support to Hungarian resistance organizations. Together, these efforts produced a force-multiplying effect, as the spirit of Solidarity spread throughout the Soviet bloc. It reached a critical point in October 1986, when 122 dissidents in four countries – Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and East Germany –

⁶² Ibid., pp. 70, 75, 86, 88, 89, 123, 160, 164, 165, 227, 228 257 258.

⁶³ Ibid., pp. 265, 281.

⁶⁴ Ibid., pp. 159, 256.

⁶⁵ This writer personally met one of these Alpinists who shared with me reports of these contacts.

⁶⁶ Schweizer, *Victory*, pp. 184, 228.

issued, with U.S. help, a joint protest letter.⁶⁷ Joint action of this type was one of the Kremlin's biggest nightmares.

Covert Action Inside the USSR Finally, the Reagan Administration's program to undermine Soviet rule involved a covert plan to bring the Soviet war in Afghanistan to the USSR itself. This began with a discussion between William Casey and King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, who had been funneling significant financial support to *mujaheddin* guerrillas fighting the Soviet army in Afghanistan. Initially, Casey had the idea of inciting nationalist-religious passions among the populace of the Islamic regions of Soviet Central Asia – an idea for which Fahd expressed some interest.⁶⁸ Subsequently, Casey secured the cooperation of Pakistani President, Zia ul-Haq and his Foreign Minister, Yaqub Khan, and proposed further that literature be smuggled into Soviet Central Asia to stir up dissent, as well as arms which could be used as part of local insurrections.⁶⁹

With this support lined up, guerrilla operations were launched inside the Soviet Union by Afghan irregulars based in Iran. These involved laying mines, attacking isolated military outposts, and ambushing Soviet border patrols in Turkmenistan.⁷⁰ To incite Uzbek dissent, the CIA bought Korans and other books containing accounts of Soviet atrocities against Uzbeks for smuggling into Soviet Uzbekistan.⁷¹ Towards the end of 1984, the CIA launched a major covert campaign to incite dissent in Soviet Central Asia. Working with Pakistan, Turkey, and China, the campaign smuggled literature and broadcasting equipment into the USSR while also operating clandestine radio broadcasts.⁷² Over the next couple of years, Afghan *mujaheddin* escalated their attacks within the Soviet Union. Trained by the Pakistani intelligence service and equipped by the CIA, they attacked electric power lines, power stations, and airfields, while ambushing Soviet forces using rocket propelled grenades, machine guns, and antitank mines.⁷³

The efforts to incite dissent within Soviet Central Asia contributed to the rise of nationalistic and religious rebellion against Soviet rule. Early manifestations of this rebellion occurred in Kazakhstan on the eve of the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan.⁷⁴ They reached full bloom in 1989-1990 when "peoples' fronts" were established in most of the USSR's "union republics" and the world witnessed huge anti-Soviet demonstrations in provincial capitals such as Alma Ata, Tashkent, Dushanbe, and Bishkek.

What Finally Precipitated the Soviet Collapse?

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 267.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 156.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 177.

⁷⁰ Ibid., pp. 175-176.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 178.

⁷² Ibid., p. 208.

⁷³ Ibid., pp. 271-272.

⁷⁴ Ibid., pp. 273-274.

The final collapse of the Soviet regime in December 1991 was the result of a confluence of internal crises that were aggravated by the many “straws” placed on the Soviet “camel’s back” by the Reagan Administration. Here is a brief summary of those internal and external factors.

There were three simultaneous internal crises that put enormous pressure on the Kremlin to change its policies.⁷⁵

The first was a crisis of legitimacy. The Marxist-Leninist justification for why the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) deserved to be in power was no longer commanding widespread respect. The Party’s special knowledge of the “laws of history” had become a joke. The laws of history were simply not working out as the Party’s ideologists had predicted. Socialism was not producing benefits for the entire society. The classless society had not emerged. The “new class,” as explained by Yugoslav communist, Milovan Djilas, had established itself as the new *nomenklatura* elite and was enjoying greater privileges than any putative capitalist “exploiters.”⁷⁶ The state, established as the instrument of the oppression of the capitalist ruling class over the proletariat, had not “withered away” as it was supposed to do, according to dialectical materialism. Meanwhile, the auxiliary method of legitimation, the CPSU’s embrace of the Soviet victory over Naziism during World War II, was getting less and less credible. The notion that the “indispensable defenders of the fatherland” deserved to be in power, as they were the only ones capable of sustaining this defense was straining credulity. The result was the growing alienation of the Soviet intelligentsia from the entire socialist cause.

The second crisis was that of the Soviet military economy. Contrary to the conventional understanding of this realm, the Soviet economic problem was not a crisis of the civilian economy: that sector had been in crisis – as understood in Western terms – since 1917. The part of the Soviet economy that had worked reasonably well throughout Soviet history was the military economy, on which the Politburo had placed the highest priority. It was this sector which started facing serious crisis due to the revolution in military affairs in the United States: the application of modern digital technologies to the use of arms. The Reagan military buildup – with its demonstrated sprint capability not only in computer technologies but also such things as stealth technology – had aggravated the lack of competitiveness of the Soviet military. This situation was exacerbated further by the Administration’s technology denial program as well as its other economic warfare efforts such as reducing the Kremlin’s capacity to earn hard currency.

These externally-generated economic pressures accentuated the normal pattern of Soviet politics as brilliantly described by French Sovietologist Alain Besancon. This pattern was one of “freeze and thaw” – of enforced conformity with socialist norms alternating with periods of relaxation of that enforcement. This pattern can be best understood by recognizing the parasitical relationship the Party had with society at large. The Party was a completely unproductive class: creating no wealth, but rather sapping the production of society while acting as prefects and “back seat drivers” for their productive counterparts in the government apparatus which actually operated

⁷⁵ For an expanded analysis of the three internal crises reviewed here, see John Lenczowski, *The Sources of Soviet Perestroika*, (Ashland, OH: Ashbrook Center, Ashland University, 1990).

⁷⁶ See Milovan Djilas, *The New Class: An Analysis of the Communist System*, (New York, NY: Praeger, 1957); and Michael Voslensky, *Nomenklatura: The Soviet Ruling Class*, (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1984), for early and late descriptions of the communist privileged elite.

the state economic enterprises. The prefects would ensure that the managers were faithfully executing the policies of the Party.

As a parasite sucks the blood of its host – society at large – the host would get sick and become ever less productive. This was what happened when the Party taxed the peasants at 100 percent as it “requisitioned” the harvest during the period of War Communism. Society (the 95 percent agricultural economy) grew weak as its sustenance was sucked away. It rebelled by refusing to sow and even went so far as to burn its crops. The parasite had to retreat and let the agricultural economy resuscitate itself: after the “freeze,” this was the “thaw” – the New Economic Policy (NEP) which restored limited private property, the selling of crops in the marketplace, and the restoration of a progressive income tax so that people could keep some share of the fruits of their labors.

But just as the freeze could last only so long without threatening the power of the Party, the thaw could last only so long. Too much power restored to society risked jeopardizing the power of the Party on the other side of the continuum. The NEP had to be stopped, and by 1928 it was: Stalin imposed a second round of collectivization on Soviet agriculture.⁷⁷

By 1985, the Party was faced with a terrible choice: to reform its domestic economy to such an extent that it could efficiently develop modern technologies independently; or to keep the economy frozen according to socialist norms and rely ever more on acquiring technologies (and financial resources in general) from the West.

The first option necessarily meant decentralizing economic decision making – which threatened the Party’s ability to maintain military production as the highest priority, and which threatened pressures for the decentralization of political decision making, which, in turn would jeopardize the Party’s monopoly of power. Gorbachev tried every method in the Soviet repertoire to enhance economic growth short of permitting private property and genuine economic decentralization. He tried exhortations to meet the five-year plan. He tried the restoration of Stalin-style labor discipline, which meant the resumption of collective punishment of work collectives even when poor performance was manifested by only a single worker. He tried the anti-alcohol campaign. Then he adopted his famous policy of *perestroika* (restructuring). This involved, among other things, an attempt to achieve profitability by implementing “cost accounting” in state enterprises. But this did not work because enterprises could not control any costs beyond payroll costs (what it did accomplish was to create greater job insecurity). He then tried land leasing – in hopes that having a lease would be treated by the renter as bestowing the same incentives as property ownership. He would not dare trying private property. None of it worked.

As a last resort, Gorbachev needed a bailout from the West. But to get the loans and technology that his military economy needed, he could not give the West the impression that he continued to be an unreconstructed communist and an enemy of the United States. As a result, he began a *détente* policy and a charm offensive to achieve as much psychological disarmament in the West as possible. This involved such things as a cultural diplomacy campaign, a series of pageant-

⁷⁷ This pattern of freeze and thaw is fully explained in Alain Besancon, *The Soviet Syndrome*, (New York, NY: Librairie Hachette, 1976).

like summit meetings with President Reagan, and the signing of new arms control agreements (notwithstanding the fact that Moscow was continuing to violate every agreement it had previously signed).⁷⁸ It also involved portraying his policy of perestroika as a fundamental change in the very nature of Soviet communism. The goal of all this, as described by one of Gorbachev's top theoreticians, Fedor Burlatsky, was "to destroy the enemy image...still haunting Soviet-American relations" so that the U.S. would have no more justification for its military buildup, and thus relieve the Soviet military economy of its main external pressure.⁷⁹ Gorbachev made this point himself: "Our *perestroika*, with all its international consequences, is eliminating the fear of the 'Soviet threat', with [U.S.] militarism losing its political justification."⁸⁰

The third crisis was that of the Party. By late 1982, when former KGB chief, Yuri Andropov, became CPSU General Secretary, he and a number of his colleagues in the Politburo had become convinced that the Party had become bloated, bureaucratized, undisciplined, ineffective, and corrupt. Andropov initiated efforts to reform it, but died before he could implement all the desired measures.

After the brief tour of anti-reformer Konstantin Chernenko, Mikhail Gorbachev, who shared Andropov's concerns about the Party, came to power. He believed that the Party crisis was due to several influences which needed to be purged from the system. The most prominent was the existence of the vast underground economy. Successive generations of Soviet leaders had to tolerate this economy, as it was the only vehicle ensuring the efficient distribution of goods and services to areas of acute shortages (because it was the only instrument to distribute goods and services according to price, i.e., according to supply and demand, as opposed to central planning or Party privilege). Thus, it served as the only method to ensure the physical survival of the labor force. The problem was that for this economy to function, its participants had to bribe Communist Party officials to avert their gaze from prohibited commercial transactions. In due course, many of those officials not only took bribes but also invested in underground enterprises. This meant developing forms of self-interest that were at variance with the Party's interest. This problem, called a lack of *partiinost'* (Party-mindedness), was the source of huge corruption and lack of Party discipline.

Gorbachev's solution to this corruption and lack of discipline was threefold: 1) the imposition of an ideological purification campaign within the Party to ensure ideological conformity; 2) an unprecedented attack on the underground economy, during which over 800,000 underground entrepreneurs were arrested or fled their jobs for fear of arrest; and 3) a purge of the

⁷⁸ For a systematic analysis of the Soviet cultural offensive, see John Lenczowski, *Soviet Cultural Diplomacy: A Multi-faceted Strategic Instrument of Soviet Power*, 1991, available on-line: http://www.iwp.edu/doclib/200607710_cultural_diplomacy.pdf

⁷⁹ TASS, October 31, 1987, Foreign Broadcast Information Service Daily Report – Soviet Union, November 5, 1987, p. 54. This quotation is cited in John Lenczowski, "Military *Glasnost'* and Strategic Deception," *International Freedom Review*, Vol. 3 Number 2, Winter, 1990, p. 6 available online at: http://www.iwp.edu/docLib/20110628_MilitaryGlasnost.pdf

⁸⁰ Mikhail Gorbachev, Speech on the Anniversary of the October Revolution, November 1987. This is also quoted in Lenczowski, "Military *Glasnost'* and Strategic Deception," p. 6.

Party's ranks, whereby some 250,000 members of the Party and managerial elite were arrested and prosecuted.

The original vehicle for the Party purge was *glasnost*'. This campaign, which came to be defined, inaccurately, by the Western media as "openness," was originally designed as a method of encouraging ordinary citizens (insofar as they could be called so) to tattle on corrupt Party and government officials. (This explains why the definition of *glasnost*' in Soviet political lexicons refers to "revolutionary vigilance.")⁸¹ Gorbachev also used *glasnost*' as a means to improve the credibility of the Soviet propaganda apparatus: Soviet media had become so predictable and without credibility that the desirable effects of propaganda could no longer be achieved: namely the defining of the frame of reference by which people would understand reality. *Glasnost*' involved injecting more truth into the mixture of truth and falsehood that makes propaganda effective. Thus, Gorbachev used the *glasnost*' campaign as a vehicle to effect a literary thaw of the kind that Khrushchev had implemented in the 1950s as a method to attract the intelligentsia back to greater loyalty to socialism.

Finally, when the West started to view *glasnost*' as a de facto "freedom of speech" type of reform, the campaign became an indispensable instrument to persuade the West that the USSR had reformed so much that it was not really a Marxist-Leninist state anymore. (It should be noted that the first post-Soviet President of Russia and former Soviet Politburo member, Boris Yeltsin, called Gorbachev's USSR a "totalitarian state.") Gorbachev's exploitation of this Western perception of a new Soviet policy of "freedom of speech" was taken to special heights in his "military *glasnost*" campaign, which involved giving American delegations access to ostensibly sensitive Soviet military facilities to show that military secrecy was no longer a Soviet priority and that therefore the Soviet Union was no longer a threat to the West.⁸² All this served to psychologically disarm the West.

The problem that the Party faced, however, was that *glasnost*' was seized upon by many members of society as a method to criticize not just corrupt members of the *nomenklatura* but also the entire Soviet system. Dissidents, knowing that, thanks to American public diplomacy, they were not alone, emboldened by the rise of Solidarity in Poland, encouraged by the successful resistance of anti-communist movements from Nicaragua to Afghanistan, and sensing that the Party was trapped in a box with no good options, started to speak out. One, Sergei Grigoryants, established *Glasnost*' magazine. In response to its extraordinary articles, KGB thugs would smash its office and printing equipment but they could not send Grigoryants to the Gulag: to do so would restore the "enemy image" that Gorbachev was working so assiduously to eliminate from American consciousness. And even though Gorbachev's forces used poison gas on demonstrators in Tbilisi (and slaughtered many of them with sharpened military shovels), invaded Vilnius and Baku⁸³, and

⁸¹ Properly speaking, *glasnost*' means "publicity" or possibly "giving voice to people under controlled circumstances." Insofar as it has any relation to "openness," it could conceivably be defined as "controlled openness." Suffice it to say that the term has been used misleadingly to describe what Soviet and Tsarist propagandists wished to portray as freedom of speech.

⁸² See Lenczowski, "Military *Glasnost*' and Soviet Strategic Deception"

⁸³ The Soviets justified the invasion of Baku on the basis of an ostensible need to create civil peace between Azeris and Armenians in Baku. The conflict between the two national groups, however, was deliberately exacerbated by

cracked down on various other demonstrations throughout the USSR, he was forced by the pressures from all sides to refrain from restoring full-fledged repression through violence lest his entire strategy of saving the military economy should collapse.

The first demonstrations of massive people power in the Soviet bloc took place in East-Central Europe in 1989. Some, and possibly all of them, were stimulated by the Soviets themselves as mechanisms to replace many of the Brezhnev-style Communist bosses with Gorbachev clones: figures with greater public relations ability to appeal to the West. The purpose behind these efforts was to ensure that, as Western European nations were poised to turn inwardly for their international trade as the planned 1992 integration of the European Union loomed ahead, more palatable leaders in East-Central Europe could encourage the continuation of trade with the East, and thus preserve a technology and financing pipeline to Moscow.

With the collapse of the Berlin Wall, so many people within the extended USSR had become so emboldened that Moscow and other major cities witnessed massive demonstrations. In Moscow alone, demonstrations of hundreds of thousands – some possibly close to one million – took place. People were ready to risk the possibility of violence or Gulag to make their voices heard. But the courage to take to the streets was the essential element. This courage did not come from consumer goods shortages, from knowledge of the superiority of Western goods, from rock and roll, or from any material factor. It was a matter of the spirit. It was a matter of inspiration. And this came from the contagious moral witness to truth that lay at the heart of the war of ideas.

The final collapse came with the defection of Boris Yeltsin, a leader with the courage to call upon the Soviet armed forces to refrain from shooting at their fellow citizens and to stand up against the Party which had denounced him Stalin-style just months beforehand. The man who had demonstrated that one could break with the Party without fear put the final dollops of courage into the hearts of millions of ordinary people so that they could do the same. People who had been kept in a cage for three quarters of a century, and who did not know the full meaning of freedom, could not easily define what that freedom would look like. The main thing they wanted was to lead what so many of them described as “a normal life” – something that was the opposite of the abnormal life to which they knew instinctively they had been subjected.

The denouement that came in December of 1991 was thus the result of the combination of external pressure, external inspiration, internal resistance and the impossible dilemma faced by Gorbachev: whether to liberalize, thereby unleashing political forces beyond his control, or to crack down on those forces, thereby jeopardizing the external economic bailout and the psychological disarmament of the West. It was a combination that could not have been achieved without a profound connection by the Reagan Administration with the peoples of the Soviet empire. That connection was made possible by the courage of a President who understood the critical moral dimension of the Cold War and his mobilization of the mechanisms of public diplomacy whose substance touched the depths of the human heart.

the KGB which orchestrated a pogrom of Armenians living in that city and gave media platforms (such as prime-time television) to Azeri chauvinist extremists who incited anti-Armenian violence.

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