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**Reevaluation of Eduard Shevardnadze's role
in the Soviet foreign policy making**

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Abstract

Eduard Shevardnadze and his role in foreign policy making of the Soviet Union was and still is one of the topics superficially touched by academics, scholars and political experts. Looking at the information that existed back then and the one available today, it is clear that in most of the times, the scholars contributed their works to the overall perspective of the Cold War. That included works dedicated to US-Soviet relations in the beginning of 1980s, such as *The Cold War as Cooperation* edited by E. Kanet and E. Kolodziej; *Beyond the Cold War: Superpowers at the Crossroads?* edited by M. Cox and K. Thompson; B. Bjornulnd and *The Cold War ends: 1980 to the Present*; R. Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation: American-Soviet Relations from Nixon to Reagan*; R. Brown, *From the Cold War to Collapse: Theory and World Politics in the 1980s*; S. Dockrill, *The End of the Cold War Era*; P. Winters, *Turning Points in World History*; M. Leffler, *For the Soul of Mankind: the United States, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War*; P. Boyle, *American-Soviet Relations* and others. In addition to that, academics also placed their focus on leaders of the superpowers, such as in *The Crusader: Ronald Reagan and the Fall of Communism* by Paul Kengor; J. Matlock Jr., *Reagan and Gorbachev: How the Cold War Ended*; J. McMahan, *Reagan and the World: Imperial Policy in the New Cold War*; V. Zubok, *A Failed Empire. The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev*; M. McCauley in *Gorbachev: Profiles in Power*; A. Brown in *The Gorbachev Factor*; and *Gorbachev's New Thinking* by K. Knotts. Though scholars did place their attention on the foreign policy of both US and Soviet Union, many of them lacked information about Eduard Shevardnadze, who was responsible for changes and developments in Soviet foreign policy, along with the improvement of US-Soviet relations. In order to give Eduard Shevardnadze a due credit for his work, this thesis takes a closer look at the primary sources, academic works and new available information about the Soviet foreign policy making, namely the major changes coordinated by Eduard Shevardnadze in it, his relations with Mikhail Gorbachev and the development of US-Soviet relations in the onset of the Soviet collapse.

In order to contribute to the existing knowledge about the Soviet foreign policy making, this work draws its attention to the main aspects of Shevardnadze's career and to the consequences it brought both for Soviet foreign policy and international affairs. The thesis consists of three main parts, that provide a reader with a map of thoughts and actions taken by a Soviet leadership, including the topics that were barely discussed at the time of perestroika. Following the introduction, the first chapter starts with the overall analysis of the world order in the beginning of 1980s and changes that were about to come with the presidency of Ronald Reagan in his first term. That includes

Reagan and his administrations's new ideologies and policies toward the Soviet Union, and answers to the following questions: how did the new leadership see the Soviet Union and its actions in the international arena? What were, according to the administration, perspectives of US-Soviet relations? What would be the best approach in the relations with the USSR? On the opposite, the chapter also discusses new Soviet leadership, namely the appointment of Mikhail Gorbachev as the General Secretary and his newly formed team, including Eduard Shevardnadze, as Soviet Foreign Minister. In order to have a more detailed look at these events, the chapter holds materials from official meetings of leaders of two countries, secret documents collected by Central Intelligence Agency, interviews and articles of members of both leaderships and academic works of political experts and scholars. As an example, the chapter includes works by R. Kanet and E. Kolodziej, *The Cold Was as Cooperation*; P. Boyle, *American-Soviet Relations*; P. Kengor, *The Crusader*; A. Chernyaev, *Proekt: Sovetskaya Politika*; NSDD-32 - US National Security Strategy; Conventional Arms Transfer Policy provided by National Security Council and others. This part concludes itself with the appointment of Shevardnadze as a Minister of Foreign Affairs and describes the surprise reaction to it in both Soviet and Western leaderships.

The second chapter is, if not the main one, but most important one, as it discusses Shevardnadze's direct impact on the domestic policy of the Soviet Union, developments in which he strongly connected to the foreign policy. Because Soviet domestic and foreign policy in the second half of 1980s was always associated with Gorbachev and his "new thinking," it is important to affect that perspective by adding an analysis of the implementations done by Shevardnadze. In order to do that, the second chapter starts with the definition of the new political thinking, both by Gorbachev and Shevardnadze himself, and shows where they saw the differences in approaches towards the new foreign policy. Further, the chapter discusses the fair rebuilding of the Foreign Ministry under newly proclaimed foreign minister, including personnel changes, that can be found mainly in the works of A. Brown, *Seven Years that Changed the World*; C. Nolan, *Ethics and Statecraft*; J. Van Oudenaren, *The Role of Shevardnadze and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*; M. Fainsod, *How Russia is Ruled*; P. Vanneman, *The Supreme Soviet: Politics and the Legislative Process in the Soviet Political System*; M. Polynov, *Vneshnyya Politika*; V. Israelyan, *Na Frontakh Kholodnoy Voiny*; M. Kramer, *The Role of the CPSU International Department in Soviet Foreign Relations and National Security Policy*; together with CIA Directory of USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs Officials Report, interviews of Gennady Gerasimov, George Shultz and Sergey Tarasenko cited in *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze* by C. Ekedahl and M. Goodman, and of course, memoirs of Shevardnadze

himself, such as *Moy Vybor* and *Kogda Rukhnul Zhelezny Zanaves*. The rebuilding of the Foreign Ministry was important for Shevardnadze not only because he wanted to see a strong team next to him, but also because, as it turned out later, it would be the beginning of the development of human rights not only in the Soviet leadership, but also in the Soviet society. As history shows, human rights in the Soviet Union was not a topic for a public discussion, let alone rectifying their position in Soviet society, and therefore Shevardnadze was the only one in the Soviet leadership to make an accent on its development. In order to make the analysis of this topic, various primary sources were used. That is, articles and speeches published in *Pravda*, *Tass* and *Soviet News*, starting from April 1985 up until the end of 1989; General CIA Records including “Rights, ideology and “new Russians” by W. Pfaff and “Soviets Empty Promises on Rights” by E. Conine; Secret documents on “USSR: Dissident Scene” and “USSR: Soviet Extend Shcharansky Investigation;” and Memorandum of Conversations Pertaining to the US and USSR Relations. This part of the chapter helps the reader to see the real impact Shevardnadze had on the issue of human rights in the Soviet policy and international affairs. The chapter concludes itself with another important implication, specifically solving the “American problem” and defense cutbacks proposed by Shevardnadze. Here, the attention is given to the centrality of US in the Soviet foreign policy and the importance to eliminate the vision of the “enemy.” That, according to Shevardnadze was only possible thanks to the cutbacks on the defense spendings, therefore showing the western rival that the USSR did in fact change and was not hostile as it might seem. Soviet defense spendings data was not publicly available at the time, and thus, this work included newly published information, including “Allocation of Resources in the Soviet Union and China in 1986” prepared by Joint Economic Committee of US Congress; “CNA Research Memorandum: Downgrading the Military in Soviet Foreign Policy” by S. Atkinson; “Gorbachev and the Defense Budget: the Prospects for Glasnost” prepared by the Office of Soviet Analysis in 1987; “The Soviet Release of Defense Spending Data to the United Nations: Less than Meets the Eye” collected by CIA; “Defense and the Soviet Economy: Military Muscle and Economic Weakness” prepared by RAND Corporation and others.

The final chapter of this thesis consists of steps taken by Shevardnadze towards the new world order. Diplomacy was his key instrument, as he tried to take newly proclaimed Soviet policy to all corners of the globe with the specific intent of building geographic and functional interrelationships. That also included shift to political interaction in Europe, and especially reunification of Germany, decisions on which Shevardnadze had to take under the pressure of criticism from his colleagues. The chapter discusses how such decisions were made and the criticism Shevardnadze received for

allowing the Soviet Union “lose” the Germany to the US. Such analysis was made based on memoirs of members of Soviet leaders, such as A. Dobrynin and M. Polynov; reports of conference of political experts, as in *Masterpieces of History* by S. Savranskaya, T. Blanton and V. Zubok; articles and interviews published in *Izvestia*, *International Organization* and *International Affairs*; and finally “Memorandum of Conversation between Austrian and Hungarian Foreign Ministers,” “Assessment Paper by the Austrian Foreign Ministry” and “Ambassadors’ Conference at the Austrian Foreign Ministry” translated by M. Gehler and M. Graf. The thesis ends with a part on the analysis and criticism of Shevardnadze’s role and ideologies, where his disagreements with colleagues and mainly with Gorbachev are discussed.

The main aspect of this work is to analyze newly available information about the “wins” and “losses” Shevardnadze acquired at his position in the Soviet leadership. It is important to reevaluate the existing knowledge and give the due credit to his work and career. The thesis poses questions that were not answered previously, and at the same time poses new ones, as more information becomes available.

Eduard Shevardnadze e il suo ruolo nella politica estera dell'Unione Sovietica era ed è ancora uno degli argomenti toccati superficialmente da accademici, studiosi ed esperti politici. Guardando le informazioni che esistevano allora e quelle disponibili oggi, è chiaro che nella maggior parte dei casi, gli studiosi hanno contribuito con le loro opere alla prospettiva generale della Guerra Fredda. Questo includeva opere dedicate alle relazioni tra Stati Uniti e Unione Sovietica all'inizio degli anni '80, come *The Cold War as Cooperation* a cura di E. Kanet e E. Kolodziej; *Beyond the Cold War: Superpowers at the Crossroads?* a cura di M. Cox e K. Thompson; B. Bjornulnd e *The Cold War ends: 1980 to the Present*; R. Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation: American-Soviet Relations from Nixon to Reagan*; R. Brown, *From the Cold War to Collapse: Theory and World Politics in the 1980s*; S. Dockrill, *The End of the Cold War Era*; P. Winters, *Turning Points in World History*; M. Leffler, *For the Soul of Mankind: the United States, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War*; P. Boyle, *American-Soviet Relations* e altri. Oltre a ciò, gli accademici si sono concentrati anche sui leader delle superpotenze, come in *The Crusader: Ronald Reagan and the Fall of Communism* di Paul Kengor; J. Matlock Jr, *Reagan and Gorbachev: How the Cold War Ended*; J. McMahan, *Reagan and the World: Imperial Policy in the New Cold War*; V. Zubok, *A Failed Empire. The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev*; M. McCauley in *Gorbachev: Profiles in Power*; A. Brown in *The Gorbachev Factor*; e *Gorbachev's New Thinking* di K. Knotts. Anche se gli studiosi hanno posto la loro attenzione sulla politica estera sia degli Stati Uniti che dell'Unione Sovietica, molti di loro mancavano di informazioni su Eduard Shevardnadze, che era responsabile dei cambiamenti e degli sviluppi della politica estera sovietica, insieme al miglioramento delle relazioni tra le due superpotenze appena menzionate. Allo scopo di dare ad Eduard Shevardnadze il giusto credito per il suo lavoro, questa tesi esamina più da vicino le fonti primarie, i lavori accademici e le nuove informazioni disponibili sulla politica estera sovietica, in particolare i principali cambiamenti coordinati da Eduard Shevardnadze in essa, le sue relazioni con Mikhail Gorbaciov e lo sviluppo delle relazioni tra gli Stati Uniti e URSS all'inizio del crollo sovietico.

Al fine di contribuire alle conoscenze esistenti sull'elaborazione della politica estera sovietica, questo lavoro si focalizza sugli aspetti principali della carriera di Shevardnadze e sulle conseguenze che hanno portato sia alla politica estera sovietica che agli affari internazionali. La tesi si compone di tre parti principali, che forniscono al lettore una mappa dei pensieri e delle azioni intraprese dalla leadership sovietica, compresi gli argomenti che erano appena discussi al momento della perestroika.

Dopo l'introduzione, il primo capitolo inizia con l'analisi generale dell'ordine mondiale all'inizio degli anni '80 e dei cambiamenti che stavano per arrivare con la presidenza di Ronald Reagan nel suo primo mandato. Questo include le nuove ideologie e politiche di Reagan e della sua amministrazione nei confronti dell'Unione Sovietica, e le risposte alle seguenti domande: come vedeva la nuova leadership dell'Unione Sovietica e le sue azioni nell'arena internazionale? Quali erano, secondo l'amministrazione, le prospettive delle loro relazioni politiche? Quale sarebbe stato l'approccio migliore nelle relazioni con l'URSS? Al contrario, il capitolo discute anche la nuova leadership sovietica, vale a dire la nomina di Mikhail Gorbaciov come Segretario Generale e il suo team appena formato, tra cui Eduard Shevardnadze, come Ministro degli Affari Esteri. Al fine di avere uno sguardo più dettagliato su questi eventi, il capitolo contiene materiali da incontri ufficiali dei leader dei due paesi, documenti segreti raccolti dalla Central Intelligence Agency, interviste e articoli di membri di entrambe le leadership e lavori accademici di esperti politici e studiosi. Come esempio, il capitolo include opere di R. Kanet e E. Kolodziej, *The Cold Was as Cooperation*; P. Boyle, *American-Soviet Relations*; P. Kengor, *The Crusader*, A. Chernyaev, *Proekt: Sovetskaya Politika*; NSDD-32 - US National Security Strategy; Conventional Arms Transfer Policy fornita dal National Security Council e altri. Questa parte si conclude con la nomina di Shevardnadze a Ministro degli Affari Esteri e descrive la reazione di sorpresa che essa suscitò sia nella leadership sovietica che in quella occidentale.

Il secondo capitolo è, se non il principale, il più importante, in quanto discute l'impatto diretto di Shevardnadze sulla politica interna dell'Unione Sovietica, sviluppi in cui si è fortemente collegato alla politica estera. Poiché la politica interna ed estera sovietica nella seconda metà degli anni '80 è stata sempre associata a Gorbaciov e al suo "nuovo pensiero", è importante influenzare questa prospettiva aggiungendo un'analisi delle implementazioni fatte da Shevardnadze. Per fare ciò, il secondo capitolo inizia con la definizione del nuovo pensiero politico, sia di Gorbaciov che dello stesso Shevardnadze, e mostra dove hanno trovato incongruenze di approccio verso la nuova politica estera. Inoltre, il capitolo discute l'equa ricostruzione del Ministero degli Affari Esteri sotto il nuovo Ministro, compresi i cambiamenti del personale, che possono essere trovati principalmente nelle opere di A. Brown, *Seven Years that Changed the World*; C. Nolan, *Ethics and Statecraft*; J. Van Oudenaren, "The Role of Shevardnadze and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs;" M. Fainsod, *How Russia is Ruled*; P. Vanneman, *The Supreme Soviet: Politics and the Legislative Process in the Soviet Political System*; M. Polynov, *Vneshnyya Politika*; V. Israelyan, *Na Frontakh Kholodnoy Voyny*; M. Kramer, "The Role of the CPSU International Department in Soviet Foreign Relations

and National Security Policy;” insieme a CIA Directory of USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs Officials Report, interviste di Gennady Gerasimov, George Shultz e Sergey Tarasenko citate in *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze* di C. Ekedahl e M. Goodman, e naturalmente, memorie di Shevardnadze stesso, come *Moy Vybor* e *Kogda Rukhnul Zhelezny Zanaves*. La ricostruzione del Ministero degli Affari Esteri era importante per Shevardnadze non solo perché voleva vedere un team forte accanto a lui, ma anche perché, come si è scoperto più tardi, sarebbe stato l'inizio dello sviluppo dei diritti umani non solo nella leadership sovietica, ma anche nella società sovietica. Come dimostra la storia, i diritti umani in Unione Sovietica non erano un argomento di discussione pubblica, per non parlare della rettifica della loro posizione nella società, e quindi Shevardnadze fu l'unico esponente a porre l'accento sul loro sviluppo. Per fare l'analisi di questo argomento, sono state utilizzate varie fonti primarie. Ovvero, articoli e discorsi pubblicati su *Pravda*, *Tass* e *Soviet News*, a partire dall'aprile 1985 fino alla fine del 1989; documenti generali della CIA tra cui "Diritti, ideologia e "nuovi russi" di W. Pfaff e "Soviet Empty Promises on Rights" di E. Conine; documenti segreti su "USSR: Scena dei dissidenti" e "USSR: Soviet Extend Shcharansky Investigation;" e "Memorandum of Conversations Pertaining to the US and USSR Relations." Questa parte del capitolo aiuta il lettore a vedere il reale impatto che Shevardnadze ebbe sulla questione dei diritti umani nella politica sovietica e negli affari internazionali. Il capitolo si conclude con un'altra importante implicazione, in particolare la soluzione del "problema americano" e i tagli alla difesa proposti da Shevardnadze. In questo caso, l'attenzione è data alla centralità degli Stati Uniti nella politica estera sovietica e l'importanza di eliminare la visione del "nemico". Questo, secondo Shevardnadze, era possibile solo grazie ai tagli alle spese per la difesa, mostrando così al rivale occidentale che l'URSS in realtà era cambiata e non era ostile come poteva sembrare. I dati sulle spese per la difesa sovietica non erano disponibili al pubblico all'epoca, e quindi questo lavoro includeva informazioni pubblicate di recente, tra cui "Allocation of Resources in the Soviet Union and China in 1986" preparato dal Joint Economic Committee del Congresso USA; "CNA Research Memorandum: Downgrading the Military in Soviet Foreign Policy" di S. Atkinson; "Gorbaciov and the Defense Budget: the Prospects for Glasnost" preparato dall'Office of Soviet Analysis nel 1987; "The Soviet Release of Defense Spending Data to the United Nations: Less than Meets the Eye" raccolto dalla CIA; "Defense and the Soviet Economy: Military Muscle and Economic Weakness" preparato da RAND Corporation e altri.

Il capitolo finale di questa tesi consiste nei passi fatti da Shevardnadze verso il nuovo ordine mondiale. La diplomazia fu il suo strumento chiave, poiché cercò di portare la politica sovietica

appena proclamata in tutti gli angoli del mondo con l'intento specifico di costruire interrelazioni geografiche e funzionali. Questo includeva anche il passaggio all'interazione politica in Europa, e specialmente la riunificazione della Germania, decisioni che Shevardnadze dovette prendere sotto la pressione delle critiche dei suoi colleghi. Il capitolo discute come tali decisioni furono prese e le critiche che Shevardnadze ricevette per aver permesso all'Unione Sovietica di "perdere" la Germania a favore degli Stati Uniti. Tale analisi è stata fatta sulla base di memorie di membri dei leader sovietici, come A. Dobrynin e M. Polynov; relazioni di conferenze di esperti politici, come in Capolavori della storia di S. Savranskaya, T. Blanton e V. Zubok; articoli e interviste pubblicati su *Izvestia*, *International Organization International Affairs*; e infine "Memorandum of Conversation between Austrian and Hungarian Foreign Ministers," "Assessment Paper by the Austrian Foreign Ministry" e "Ambassadors' Conference at the Austrian Foreign Ministry" tradotti da M. Gehler e M. Graf. La tesi si conclude con una parte di analisi e critica del ruolo e delle ideologie di Shevardnadze, dove vengono discussi i suoi disaccordi con i colleghi e soprattutto con Gorbaciov.

L'aspetto principale di questo lavoro è analizzare le nuove informazioni disponibili sulle "vittorie" e "perdite" che Shevardnadze ha acquisito nella sua posizione nella leadership sovietica. È importante rivalutare le conoscenze esistenti e dare il giusto credito al suo lavoro e alla sua carriera. La tesi pone domande che non hanno avuto risposta in precedenza, e allo stesso tempo ne pone di nuove, man mano che si rendono disponibili maggiori informazioni.

Introduction

The decade of 1980s began with the onset of the Second Cold War and ended with an unparalleled cooperation between the superpowers.¹ At the time, it was hard to predict that a huge change, such as a collapse of the Soviet Union would appear within the following decade. In December 1979, the British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, predicted that the world was now facing “the dangerous decade”. In her view, in the 1980s the “challenges to our security and to our way of life may, if anything, be even more acute than in the 1970s,” which would require the West to be “firm, calm, and concentrated.”² Different from his predecessors, a strong anti-Communist and a conservative representative of Republicans, Ronald Reagan entered the White House’s Oval office with much tougher ideas towards the “evil empire” as he used to call it in his speeches. In his first press conference as President in January 1981, Reagan singled out the Soviet leadership as “immoral,” stating that the Soviets were willing to commit any crime, to lie and cheat.”³ Although President’s close aides thought that he did not know what he was doing, it is clear now, after years, that Reagan had a clear plan in his mind. Apart from running in the arms race with the Soviet Union, the United States would no longer be content merely to shape and influence Soviet behavior, but would set out to change the Soviet system itself, and literally “roll back” Soviet advances and conquests outside its borders. The objective was to find weak points in the Soviet structure, to aggravate the weakness, and to undermine the system.⁴

In March 1985, after the sudden death of Konstantin Chernenko, the Politburo announced Mikhail Gorbachev as the new effective leader of USSR. At that time the Soviet Union seemed a very weary yet immensely powerful country. It was decaying economically, but politically it still appeared to be stable. The Soviet economic crisis was very visible in declining growth rates, increasing scarcity of exploitable resources and, most important, the worsening imbalance between military production and that for the general economy, especially consumer goods.⁵ As soon as Gorbachev entered into his appointment, he planned to make changes internally, rather than focusing on Soviet foreign

¹ R. Brown (ed.), *From the Cold War to Collapse: Theory and World Politics in the 1980s*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1993, p. 1.

² S. Dockrill, *The End of the Cold War Era. The Transformation of the Global Security Order*, London, Hodder Education, 2005, p. 8.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ P. Winters, *Turning Points in World History. The Collapse of the Soviet Union*, San Diego, Greenhaven Press, 1999, p. 51.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 41-42.

policy. The first official meeting of Mikhail Gorbachev and members of Reagan administration took place in the beginning of March 1985. Vice President George Bush and a Secretary of State Shultz had a brief, but important talk with new Soviet leader, where they exchanged their views and hopes on future U.S.-Soviet relations. Gorbachev thanked the Americans for paying their respects and then delivered a sweeping statement of his government's aims:

[...] the USSR has no expansionist ambitions [...]. The USSR has never intended to fight the United States and does not have any intentions now. There has never been such madmen in the Soviet leadership, and there are none now. The Soviets respect your right to run your own country the way you see fit [...]. As to the question of which is the better system, this is something for history to judge.⁶

Bush responded, and then asked Shultz to say a few words:

President Reagan told me to look you squarely in the eyes and tell you: Ronald Reagan believes that this is a very special moment in the history of mankind [...]. You are starting your term as a general secretary. Ronald Reagan is starting his second term as president [...]. President Reagan is ready to work with you [...]. He invites you to visit the United States at the earliest convenient time [...]. If important agreements can be found, the sooner the better.⁷

Gorbachev then said: “this is a unique moment; I am ready to return Soviet-US relations to a normal channel. It is necessary to know each other, to find time to discuss outstanding problems, and to seek ways to bring two countries closer together.”⁸

⁶ G. Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph: My Years as Secretary of State*, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1993, pp. 531-32, cited in M. Leffler, *For the Soul of Mankind. The United States, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War*, New York, Hill and Wang, 2007, pp. 338-39.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

Chapter 1

U.S.-Soviet Relations in the 1980s

1. The World Order in 1980s

From late 1970s, the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union went through a number of drastic changes. One of them might be described as an increased preoccupation with the role of military strength and armed power, whereas the second one lays in the attempted mobilization of allies to sustain and support the defense of the West from a perceived and growing Soviet threat — or the socialist camp from the machinations of an aggressive imperialism.⁹ The public anxiety, that was widespread in the US rose larger with the possible end of détente and the arrival of Reagan into the office. The agitation was justified, knowing that Reagan did not see neither an upcoming improvement in U.S.-Soviet relations, nor a military or political parity in between.¹⁰ Instead, as Raymond Garthoff stated, “under the confrontational approach of the Reagan administration the very legitimacy of the Soviet system was repeatedly challenged by the president himself.”¹¹ Reagan, with solid consistency, adhered to the view of the Soviet Union which he had always held, namely that peaceful and friendly co-existence with a Communist State was inherently impossible and that a good relationship with the Soviet Union could be attained only by the conversion of the Soviet system into a political and social structure akin to Western capitalist democracy.¹² One of the ways to reassure citizens was brought by the new arms control proposals. Reagan believed that the Soviets took advantage of the United States in the past with regard to disarmament agreements and that the Soviets should therefore make deeper cuts.¹³ The negotiations led by Reagan were based on the ground-launched U.S. and Soviet nuclear-capable missiles. This included the Pershing II, the GLCM and most importantly Soviet SS-20. According to Thomas Risse-Kappen, the initial Soviet response to the Western buildup was arms race as usual.¹⁴ Under

⁹ M. Cox (ed.), *Beyond the Cold War: Superpowers at the Crossroads?* Lanham, University Press of America, 1990, p. xvii.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ R. Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation: American-Soviet Relations from Nixon to Reagan*, Washington, Brookings Institution, 1985, p. 1080, cited in P. Boyle, *American-Soviet Relations. From the Russian Revolution to the Fall of Communism*, London and New York, Routledge, 1993, p. 201.

¹² P. Boyle, *American-Soviet Relations*, p. 201.

¹³ Ibid., p. 204.

¹⁴ T. Risse-Kappen, “Ideas Do Not Float Freely: Transnational Coalitions, Domestic Structures, and the End of the Cold War”, *International Organization*, vol. 48, n. 2, 1994, p. 190.

Andropov and Chernenko, who faced similarly gloomy economic conditions as Gorbachev, Moscow accelerated the production and deployment of the new nuclear weapons.¹⁵

Although superpowers found it impossible to reach an agreement on long-range arms reduction (START) before Reagan left the office, it was clear that they entered another period of relaxation in which they were increasingly willing to take steps to moderate and regulate their relationship and to cooperate on security issues.¹⁶ The question that arose at the time was whether the period of détente would turn out to be the beginning of the new level of U.S.-Soviet relations, or was it a temporary phenomenon, after which two superpowers would return to a Cold War phase again? Writing before the Moscow Summit, a columnist for *The Economist* commented: “Arms control has a place in the business of managing tensions [...]. But arms agreements cannot control the complexion of the entire relationship. To pretend that they can is to risk making the world more dangerous, not less.”¹⁷ Under the umbrella of an essentially unilateral American military guarantee, much of the developed world rallied into a system of alliances; the developing countries were protected against a threat they sometimes did not recognize, even less admit.¹⁸ Thus the relations between the United States and Soviet Union, or the state of the Cold War between them was perceived as an ideological struggle of two diverse political systems, where each of them would not tolerate others’ objectives, values and policies. Therefore, the bipolar structure of the international system emerged, where the security dilemma was the main focus. Although nuclear weapons provided an incentive for moderating and regulating the superpower competition, as long as the system remained bipolar, it was impossible for the superpowers to escape from the security dilemma.¹⁹

As for Europe, the world order was seen a lot differently rather than for the superpowers. Apart from Europe being divided into Western and Eastern parts, governments faced a feeling of being squeezed between two walls of confrontation. Both the United States and Soviet Union saw Europe as a buffer zone, where three main principles applied. The first principle lied in ideology. In this

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ P. Williams, “US-Soviet Relations: Beyond the Cold War?” *International Affairs*, vol. 65, n. 2 1989, pp. 273.

¹⁷ L. Speaks with R. Pack, *Speaking Out: The Reagan Presidency from Inside the White House*, New York, Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1988, p. 135 cited in M. Cox (ed.), K. Thompson, *Beyond the Cold War: Superpowers at the Crossroads?* Lanham, University Press of America, 1990, p. xvii. Beyond the cold war:superpowers at the crossroads? p. 4.

¹⁸ H. Kissinger, *World Order*, Allen Lane, 2014, p. 272.

¹⁹ P. Williams, “US-Soviet Relations”, *International Affairs*, p. 274.

sense Eastern Europe presented itself as an advance guard of the world communist movement and, along with the USSR itself, the spearhead of the global communist revolution,²⁰ whereas Western part would be prepared to resist such influence with the help of the United States. Next approach would be political. The Soviet government built a base for policy initiatives in East in order to influence Western part, especially to detach it from the United States. Last, but the most important principle was based on the military confrontation. This time, both regions served as a starting territory for any possible military actions taken against any of the sides. Although the rhetorical belligerence of Moscow and Washington was not matched by recklessness on either side, the superpower relationship in the first half of the 1980s was characterized by a degree of mutual paranoia and hostility that many found extremely disturbing.²¹

2. New General Secretary in Kremlin

Those inclined to see the Cold War in apocalyptic terms as the struggle between good and evil concluded that it was Ronald Reagan and his administration that overthrew the great Satan of Communism. But most scholars and analysts conclude that the Soviet superpower met its end at the hands of its own leadership under the influence of new ideas, policies, and circumstances.²² Under Leonid Brezhnev, who was at the leading for 18 years, the rate of development of Soviet industry began to decline, the implementation of reforms was not sufficient and therefore the country slowly, but surely went into the crisis. Brezhnev's direct successors Yuri Andropov and Konstantin Chernenko were not able to affect the situation and correct the state of affairs. After the sudden death of the latter, Minister of Foreign Affairs of USSR Andrey Gromyko initiated to nominate Mikhail Gorbachev on the post of General Secretary. In his memoirs, a principal foreign policy advisor Anatoly Chernyaev, recalls the moment of the election of Gorbachev:

This last one [Gromyko] came to the podium and began to speak in a free style without a piece of paper. When he named Gorbachev, the audience burst into a standing ovation comparable to the one that was at the election of Andropov (and nothing like sour applause when Chernenko was elected). The ovation came in waves and did not calm down for a long time. According to many "data" the

²⁰ R. Kanet, E. Kolodziej (eds.), *The Cold War as Cooperation*, Baltimore, The John Hopkins University Press, 1991, p. 91.

²¹ P. Williams, "US-Soviet Relations", *International Affairs*, p. 273.

²² V. Zubok, *A Failed Empire. The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev*, The University of North Carolina Press, 2007, p. 303.

people are happy that it is Gorbachev. Even before Chernenko's death, people in the subway, trolleybuses, in canteens did not hesitate to loudly express such a “wish”. The people are tired of timelessness, of the demonstration of official stupidity, when the leader is turned into a revered doll, with the help of which, however, they greatly influence the course of events. But [...] they expect a lot from Gorbachev, as they began to expect from Andropov. Will he have the courage to live up to expectations? He has great opportunities. Fresh cadres of the party apparatus and the real intelligentsia will support him. In a little while is the congress, which he can make a turning point in the history of the country.²³

Right after his election, Gorbachev has surely defined necessary actions for domestic policy, but have lacked ideas and knowledge on further steps in foreign policy. Soviet diplomat, Anatoly Dobrynin, stated:

Gorbachev did not yet have a clear program in the field of the country's foreign policy, although he expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of dynamism and strategic room for broad maneuver in order to reverse the dangerous confrontation between the USSR and the USA and changes in the general tense of international situation.²⁴

Opinion on new General Secretary was also shared during the MacNeil-Lehrer NewsHour for Public Affairs Staff. On 11 March 1985, MacNeil interviewed John Kristol and Arkady Shevchenko, both of whom met and worked with Mikhail Gorbachev before. Kristol claimed that Gorbachev was “civil, intelligent, perfectly capable of measuring the faults of the agriculture economy of the Soviet Union” and that he was “a man who thought that a good economy was good politics.”²⁵ Schevchenko, former Soviet diplomat, added that although Gorbachev had “more fresh knowledge of what was going on in the Soviet Union than his predecessors,” the Western leadership should not be excited about the changes in the Soviet foreign policy immediately:

But let me caution you that — you just mentioned that it is a generational shift in the Soviet leadership — let's wait. In a sense it is true. In a sense, only, because still the majority of the Politburo, the people to whom Gorbachev has to listen — and not only listen, but who can make decisions, at the very top of the Politburo. So he is the only one who made now the move and become a new leader of the Soviet Union, a leader which perhaps will have a fresh look at the Soviet reality as far as the economy is

²³ A. Chernyaev, *Memoirs. Proekt. Sovetskaya politika 1972-1991 iznutri*, 1985, p. 21.

²⁴ M. Polynov, “Soviet Union-United States relations in the foreign policy of Mikhail Gorbachev, 1985-1988”, *Istoriya i Sovremennost'*, n. 2, 2006, p. 307.

²⁵ “The MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour. Mikhail Gorbachev/US-Soviet relations”, Radio TV Reports, Washington D.C., 11 March 1985

concerned, but who will definitely will not change anything as far as foreign policy of the Soviet Union is concerned in the near future.²⁶

As Ronald Reagan just started his second term presidency, Gorbachev made it clear that one of his main objectives would be to change the state of Soviet-American relations. That can be seen in the following circumstances: first of all, it was important to decrease the degree of tension between two superpowers, that was mainly initiated after the placement of American nuclear missiles in Western Europe and Soviet ones in GDR and Czechoslovakia; secondly, Gorbachev believed that if the relations between US and USSR will stay at the same level, it would be hard to normalize international relations as a whole and to implement any domestic changes successfully. The first obstacle in the way of improving the Soviet foreign policy was a Strategic Defense Initiative. Eduard Shevardnadze recalls that after he was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs, he and Gorbachev pondered a lot about whether the Soviet Union would be able to withstand the arms race and, above all, the SDI competition for a long time. As he argues, calculations showed that after a while the Americans can create this system, and therefore “Gorbachev and I finally decided: we must at any cost seek a common language with the Americans.” Gorbachev tried to convince Reagan that the Soviet Union would not allow superiority over itself in SDI:

In the United States, apparently, they believe that the Americans have a certain gap with us in some types of technology. Once again, a desire arises, seizing on this “advantage,” to achieve military superiority for oneself So, if we talk about this so-called technological superiority, which is meant to be realized in SDI and thus put the Soviet Union in a difficult position , then I want to say - this is another delusion. The answer will be found.²⁷

Western experts, on the opposite, did not see the changes in the arms race coming from the new Soviet leadership. As Arnold Horlick, CIA National Intelligence Officer for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, stated that it was not likely that the Soviet going-in position at Geneva was going to be affected one way or another:²⁸

Firstly, in part it is so because those positions worked out over the last few months without the active participation of Chernenko. So taking him out of the picture shouldn't really make any difference. Secondly, and even more importantly, the logic of the Soviet position at Geneva argues for their doing precisely what is it clear now — namely, to try to soften up, to erode, at a minimum to test the firmness of the US position, particularly with respect to strategic defensive weaponry. And if they fail

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ M. Polynov, “Soviet Union-United States”, p. 308.

²⁸ “The MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour”, p. 4.

to move that position or to soften it, to seize the high ground, diplomatically and propagandistically, in a struggle for Western public opinion, it will be a natural outgrowth of this first round at Geneva.²⁹

Gorbachev did everything in order to meet with Ronald Reagan again and discuss the future of the world order and control over the arms race. Anatoly Chernyaev, that was following Gorbachev to an important meeting in Geneva, later claimed that an interview given by the new General Secretary was a source of new understanding of the political world and ourselves:

Will we [the Soviet government] be able to take advantage of this? A sharp change has happened: the arms race continues, nothing has changed in the military confrontation but a turning point has been outlined in international relations, where we have come close to recognizing that no one will start a war, to understanding that it can no longer be provoked either in the name of communism or in the name of capitalism.³⁰

Moreover, Gorbachev and his cabinet decided to use broad concessions towards Reagan and his administration. According to American experts, Gorbachev made more concessions in one day, than what the United States has received in the last 25 years from the Soviet Union. “He [Gorbachev] threw gifts at our feet, more precisely, on the table - concession after concession!” Shultz noted. On the other side, at the meeting of the Politburo on April 3, 1986, referring to relations with the United States, Gorbachev noted: “[...] for all the contradictory nature of our relations, the reality is that we will not do anything without them, and they will not do anything without us. We will not be able to keep the world without the United States. This is a strong move: we recognize their role.” He also argued that the USSR would get nothing from Reagan if it only responded with blow to blow:

To swing Reagan, we must give him something [...]. We must all understand: if our proposals will lead to weakening of U.S. security, it will not work for us. The Americans will never agree to this [...]. The ultimate task is to disrupt the next stage of the arms race. If we do not do this [...] we will be drawn into an unbearable race, and we will lose it, because we are at the limit of our capabilities.”³¹

In Shevardnadze’s view the struggle between the two opposing systems is no longer the defining tendency of the present era. In place of this outmoded “two camp” view, the USSR, he argued, was now guided by a very different principle. Because the U.S. and the USSR occupy the same planet and are confronted by the same dangers (including nuclear annihilation) they must move “beyond confrontation” towards cooperation. Such “new thinking” of Gorbachev and his cabinet were placed

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ A. Chernyaev, *Memoirs*, pp. 72-73.

³¹ M. Polynov, “Soviet Union-United States”, pp. 312-314.

not only in the concept of security and domestic economic reformations, but also in the improvement of situation in the Third World. Thus, whereas it used to denounce the capitalist West for underdeveloping third world countries (and concluded that they could only develop after they had broken from the West economically) it now argued that the real source of their backwardness was to be found within the less developed countries themselves.³² Washington, however, did not trust Soviet words. The Reagan administration needed real proof that Soviet Union was ready to change its policy not only in Afghanistan, but also in the sphere of human rights, which was one of the main frameworks for president's assessment of Soviet intentions. Above all, many in Reagan's entourage regarded SDI as a stone that could kill three to more birds: it could provide a moral basis for the costly military buildup, boost the domestic economy, and scare the Soviets into retreat on all fronts. Although there was not any visible sign of continuing détente with the United States, Gorbachev's new thinking continued to evolve, in marked contrast to Brezhnev's détente politics. Furthermore, nobody among Politburo staff was willing to contradict the General Secretary. Even the General Staff, for all its dismay at the new disarmament proposals and military doctrine, never dared to oppose Gorbachev's policies at the Politburo.

Gorbachev was careful not to challenge the basics of official ideology openly. On the contrary, his ideological vigor and frequent public pledges "to live up to the potential of socialism" confused the sophisticated Moscow elites who had long regarded communist ideology to be a cadaver. On some foreign policy issues, the dividing line was not so much ideological principles as the strategies of Soviet retrenchment. The two ranking members of the Politburo commission on Afghanistan, Shevardnadze and the KGB's Kryuchkov, however, insisted on continuing efforts to "safe" Afghanistan, fearing a bloodbath in Kabul and damage to Soviet security interests in case of a fundamentalist victory. Overall, Gorbachev tended to support and sustain its allies in underdeveloped countries, including those of anti-Israeli nationalistic Arab regimes, Vietnam and others. The state of Sino-Soviet relations also went through changes. As the Chinese reacted to a change in the balance of forces, with the Soviet Union bogged down and isolated and the United States set on path of rearmament and determined opposition to the Soviet Union, the Chinese were ready to distance themselves from the United States and explore openings to Moscow. In two keynote speeches in Vladivostok in July 1986 and Krasnoyarsk in September 1988, Gorbachev in effect acknowledged that past Soviet policy had been a series of costly failures. Seeing the normalization of relations with China as the key to developing better relations in East Asia and to

³² M. Cox, *Beyond the Cold War*, p. 111.

participating in the economic dynamism of the region, Gorbachev made a series of unilateral concessions to the Chinese.³³ The dynamics and motivation behind this costly policy demands explanation. Did Gorbachev want to reform the Soviet Union while sustaining its great power role and alliances around the world? Did he, as well as Shevardnadze, still adhere, through inertia, to the legacy of the revolutionary-imperial paradigm in the third world? It also appears that the third world issues never really interested Gorbachev, whose new thinking ideology made him focus on the integration of the Soviet Union into the “first world” — cooperation with the most advanced capitalists powers. In 1987, Gorbachev was already beginning to articulate his beliefs in the global interdependence between Soviet socialism and democratic capitalism. A major factor influencing Gorbachev and the Politburo at this time was the ongoing economic slump and the looming deficit. The initial programs for *perestroika* and improvement of the Soviet economy lay in ruins.³⁴ *Perestroika*, well known economic reform suggested and implemented by Gorbachev himself has received a lot of attention and criticism with time. It clearly required a careful consideration in order to push economic incentives the same direction with political ones. It was important to implement proper actions so that a new incentive system would be in place as the old one was destroyed, which was never done. Clearly Gorbachev had no theory of economic transition and something — including, no doubt, an exaggerated sense of the power of the bureaucracy — led him to hope that a market would automatically come into being if the old system were destroyed. His lack of conviction about how to conduct economic reform seems to have strengthened his commitment to democracy.³⁵

General Secretary Gorbachev moved rapidly to capitalize on his strengthened political position and his new leadership team has been active on almost all policy fronts, issuing statements and taking actions that reflect a new, more favorable political balance for him at the top. According to the CIA Intelligence Assessment of 1988³⁶, there are still significant constraints on Gorbachev’s power, but he is in a better position than ever to advance his reform agenda. As both President and head of the party, Gorbachev now directly supervises the process of strengthening legislative institutions and transferring some executive powers from conservative and resistant party bodies to the presidency,

³³ M. Yahuda, *International politics*, pp. 154-155.

³⁴ V. Zubok, *Failed Empire*, pp. 287-296.

³⁵ J. Hough, *Democratization and Revolution in the USSR, 1985-1991*, Washington, Democratization and revolution, Jerry Hough, Brookings Institution Press, 1997, p. 139.

³⁶ “Gorbachev’s September Housecleaning: An Early Evaluation”, 1988, National Security Archive, An Intelligence Assessment.

and therefore build a political base for himself outside the Politburo and Central Committee. Regarding the foreign policy, in its assessment CIA claims that Gorbachev's two closest Politburo allies, Aleksandr Yakovlev and Eduard Shevardnadze, are now formally in charge of managing the party and government foreign policy decision making bodies. Likewise, the leadership's efforts to pursue more pragmatic policies in the Third World are likely to be invigorated by the changes as well, and therefore the United States is likely to face accelerated Soviet activity on national security issues, particularly with respect to bilateral and multilateral arms control.³⁷

3. Main aspects of Reagan administration

Ronald Reagan entered the Oval Office as the 40th president of the United States on 20 January 1981. Right from the beginning of his campaign and all the way up to his inauguration, Reagan brought with him the idea of restoring the American morale. His approach constituted a direct challenge to the Soviet leadership since it explicitly denied fundamental tenets of Communist ideology and required a Soviet about-face on many issues under negotiation.³⁸ The issue of morale and many others were front and center in a key 17 March 1980 address by Reagan to the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations. In his first Reagan "State of the Union," he argued that regaining US prestige was fundamental to a fruitful foreign policy: "Confronted by so many pressing crises, we would all like to find quick solutions. What can be done, tomorrow, to free our diplomats in Tehran? What can be done now to turn back the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan?"³⁹

As soon as Reagan administration got down to work, their main goal was to restore global dominance in the most important spheres, such as ideological, political, military and economic. The Reagan administration came to power with the belief that the American way of life was under threat. The wealth and privilege of the people and the power and prestige of the government were being increasingly challenged both by the menace of International Communism and by nationalist movements in the third world (which of course Reagan identified simply as elements in the

³⁷ "Gorbachev's September Housecleaning: An Early Evaluation", 1988, NSA.

³⁸ J. Matlock Jr., *Reagan and Gorbachev. How the Cold War Ended*, New York, Random House, 2004, p. 5.

³⁹ P. Kengor, *The Crusader. Ronald Reagan and the Fall of Communism*, HarperCollins Publishers, 2006, p. 140.

Communist Conspiracy).⁴⁰ Yet, despite the risks, the Reagan administration abandoned the attempt of its predecessors to manage the competition between the United States and the Soviet Union within the framework of détente, and instead adopted a more aggressive and confrontational posture.⁴¹ In order to build a strategic and military superiority over the Soviets, Reagan was determined to “win” the arms race and restore country’s safety. Forcing the Soviets to divert even more resources to the production of arms will, it is hoped, help to cripple the less robust Soviet economy, ultimately bringing about the collapse of the Soviet system from within.⁴² Reagan administration used various methods in order to shake the Soviet Union from the inside. Some of them were covert operations, hidden diplomacy, a technologically intense and sustained defense buildup, as well as series of actions designed to throw the sand in the gears of the Soviet economy. During his speech to the British Parliament in 1982, Ronald Reagan has stated:

In an ironic sense, Karl Marx was right. We are witnessing today a great revolutionary crisis— a crisis where the demands of the economic order are colliding directly with those of the political order. But the crisis is happening not in the free, non-Marxist West, but in the home of Marxism-Leninism, the Soviet Union [...]. What we see here is a political structure that no longer corresponds to its economic base, a society where production forces are hampered by political ones.⁴³

Reagan’s idea and belief in the Soviet Union’s weakness was seen not only in his speeches, but mainly in the policy of its administration. In early 1982, President Reagan and a few key advisors began mapping out a strategy to attack the fundamental economic and political weaknesses of the Soviet system. As Caspar Weinberger recalls, “It was a silent campaign, working through allies and using other measures [...] designed to shift the focus of the superpower struggle to the Soviet bloc, even the Soviet Union itself.”⁴⁴ First serious action taken by Reagan was an announcement of the new nuclear arms program called the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), which involved development of an orbiting anti-missile system that would protect the United States from a surprise nuclear attack. Although SDI was controversial and has violated the Strategic Arms Limitation

⁴⁰ J. McMahan, *Reagan and the World. Imperial Policy in the New Cold War*, New York, Monthly Review Press, 1985, p. 10.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁴² J. McMahan, *Reagan and the World*, p. 11.

⁴³ P. Schweizer, *Victory. Reagan Administration’s Secret Strategy that Hastened the Collapse of the Soviet Union*, New York, The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1994, p. xiii.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* p. xv.

Talks Treaty signed by both nations in 1972, the Soviet Union has claimed that they will never let the United States beat them in the arms race.⁴⁵

Most of the strategies and policies suggested by the president were put into the National Security Decision Directives, a top-secret document to set forth official national policy for the guidance of the defense, intelligence, and foreign policy establishments of the United States government. In many respects, these directives represented a fundamental break with American policies of the recent past. As it was claimed in one of the first NSDDs, the challenges and hostility towards fundamental United States interests, and the interests of its friends and allies, have grown significantly in recent years. These trends threaten stability in many regions and impede progress towards greater political and economic development.⁴⁶ The NSDD-32, that was signed in March 1982, contained the United States National Security Strategy, posed by political advisors and reviewed by Ronald Reagan. The document introduced and formalized the notion that the United States should seek not simply to contain the spread of Soviet influence but to reverse it as well, and to pressure the internal Soviet system so as to encourage change. They were intended to reorient U.S. Cold War policy away from a defensive, reactive approach toward one that went on the offensive. The NSDD mandated that the review should address the likelihood of changes in the Soviet system; the sources of strains and tensions within that system, as well as the bases for continuity; whether there existed in the Soviet ruling elite elements that favored change (in a liberal or conservative direction) rather than the status quo, and “what actions by foreign powers assist each of these competing groups.” It directed that in setting out U.S. policy towards the USSR, the NSDD should emphasize how the “United States, its Allies and other mobilizable forces” could “influence the evolution of Soviet policies and the Soviet regime in directions favorable to our interests.”⁴⁷ Concerning the threat of spreading communism, the Reagan administration has posed an important point in its policy in order to contain and reverse the expansion of Soviet control and military presence throughout the world; to neutralize the efforts of the USSR to increase its influence through its use of diplomacy, arms transfers, economic pressure, political action, propaganda and disinformation. The foreign policy has also included the relations with allies, and therefore if possible in concert with American allies, restraint in Soviet military spending,

⁴⁵ B. Bjornulnd, *The Cold War ends: 1980 to the Present*, Farmington Hills, Lucent Books, 2003, p. 15.

⁴⁶ “Conventional Arms Transfer Policy”, 1981, National Security Council, National Security Decision Directives (NSC-NSDD-5). Available at: <https://fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsdd/nsdd-005.htm>

⁴⁷ P. Lettow, *Ronald Reagan and His Quest to Abolish Nuclear Weapons*, New York, Random House, 200, pp. 70-76.

discourage Soviet adventurism, and weaken the Soviet alliance system by forcing the USSR to bear the brunt of its economic shortcomings, and to encourage long-term liberalizing and nationalist tendencies within the Soviet Union and allied countries. In order to encourage its allies and friends to resist the spread of Communism, earlier Reagan administration has come up with a Conventional Arms Transfer Policy, which was stated in NSDD-5. Here the National Security Council claims that the United States must, in today's world, not only strengthen its own military capabilities, but be prepared to help its friends and allies to strengthen theirs through the transfer of conventional arms and their forms of security assistance and therefore sees it as an essential element of its global defense posture and an indispensable component of its foreign policy.⁴⁸ To meet successfully the challenges to their interests, the United States will require stringer and more effective collective defense arrangements. The same is implemented towards NATO Allies, while they are encouraged to maintain and increase their contributions in Europe, and other allies, who can contribute outside of Europe to allocate their marginal defense resources preferential to capabilities which could support both out of area and European missions. This also means that the United States will have to improve nuclear and chemical forces, as the security of Europe remains vital to the defense of the United States. Likewise, the modernization of strategic nuclear forces and the achievement of parity with the Soviet Union shall receive first priority in their [administration's] efforts to rebuild the military capabilities in the United States. Deterrence can best be achieved if their defense posture makes Soviet assessment of war outcomes, under any contingency, so dangerous and uncertain as to remove any incentive for initiating attack.⁴⁹

Advisors have also used this document to emphasize on the role of the possible attack from the Soviet side, and mainly from its allies and clients. Here, the administration states that despite increasing pressures on its economy and the growing vulnerabilities of its empire, the Soviet military will continue to expand and modernize. The Soviet Union remains aware of the catastrophic consequences of initiating military action directly against the United States or its allies. For this reason, a war with a Soviet ally arising from regional tensions is more likely than a direct conflict with the USSR. In a conflict with a Soviet ally, however, the risk of direct confrontation with the Soviet Union remains.

⁴⁸ "Conventional Arms Transfer Policy", 1981, (NSC).

⁴⁹ "U.S. National Security Strategy", 1982, Top Secret, National Security Decision Directive 32, System II, 90283. Available at: <https://fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsdd/nsdd-32.pdf>

The most important figures in building such policy were the Director of Central Intelligence Agency William Casey and the Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger. Casey was the responsible for carrying out the strategy, as he oftentimes ventured into areas of foreign policy traditionally reserved for other cabinet members. Weinberger had a strong appreciation for technological innovations, and therefore believed that it was a distinct American advantage that could and should be used to strain the Soviet economy.⁵⁰ Although these two members of the cabinet were an integral part of the strategy, the National Security Council played the biggest role in its formulation. By 1987, the NSC has come up with the following objectives, that affected the very heart of the Soviet Union system and included: covert financial, intelligence and logistical support to the Solidarity movement in Poland that ensured the survival of an opposition movement in the heart of the Soviet empire; substantial financial and military support to the Afghan resistance, as well as supplying of mujaheddin personnel to take the war into the Soviet Union itself; a campaign to reduce dramatically Soviet hard currency earnings by driving for the price of oil with Saudi cooperation and limiting natural gas exports to the West; a comprehensive global campaign, including secret diplomacy, to reduce drastically Soviet access to Western high technology. Although arms race and its control have played a sharp role in the U.S.-Soviet relations in 1980s, Ronald Reagan has not seen the agreements to treaties on arms control as the measure of his success in foreign affairs. Rather, this is an account of a secret offensive on economic, geostrategic, and psychological fronts designed to roll back and weaken Soviet power.⁵¹

Communist expansionism also concerned the third world region, namely Soviet troops in Afghanistan, resistance movements in Angola and Nicaragua. The Sandinista government led by Daniel Ortega was one of the main objectives in Reagan's agenda. In order to bring down the Sandinista government, Reagan began to send the aid to the Contras [contrarevolutionarios], the right-wing former supporters of the deposed dictator Somoza. Reagan declared his unqualified support for the "freedom fighters," the Contras, but Congress and public opinion were more ambivalent. Congress gave hesitant support for CIA aid to the Contras, but by 1984 indiscrete CIA operations, such as the mining of harbors in Nicaragua, and human rights violations by the Contras, especially indiscriminate killing of civilians, led Congress to pass the Boland amendment, ending aid to the Contras. In virtually every respect, then, from direct relations with the Soviet Union to regional conflicts such as Nicaragua, Reagan's policies were a return to Cold War fundamentalism,

⁵⁰ P. Schweizer, *Victory*, p. xvi.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. xix.

confrontational in approach with a self-righteous reassertion of the superiority of American values.⁵²

Regarding the Asia-Pacific, the Reagan administration has changed the state of Sino-American relations, although not fundamentally. President Reagan himself offended Beijing by his early rhetoric that called for upgrading American relations with Taiwan, and made it clear that China had become less important to the United States. That let China gain a greater degree of diplomatic maneuver, as it had less cause to fear Soviet aggression. Additionally, with the Soviet Union bogged down in Afghanistan, the Chinese could afford to take the “sting” out of relations with the Soviet Union. Consequently the Chinese began to move to what they called at the Twelfth Communist Party Congress in September 1982 an “independent foreign policy”, according to which China would “never attach itself to a big power or a group of powers.”⁵³

In his first term of presidency, Ronald Reagan was heavily criticized on his speeches and actions. With a lack of knowledge of foreign policy and his ignorance of basic details, he has made speeches that were rather provocative and therefore have raised an unnecessary panic and anxiety throughout the American society. Reagan’s overall attitude was ritualistic anti-Sovietism, uncritically proclaiming the righteousness of America’s universal democratic mission and grossly exaggerating the extent to which many of the world’s problems arose from conspiracy in Moscow. He felt that the Soviets respected strength and plain speaking, and he demonstrated both. His defensive build-up, especially SDI, arouse fear on the Soviet side of an upward spiral of the arms race which would be difficult to match and induced them to seek negotiations and better relations rather than arms competition and confrontation. The restoration of self-confidence which Reagan brought about, even if in an illusory manner in his practice of the politics of symbolism, was an essential prerequisite for the renewal of détente.⁵⁴

4. Appointment of Shevardnadze as Soviet Foreign Minister

Without holding any position in Moscow before, the first Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Republic of Georgia, Eduard Shevardnadze was appointed as Minister of Foreign Affairs of

⁵² P. Boyle, *American-Soviet Relations*, p. 211.

⁵³ M. Yahuda, *The International Politics of the Asia-Pacific*, Milton Park, RoutledgeCurzon, 1997, p. 129.

⁵⁴ P. Boyle, *American-Soviet Relations*, p. 214.

USSR under Gorbachev's leadership. Much to everyone's surprise, Shevardnadze had no diplomatic experience whatsoever, but Gorbachev believed that it was important to have an intelligent and like-minded man by his side who was not only not burdened by the old policy stereotypes and was ready to put his new designs into practice, but who would also universally share his new thinking in foreign policy.⁵⁵ In one of his books, Shevardnadze recalls the moment of receiving a direct call from General Secretary himself and initially rejecting the position.

The appointment was not only unexpected to me, but neither it was expected in Georgia or the Soviet Union as a whole. Leading politicians and members of press did not hide their amazement. Who is Eduard Shevardnadze?— they asked. — This person has no experience, he had no points of contact with foreign policy, he has no diplomatic skills. How did he make it to one of the top position of such superpower? Of course questions were harsh, but they were on the merits, because a foreign minister has to know how to communicate with politicians and press, has to have an influence on the international arena and make decisions on the questions of global politics.

This is when Shevardnadze rejected the position over the phone, and claimed that there are other reasons for such decision, apart from lacking experience. One of the main concerns was the nationality of future foreign minister, due to the fact that this position was previously occupied by Russians only. That might have played a sharp role in the future decisions and with time it proved itself. Shevardnadze pointed out that subsequently, that he was repeatedly reproached for the fact that by his decisions on different issues, he allegedly harmed the interests of Soviet Union and later of Russia.⁵⁶ The main question here would probably be of how did he still end up at this position. Gorbachev had no intention of accepting the negative answer and rather called Shevardnadze to let him know that the decision was already made and he was expected to arrive to Moscow and start his duties. The reasoning behind that was that Gorbachev was not focused on the professionalism of his future cabinet, but mainly on the political views and ability to regulate any upcoming issues. Gorbachev knew that he could completely rely on Shevardnadze also because they were old acquaintances dating back a quarter of a century to their days in the Young Communist League and became friends while working as party secretaries in large neighboring regions in the south of the Soviet Union. That Shevardnadze did not have his own connections inside the Kremlin leadership network suited Gorbachev, because the new foreign minister's position as an outsider helped unsure

⁵⁵ A. Dobrynin, *In Confidence. Moscow's Ambassador to America's Six Cold War Presidents, 1962-1986*, New York, Random House, 1995, p. 581.

⁵⁶E. Shevardnadze, *Kogda Rukhnul Zhelezny Zanaves. Vstrechi i Vospominaniya*, Moscow, Publishing House Evropa, 2009, p. 68.

his personal loyalty to the general secretary.⁵⁷ On the other side, some experts believe that because Shevardnadze was “virtually a blank slate in foreign affairs” Gorbachev would be totally in command of foreign policy and thus be his own foreign minister. The community of Sovietologists in Washington — particularly Jerry Hough of the Brookings Institution, Dmitri Simes of John Hopkins University, and experts at the State Department — concluded that Gorbachev picked a “new foreign minister cut from his own mold, a man of political wit who will allow Gorbachev to shape his own foreign policy over the long term.” Gorbachev thus defended his appointment of a non-Russian to the foreign ministry, saying that Shevardnadze was, after all, a “Soviet man.” As for his lack of experience, Gorbachev remarked: “Well, perhaps that’s a good thing. Our foreign policy needs a fresh eye, courage, dynamism, innovative approaches. I have no doubt that my choice is right.”⁵⁸

During his service as a party leader in Georgia, Shevardnadze pursued policies that were found liberal and enlightened, especially in the Soviet context. He made full use of his position and power in true autocratic fashion, but he also appreciated and used sophisticated political tactics, such as cultivating the support and cooperation of general public. He was an outstanding Soviet *apparatchik* and acted the role of psychopath to the leaders of the Soviet Union, extolling the virtues of those in a position to help him.⁵⁹ In short, he was extraordinary skilled, resilient, and ambitious politician who demonstrated during his Georgian career that he was capable of both ruthless careerism and political creativity.⁶⁰ As soon as he entered the office, he was faced with unresolved issues, that included the confrontation with West, question on German reunification, Soviet troops in Afghanistan, arms control race, SDI and others. It was important to make real actions in order to affect arising problems, and fortunately Gorbachev’s and Shevardnadze’s views completely coincided. As he took up his duties, Shevardnadze prioritized several objectives, which included overcoming “confrontational trend” and changing it into the dialogue. In one of his interviews to *Novosti* Press Agency, Shevardnadze claimed that everything that was achieved during his work as a foreign minister was a consequence and a product of perestroika. Regarding the state of relations between the Soviet Union and other countries, he asserted that:

⁵⁷ A. Dobrynin, *In Confidence*, p. 582.

⁵⁸ C. Ekedahl, M. Goodman, *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze*, University Park, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997, p. 35.

⁵⁹ C. Ekedahl, M. Goodman, “Eduard Shevardnadze: Leading the Soviet Union out of the Cold War”, *International Journal*, vol. 52, n. 2, 1997, p. 222.

⁶⁰ C. Ekedahl, M. Goodman, *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze*, p. 8.

We have not worsened our relations with anyone, we have developed the existing ties and initiated new ones. Our relations with the surrounding world became more equable and calmer, which means a great deal—primarily that the threat of a clash or war diminished. Our security enhanced—and not through new super-efforts in “additional armament” but thanks to a correct policy. Our words and deeds came to be more trusted.⁶¹

Considered the moral force for new political thinking, he was the point man in the struggle to undermine the forces of inertia at home and to end Moscow’s isolation abroad.⁶² As it was well seen long before new leaders came to power in 1985, the Soviet Union inclined towards an economic crisis and was seen as an exhausted empire to the rest of the world. In order to save its reputation not only externally, but also to improve it domestically, Shevardnadze started to concern the military spendings. At the heart of the new thinking was the belief that revitalizing the economy superseded any possible military threat and that security could be served best by improving relations with the West, thereby easing pressure for military spending. As domestic and foreign policies were critically linked to the new thinking, the new leaders realized that Moscow’s foreign policy would have to change profoundly.⁶³ Another concern that Shevardnadze had during his work was the decision to introduce troops in Afghanistan. Following his interview to above mentioned journal, he stated that:

[...] if these roughshod violations of the norms of party-and-state ethics had not taken place and the matter had been examined with the participation of competent experts in different fields, it would have been possible even then to conclude that the Afghan problem could not be solved militarily. This conclusion underlay the decision made by the Republic of Afghanistan and the Soviet union concerning the withdrawal of our troops and a faithful and unswerving fulfillment of the Geneva agreements. It is with good reason that the new edition of the USSR Constitution stipulates that a decision on the use of the armed forces beyond our national borders should be sanctioned by the USSR Supreme Soviet.⁶⁴

As a new foreign minister, Shevardnadze made decisions based on three following questions. Do we want our country to be a civilized state, providing its citizens with an existence worthy in all respects, protecting their civil and human rights by the highest world standards? Do we want to see ourselves in a group of advanced countries, advanced in terms of national wealth, scientific and

⁶¹ M. Kondratyev, “Eduard Shevardnadze: The world has become a safer place,” *Vestnik*, n. 16 (50), 1989, p. 4.

⁶² C. Ekedahl, M. Goodman, “Eduard Shevardnadze”, p. 220.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 221.

⁶⁴ M. Kondratyev, “Eduard Shevardnadze”, p. 11.

technological development, quality and full of life for the citizens and people of the Union? Do we want to live in an environment, full of confidence that we will be able to ensure peace, security, to cope with all the threats that exist or may arise before us? Although Shevardnadze attempted to improve domestic setup, he still was the one to criticize and blame all the failures on. In his book, that he hesitated to publish at the time, he opens up about the real struggle of direct accusations:

A harsh indictment was presented to the new political thinking: separatism of the republics, interethnic clashes, the “loss of the cordon sanitaire”— the countries of Eastern Europe, “the collapse of the socialist camp,” the unification of Germany, “concessions” to the West. The main target of the attack, as I said, was foreign policy, more precisely the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. If quite definitely — the minister.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ E. Shevardnadze, *Moi Vybor - V Zashitu Demokratii i Svobody*, Publishing House Novosti, 1991 pp.10-14.

Chapter 2

Eduard Shevardnadze's new domestic policy choices

1. New political thinking in foreign policy

In foreign policy, Gorbachev was the legate of bad relations with the US, poor relations with Western Europe and Japan, uneasy relations with Poland's rulers, and only marginally improving relations with China.⁶⁶ Recognition that the Soviet Union's security could best be served by improving relations with West, thereby easing pressure to increase military spending and permitting serious efforts to deal with domestic problems, was at the heart of new political thinking.⁶⁷ The renunciation of the underlying assumption that the Soviet Union was locked in a permanent confrontation with the West, particularly the US — an assumption that drove Soviet policy for seventy years — produced the radical policies of 1985-1990. Arms control initiatives, unilateral force reductions, human rights concessions, withdrawal from Eastern Europe, and retreat from the Third World all derived from this basic fundamental change in perception.⁶⁸ Once he took the office, the pace and breadth of Gorbachev's changes not only shocked foreign observers and distressed Soviet conservatives, but also surprised Gorbachev's own comrades from the original "Andropov team" of reformers. In both domestic and foreign policy, his call for a major reformation was followed by broad liberalization, *glasnost*, and by 1989, a radically transformed political system.⁶⁹ During his political report to the Central Committee of CPSU in February of 1986, Gorbachev identified precise steps for new foreign policy. According to him, socialism unreservedly rejected war as a means of resolving interstate political and economic contradictions and ideological disputes. Therefore, the main direction of the party's activities in the world arena remained the struggle against nuclear danger, the arms race, the battle for the preservation and strengthening of world peace.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ A. Brown, *Seven Years*, p. 69.

⁶⁷ C. Ekedahl, M. Goodman, *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze*, p. 52.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

⁶⁹ R. English, *Russia and the Ideas of the West. Gorbachev, Intellectuals, and the End of the Cold War*, New York, Columbia University Press, 200, p. 193.

⁷⁰ "Politicheskii Doklad Tsentralnogo Komiteta KPSS. XVII S'ezdu Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soyuza. Dokald M.S. Gorbacheva", *Pravda*, 25 February 1986, pp. 2-9.

First reforms presented by Gorbachev included personnel changes in most of the departments. He was able to have a decisive impact on the development of ideas on the Soviet Union's relationship with the outside world and on the actual conduct of Soviet foreign policy by virtue of some half-dozen key appointments.⁷¹ These were the elevation of Eduard Shevardnadze to the post of Foreign Minister, in succession to Andrey Gromyko, in the summer 1985; the replacement of Boris Ponomarev as head of the International Department by Anatoly Dobrynin in 1986; the promotion of Alexander Yakovlev⁷² to Politburo and Secretariat membership; the replacement of Konstantin Rusakov by Vadim Medvedev as head of the Socialist Countries Department of the Central Committee in 1986, together with the promotion of Georgy Shakhnazarov to First Deputy Head of that department; and the appointment of Anatoly Chernyaev as Gorbachev's foreign policy aide in 1986.⁷³ Though largely unappreciated in the West, the promotion of new-thinking advisers, together with the growing influence of liberal, anti-socialist ideas in intellectual life more generally, began to shift the "critical mass" in foreign policy thought.⁷⁴ With Gorbachev in charge and a new foreign policy team in place, the leadership both generated and encouraged innovative ideas. It was also responsive to fresh thinking emanating from within the Foreign Ministry and Central Committee apparatus and from the broader community of *mezhdunarodniki*.⁷⁵ Although Gorbachev's major speech to the Twenty-Seventh Party Congress in 1986 did not yet set out an internally coherent new foreign policy,⁷⁷ it nevertheless stated new fundamental principles, that new Soviet government had to follow. First of all, following in the military field: the rejection of the nuclear powers from war against each other or against third states, both nuclear and conventional; non-admission of arms race in outer space, cessation of all tests of nuclear weapons and their complete elimination, prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons, refusal to create other means of mass destruction; strictly controlled reduction of the levels of military potentials of states, to the level of reasonable sufficiency; the dissolution of military groupings, and as a step toward this, the rejection of their expansion and the formation of new ones; proportionate and commensurate reductions in military

⁷¹ A. Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1997, pp. 212-213.

⁷² Although Yakovlev was promoted as a member of Politburo, he participated in Soviet international affairs from the autumn of 1988, although even before that he participated in foreign policy discussions.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ R. English, *Russia and the Ideas*, p. 209.

⁷⁵ trans. Specialists on international relations and foreign countries

⁷⁶ A. Brown, *Gorbachev Factor*, p. 220.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 221.

budgets.⁷⁸ Gorbachev emphasized that so far as relations with the US were concerned, the only security worthy of the name was mutual security, while at the same time stressing that “reasonable sufficiency” should henceforth be the criterion for judging Soviet military expenditure.⁷⁹ According to Secretary of State George Shultz, Gorbachev talked in global terms, saying that their task was “to assist all countries in improving the international situation,” which “had changed radically compared to the 1950s,” with literally dozens of new countries, each with its own interests and aspirations. “No one, not even USSR and the US, could fail to take this into account. We have to learn to base our relations on these realities,” and their interpretation of them must affect “the formulation and implementation of foreign policy.”⁸⁰ Further, Gorbachev discussed new principles in political field, which were based on unconditional respect in international practice for the right of every nation to sovereignly choose the paths and forms of their development; a fair political settlement of international crises and regional conflicts; development of a set of measures aimed at strengthening confidence between states, at creating effective guarantees against attacks on them from outside, the inviolability of their borders; development of effective methods for the prevention of international terrorism, including the safety of the use of international land, air and sea communications.⁸¹ He also provided an early indication of the more multipolar Soviet foreign policy he intended to follow, observing that “one must not in world politics restrict oneself to relations with just one country alone, even if it is a very important one.”⁸² This was not only a criticism of the US, but an indirect criticism of Gromyko’s foreign policy, as was Gorbachev’s remark that “continuity in foreign policy has nothing in common with the simple repetition of what was done before, especially in the approach to problems that accumulated.”⁸³ Further, he included economic field, which was more focused on the international economic condition, rather than domestic and included: exclusion from international practice of all forms of discrimination, rejection of the policy of economic blockades and sanctions, if this is not directly provided for by the recommendations of the world society; joint search for a fair settlement of the debt problem; the establishment of a new world economic order that guaranteed equal economic security for all states;

⁷⁸ “Politicheskii Doklad Gorbachev”, *Pravda*, 1986, p. 8.

⁷⁹ M. Gorbachev, *Izbrannye Rechi i Stat’i*, vol. 3, Moscow, Izdatel’stvo Politicheskoi Literatury, 1987, pp. 243-257.

⁸⁰ G. Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, p. 529.

⁸¹ “Politicheskii Doklad Gorbacheva”, *Pravda*, 1986, p. 8.

⁸² A. Brown, *Gorbachev Factor*, p. 221.

⁸³ M. Gorbachev, *Izbrannye Rechi*, p. 247.

development of principles for the use for the benefit of world society, primarily developing countries, of part of the funds that will be released as a result of cuts in military budgets; joining efforts in the exploration and peaceful use of outer space, solving global problems on which the fate of civilization depends.⁸⁴ Last, but one of the most important elements in Soviet new thinking on foreign policy was a humanistic universalism,⁸⁵ which Gorbachev also included in his report. According to him, this sphere consisted of cooperation in spreading the ideas of peace, raising the level of general objective awareness, mutual acquaintance of people with each other's life, strengthening the spirit of mutual understanding and harmony in relations between them; the eradication of genocide, apartheid, the preaching of fascism and any other racial, national or religious exclusivity, as well as discrimination against people on this basis; expansion — while respecting the laws of each country — international cooperation in the exercise of political, social and personal human rights; solving in a humane and positive spirit the issues of family reunification, marriage, the development of contacts between people and organizations.⁸⁶

According to western experts and Gorbachev himself, the new political thinking in the foreign policy was based on two main axioms. Gorbachev for the first time explained his new political thinking and reasons behind it in his book in 1987, which was published a year later. There the first axiom stated that a nuclear war cannot be a means of achieving political, economic, ideological, or any other goals. After all, it was the political function of war that always served as its justification, its “rational” meaning.⁸⁷ Sharing such opinion, Shevardnadze spoke in Helsinki to a session of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, and stated that it would be necessary to reduce East-West tensions, lessen the costs of competing in a “no-win” arms race, and create a more relaxed international environment in order to enhance the prospects of gaining increased credits and trade with West.⁸⁸ By the summer of 1985 Gorbachev was corresponding with Ronald Reagan on how to reduce the threat of nuclear war and curb the nuclear arms race. He dropped the condition, imposed since 1977, that any meeting between the superpower leaders must be linked to signing of significant agreements.⁸⁹ According to an Irish historian and former senior lecturer at the School of

⁸⁴ “Politicheskii Doklad Gorbacheva”, *Pravda*, 1986, p. 8.

⁸⁵ A. Brown, *Gorbachev Factor*, p.221.

⁸⁶ “Politicheskii Doklad Gorbacheva”, *Pravda*, 1986, pp. 8-9.

⁸⁷ M.Gorbachev, *Perestroika i Novoe Myshlenniye*, p. 72.

⁸⁸ C. Ekedahl, M. Goodman, *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze*, p. 61.

⁸⁹ V. Zubok, *A Failed Empire*, p. 284.

Slavonic and East European Studies, Martin McCauley, Gorbachev perceived that the Soviet empire overstretched itself and that it could no longer challenge the US for world supremacy and therefore the first goal was to slow down the arms race and then move to arms reduction.⁹⁰ This opinion was shared by Archibald Brown, a British political scientist and a professor of politics at the University of Oxford. In his view, for Gorbachev the possibility of the arms race entering a still more highly automated, dangerous and expensive stage was a further argument for the kind of policy innovation which would break the deadlock and end the vicious spiral. That is the view that the change in the Soviet Union was induced by the intensification of the arms race inaugurated by Ronald Reagan after he entered the White House in 1980 and, in particular, by his Strategic Defense Initiative.⁹¹ The second axiom was based on the fact that Gorbachev saw the national security tied directly to the domestic economy. He told the Twenty-Seventh Communist Party Congress in March 1986 that saving an economy in crisis superseded any external military threat as the Soviet Union's "primary task."⁹² Shevardnadze added later on the theme that foreign policy must advance economic strength, during his speech in July 1987:

The time has come today to introduce economics into Soviet foreign policy, until it emerges completely with economics, it will not be able to assist in restructuring the Soviet internal economy and society in general [...], which otherwise will not be able to participate on equal terms in the competitive political struggle for making its social and political model of development attractive.⁹³

Robert Legvold, an American political scientist and Director of Columbia University's Harriman Institute proclaimed that Gorbachev's domestic economic reform program was his most important foreign policy statement.⁹⁴ That, according to Richard Ericsson, included six main objectives: an emphasis on technological modernization, raising the level of Soviet technology to develop world standards; modernizing organizational structures and management methods; eliminating the inherently wasteful nature of Soviet production and distribution activity; modernizing the sectoral structure of the economy; modifying the structure of consumption and raising the standard of living for common people; and bringing the Soviet Union into the mainstream of the world economy in

⁹⁰ M. McCauley (ed.), *Gorbachev*, Essex, Pearson Education Limited, 1988, p. 77.

⁹¹ A. Brown, *Gorbachev Factor*, p. 226.

⁹² footnote 19 wars of Shevardnadze p. 61

⁹³ footnote 20 wars p. 61.

⁹⁴ R. Legvold, "War, Weapons, and Soviet Foreign Policy," in *Gorbachev's Russia and American Foreign Policy*, ed. S. Bialer, M. Mandelbaum, Westview Press, 1988, p. 102. cited in K. Knottes Jr., "Mikhail Gorbachev's 'New Thinking': Implications for Western Security", Naval Postgraduate School, 1991, p. 11.

the direct sense of participation commensurate with its size and importance.⁹⁵ These major policy revisions culminated in a revolutionary new Soviet outlook on both domestic and international affairs. The new political thinking could not be easily defined, but was perhaps best characterized as a fundamentally more flexible approach to dealing with a wide range of domestic and international concerns.⁹⁶ According to Bruce Weinrod, a board member of US Institute of Peace and Director of Foreign Policy and Defense Studies at The Heritage Foundation, there were three possibilities why domestic changes occurred. In his research in fall of 1988, Weinrod argued that the first possibility of changes occurred simply because Gorbachev was a genuine reformer, and therefore wanted to make the Soviet Union a modern industrial power, which would require internal structural changes. Possibility number two stated that Gorbachev basically believed in the traditional Soviet system, but concluded that it needed some carefully managed and controlled shaking up to invigorate it, along with a modest loosening of controls — at least temporarily — in order to provide incentives for economic development. Third possibility proclaimed that he did not have a master plan guiding his actions, but rather was pragmatically trying different approaches, hoping he would eventually press the right combination of buttons leading to economic development.⁹⁷

Gorbachev, Shevardnadze and Yakovlev fought long and hard to transform Soviet international relations and foreign policy. The new thinking was inevitable only in their minds; in the political arena, it could easily have been halted at any number of turns.⁹⁸ In early 1986, in connection with the upcoming Twenty-Seventh Party Congress, Gorbachev, Yakovlev and Shevardnadze sat down to tackle “the philosophy of foreign policy.” Shevardnadze recalled the “incredible difficulty” with which the group accepted the view of an integral world over one divided by social systems; in their near daily sessions, he “observed Gorbachev’s ideas heading into dangerous, uncharted water.”⁹⁹ He also stated that the formation of the basic principles of new thinking was to be preceded by a meticulous, scientifically verified analysis of the main trends and contradictions of the modern world in the most direct, immediate connection with the situation in the country. It was a task no

⁹⁵ R. Ericson, “Soviet Economic Reforms: The Motivation and Content of Perestroika,” *Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 42, Spring 1988, p. 318, cited in *Ibid*.

⁹⁶ K. Knotts Jr., “Mikhail Gorbachev,” p. 3.

⁹⁷ W. Weinrod, “‘New Thinking’ and US Foreign Policy,” *World Affairs*, Vol. 151, No. 2, Fall 1988, p. 60.

⁹⁸ R. English, *Russia and the Ideas*, p. 195.

⁹⁹ E. Shevardnadze, *Moi Vybor*, pp. 94-96.

less difficult than the proclamation of new guiding goals, a task in itself also insoluble because of the tools of new thinking.¹⁰⁰

The key idea was about a contradictory, but interconnected, integral world. The thesis about human life as the highest goal of social development, later developed into an imperative category of the priority of universal human values. The principle of freedom of choice, which could only be realized in a world without weapons and violence. Ensuring the security and regency of all controversial issues exclusively by political means, in other words, a statement of the supremacy of the power of politics over the politics of power. An extremely important conclusion from both theoretical and practical points of view was that security was indivisible: in bilateral relations it could only be mutual, and in international relations only universal. And such security was guaranteed not by an extremely high, but by an extremely low level of strategic balance, from which it was necessary to completely exclude nuclear and other types of weapons of mass destruction. A simple, outwardly devoid of any pitfalls, but actually rejecting the factor of ideologization — the position — to behave in the international arena with restraint, according to the norms of civilized communication, guided by the criteria of universal human morality.¹⁰¹

Shevardnadze firmly believed that the failing economy was attributable to government repression of the Soviet people and distortion of Lenin's socialist model. First, democracy and glasnost were essential to reform of the Soviet economy and therefore the Soviet people must be given a stake in the Soviet economy in order for material productivity to improve and perestroika to succeed. Second, military spending and client state subsidies collectively represented a disproportionate share of the GNP and an intolerable burden on the domestic economy. Achieving cost savings in these contentious areas was essential and would directly impact Shevardnadze's breadth of attitude in crafting foreign policy.¹⁰² Further, the Soviet economy desperately needed modernization through foreign investment, where Shevardnadze recognized that it was an important vehicle for delivery of short-term economic gains, which were vital to maintaining new thinking reforms. Last and most important was democratization of Soviet society through drastic reform in the area of human rights, where ending government repression was central in Shevardnadze's thinking. Additionally, he realized that world recognition of improvements in this area were a key requisite for foreign investment and that international perceptions of Soviet reform rested largely on his actions and diplomacy.¹⁰³ Given the extraordinary foreign policy activism of the Soviet Union under

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 97.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² "Eduard Shevardnadze," National War College, p. 2.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

Gorbachev, Shevardnadze had a demanding and important role to play, which he performed with skill and integrity, in the process winning the respect and even affection of his foreign counterparts.¹⁰⁴

In October 1989, Shevardnadze was ready to publicly state improvements in foreign policy, that happened thanks to new political thinking and argued, that Soviet Union occupied a worthy place among the nations. In his words, there was no state in the world that would not want to develop relations with the Soviet Union, to expand ties and contacts, exchange people, ideas and information.¹⁰⁵

We maintained correct, normal relations with all countries. We had no strained, let alone hostile relations with any state. We did not worsened relations with any state, but on the opposite, improved with many. For the first time in many years, not a single Soviet soldier took part in military operations anywhere in the world. We came up with the idea of eliminating foreign military bases and military presence in foreign territories by the year 2000. For the first time, the number of Soviet servicemen behind our national borders sharply decreased. We were ready, in the basis of reciprocity, to work towards the dissolution of military-political groupings in Europe.¹⁰⁶

Further, Shevardnadze claimed that the Soviet Union took an active part in settling regional situations in southern Africa, Central America, Cyprus and the Korean Peninsula, around Cambodia, the Middle East, the Horn of Africa and Western Sahara, maintaining contacts with all interested parties. The Soviet Union acted as an active partner of Non-Aligned Movement, many regional organizations and associations, and maintained business contacts with them.¹⁰⁷ Regarding the Soviet policy in the Third World, Weinrod claimed that the most significant development was, of course, in Afghanistan, which was carried out in subtle manner — through what variously was termed “indirect,” “undeclared,” or “covert” aggression. At the time however, it was only the beginning of the test of Soviet intentions and was by no means clear whether the Soviets would seek to dominate Afghanistan — or at least encourage disorder — even if they pulled out their uniformed military forces or whether it would allow a genuinely and neutral government with indigenous political and cultural institutions to develop.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ See G. Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph: My Years as Secretary of State*, p. 702, where Shultz describes the contrast between Shevardnadze and Gromyko, cited in A. Brown, *Gorbachev Factor*, p. 216.

¹⁰⁵ “Vneshyaya Politika,” *Pravda*, 24 October 1989, pp. 2-4.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*,

¹⁰⁸ W. Weinrod, “Soviet ‘New Thinking,’” p.62.

Despite the fact that quite a few diplomats, politicians, institutions and departments were involved in foreign policy problems, two people, Gorbachev and Shevardnadze, played a decisive role in this area.¹⁰⁹ They worked hand in glove and it was not long before the Gorbachev - Shevardnadze tandem came to determine the country's foreign policy in its entirety, gradually pushing the rest of the Politburo into the background, where its collective opinion was no longer of crucial importance.¹¹⁰ Western leaders, foreign ministers, and senior officials responded with diverse and mixed emotions to the new style of Soviet foreign policy, for the change of manner was immediate, whereas changes of substance were not so instantaneous. While, in general, they welcomed dealing with Soviet counterparts with whom they could have real conversations not overladen with dogma, they realized that they could no longer rely on the ineptitude of Soviet propaganda to give them a walk-over victory in any battle for public opinion.¹¹¹

2. Rebuilding the Foreign Ministry

Eduard Shevardnadze was a very skilled politician and policy-maker, but was modest about his attainments, frank about his shortcomings, and genuinely interested in encouraging his subordinates to be candid in their criticism of the Foreign Ministry's actions.¹¹² Shevardnadze had more than compensated for his previous lack of foreign policy experience with his undoubted political ability and diplomatic skills, thus helping to ensure that while the Foreign Ministry did not dominate the foreign policy making process as it did when Gromyko was minister and the hapless Chernenko was General Secretary, it had not reduced to the role of mere executant of a policy decided elsewhere but instead makes its own substantial input to that process.¹¹³ According to the 1977 constitution, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was responsible to the Council of Ministers of the USSR, which in turn was accountable to the Supreme Soviet.¹¹⁴ An important part of the security-

¹⁰⁹ M. Polynov, *Vneshnyya Politika*, p. 114.

¹¹⁰ A. Dobrynin, *In Confidence*, p. 582.

¹¹¹ A. Brown, *Gorbachev Factor*, p. 216.

¹¹² C. Nolan, *Ethics and Statecraft*, p. 183.

¹¹³ A. Brown, *Seven Years*, p. 84.

¹¹⁴ J. Van Oudenaren, "The Role of Shevardnadze and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Making of Soviet Defense and Arms Control Policy", 1990, R-3898-USDP, Prepared for the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, p. 4.

related function of the Supreme Soviet was legitimizing Soviet policy in the international arena.¹¹⁵ However, the legislature's role in foreign and security policy formulation and implementation appeared to be primarily symbolic, ritualistic, and propagandistic.¹¹⁶ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defense, and other governmental organs — all under the guiding hand of the CPSU — held the real power in foreign policy formulation.¹¹⁷¹¹⁸ The Foreign Ministry was incessantly engaged in the practical implementation of specific direction of foreign policy. By the time Shevardnadze arrived to his post, a large number of highly qualified diplomats, who enjoyed high prestige in the international arena were working there. These included G. Kornienko, A. Dobrynin, Y. Vorotsov, A. Adamishin, O. Grinevsky, Y. Kvitsinsky, V. Kochemasov, A. Kovalev, V. Petrovsku and others. They held various positions in the central apparatus of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and were ambassadors to foreign countries. They prepared official meetings of the General Secretary of the state and represented the country internationally.¹¹⁹

Anticipating resistance to new thinking, Shevardnadze arranged for Gorbachev to endorse change at an unusual foreign ministry conference in early 1986,¹²⁰ where then the president told the assembled diplomats that it was time to end the lethargy of the Gromyko era and introduce new thinking to the conduct of foreign policy.¹²¹ As Shevardnadze recalls himself, in the beginning of his career as foreign minister, he had to build a number of priorities for himself, before giving out any orders:

¹¹⁵ M. Fainsod, *How Russia is Ruled*, Cambridge, 1953, Harvard University Press, p. 313, cited in K. Rackers, "The Evolving Role of the Supreme Soviet in National Security Decision-Making", Virginia, Unclassified, Center for Naval Analyses, 1990, p. 4.

¹¹⁶ P. Vanneman, *The Supreme Soviet: Politics and the Legislative Process in the Soviet Political System*, Durham, 1977, Duke University Press, cited in K. Rackers, "The Evolving Role of the Supreme Soviet", p. 4.

¹¹⁷ The function of these committees was, first, as a final review board for checking the wording of treaties and laws in the foreign-affairs arena before their ratification by the superior bodies; and second, to serve in lieu of the higher bodies as a forum for propagating a policy by a high official. Vanneman found that the foreign-affairs commissions were composed of high-ranking CPSU apparatchiki - to a much higher degree than the general membership of the Supreme Soviet. Vanneman, *The Supreme Soviet*, p. 171, cited in Ibid.

¹¹⁸ According to the practice established for decades, before the next trip, directives for the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee were developed, discussed and approved by the Politburo. They were prepared with the direct participation of Gorbachev, the Foreign Ministry, the International Department and the KGB. See M. Gorbachev, *Zhizn' i Reformy*, vol. 2, Moscow, Novosti Publishing House, 1995, pp. 10-12.

¹¹⁹ M. Polynov, *Vneshnyya Politika*, p. 110.

¹²⁰ Interview with Sergey Tarasenko, 1993, cited in C. Ekedahl, M. Goodman, *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze*, p. 74.

¹²¹ C. Ekedahl, M. Goodman, *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze*, p. 74.

[...] I was in no hurry, I looked at people, observed, accumulated information about the department, listened more than spoke, studied, but did not lecture, took as much as I could take, and gave only encouraging interest and attention to the potential strengths of the employee. At the same time, I clearly realized that perestroika could not wait. That it did not bypass our department and that it needed new landmarks that met the new realities of the time in which the country and the world found themselves.¹²²

According to Viktor Israelyan, one of the Soviet diplomats and First Deputy Representative of the Soviet Union in the United Nations, Shevardnadze's approach towards Foreign Ministry changed quickly:

Shevardnadze's arrival at the Foreign Ministry seemed to portend a thaw in relations between the heads of the diplomatic departments of the socialist countries. The traditional smile, the outward simplicity of the new minister was noticeably stated with a dryness determined by the gloominess of his predecessor. At first, he gave primary attention to improving relations with socialist partners, often met with his communist colleagues, but soon Gorbachev's new thinking began to place other accents in Soviet foreign policy, and the minister began to focus with pleasure in other problems, pushing into the background acute issues of the socialist community.¹²³

Within the foreign ministry, Shevardnadze first made his influence felt in personnel matters.¹²⁴ In the past, officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs tended to see themselves as the “doers” — the practical people concerned with the real business of interstate relations — and the International Department as an organization more interested in liberation and revolutionary movements and in the ideological advance of communism.¹²⁵ In April 1986 Georgii Kornienko, who was the first deputy foreign minister since 1977, was moved over to the International Department.¹²⁶ Within a month, Shevardnadze appointed two new first deputy ministers, Anatolii Kovalev and Yulii Vorontsov,¹²⁷ both of whom had extensive experience in East-West affairs. Four other career diplomats, Aleksandr Bessmertnykh, Vladimir Petrovskii, Anatolii Adamishin, and Boris Chaplin

¹²² E. Shevardnadze, *Moi Vybor*, pp. 87-88.

¹²³ V. Israelyan, *Na Frontakh Holodnoy Voyny. Zapiski Sovetskogo Posla*, Moscow, Izdatelstvo Mir, 2003, p. 334.

¹²⁴ J. Van Oudenaren, “The Role of Shevardnadze”, p. 8.

¹²⁵ This view comes out strongly in the memoirs of the former high-ranking official in the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the United Nations, Arkady Shevchenko. See his *Breaking with Moscow* (Knopf, New York, 1985), especially pp. 188–91, cited in A. Brown, *Seven Years*, p. 85.

¹²⁶ M. Kramer, “The Role of the CPSU International Department in Soviet Foreign Relations and National Security Policy”, *Soviet Studies*, vol. 42, n. 3, 1990, p. 434.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

were promoted to deputy foreign ministers.¹²⁸ Bessmertnykh, a former chief of the US section, became deputy minister with responsibility toward Washington in 1986. Shevardnadze relied heavily on him during this period and praised him as the foreign ministry's chief troubleshooter.¹²⁹ Israelyan, who was a witness of reorganization of the foreign ministry, stated one of the main reasons of Shevardnadze's actions. In his book Israelyan claims that above-mentioned changes were partially based on the personal animosity:

Shevardnadze quickly cleared the top echelon of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, removing, for various reasons Gromyko's deputies — Kornienko, Maltsev, Kapitsa, who were disagreeable to him, appointing in the spring of 1986 a group of new deputies — Komplektov, Bessmertnykh, Adamishin, Petrovsky. [...] They appreciated their nomination and served the new minister faithfully for a number of years. I worked with almost all of them. Each had his own style, handwriting, and most importantly, his opinion. But they were good officials and knew how to keep their opinion to themselves when it did not coincide with the opinion of their superiors. Shevardnadze did not tolerate people whose opinion did not coincide with his own. For this reason, for example, he got rid of Kornienko, did not allow, relying on Gorbachev, the most experienced diplomat Dobrynin, to solve cardinal foreign policy problems, having achieved his transfer to work in the Central Committee of the CPSU.¹³⁰

Along with these removals of high-level officials came whole case changes in the Soviet diplomatic corps.¹³¹ The ambassadors to the major Western countries, including the US, Britain, France, West Germany, Japan, and Spain (and the United Nations) also changed. Some of his ambassadorial appointments were Brezhnev holdovers, and the Central Committee rather than the Foreign Ministry remained in charge of selecting ambassadors to East European and other Communist countries.¹³² In just first two years Gorbachev was in power, Soviet ambassadors were replaced in 60 percent (74 of 124) of the countries maintaining full diplomatic relations with the USSR, including nine of the 16 members of NATO.¹³³ Shevardnadze also promoted a number of specialists who had criticized Soviet policy in the past. His special assistant for the Middle East, new deputy chief for African affairs and the department chief for Southeast Asia criticized previous Soviet

¹²⁸ J. Van Oudenaren, "The Role of Shevardnadze", p. 8.

¹²⁹ C. Ekedahl, M. Goodman, *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze*, p. 76.

¹³⁰ V. Israaelyan, *Na Frontakh*, p. 329.

¹³¹ M. Kramer, "The Role of the CPSU", p. 435.

¹³² L. Mlechin, "A New Relationship Is Needed", *New Times*, n. 8, 1990, cited in *Ibid*.

¹³³ CIA, *Directory of Soviet Officials*, pp. 79-86; and CIA, *Directory of USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs Officials*, pp. 21 cited in *Ibid*.

policies towards those regions.¹³⁴ Specifically, Gennady Tarasov criticized Moscow's close ties to radical Arab states, Boris Asoyan wrote a devastating critiques of Brezhnev's African policy and Vladimir Lukin was critical of Soviet policy toward China.¹³⁵ The reorganization also influenced diplomats going to Eastern Europe, where Shevardnadze no longer wanted posting party officials who resisted reform but those diplomats with regional expertise. Thus, the new ambassadors — Ivan Aboimov (Hungary), Yury Kashlev (Poland), and Boris Pankin (Czechoslovakia) — were regional experts.¹³⁶ His action was not a simple changing of the guard; it involved the promotion of younger, better-educated officials with expertise in their fields.¹³⁷ Shevardnadze promoted younger officers and recruited more women and non-Russians, introducing more than one hundred women and “representatives of forty nations and nationalities” to key diplomatic posts.¹³⁸

On 6 May 1986, a new regulation on the International Department was approved, the main provisions of which were the solution of key issues of the party's foreign policy and international relations, as well as the links of the CPSU with communist and workers, revolutionary democratic and labour parties with other parties and organizations, with national-liberation movements and anti-war forces.¹³⁹ However, the International Department was unable to cope with these ambitious tasks. Brutents explained this by the fact that the department immediately faced jealous resistance from the Foreign ministry. Its new head Shevardnadze, after a short and, apparently, not very sincere “affair” with the department, tried to prevent it, like others, from entering his diocese. Dobrynin's attempts to resist this were doomed from the very beginning: their weight categories and influence were incommensurable.¹⁴⁰ Thus, the changes of personnel in both the International Department and the Foreign Ministry, tended to give the International Department new authority and strengthen the party's control over the foreign policy apparatus.¹⁴¹ As Shevardnadze recalls in one of his books:

¹³⁴ C. Ekedahl, M. Goodman, *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze*, p. 76.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Interview with G. Shultz, Palo Alto, 1993, cited in Ibid.

¹³⁹ K. Brutents, *Nezbyvsheesya. Neravnodushnye Zametki o Perestroike*, 2005, p. 153 cited in M. Polynov, *Vneshnyya Politika*, p. 111.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ M. Kramer, “The Role of the CPSU”, p. 435.

[...] Most of the ministry employees supported the restructuring policy and my style of work. Without their assistance and lively participation, it would have been impossible to find solutions to many important world problems, those solutions that significantly changed our world in the twentieth century and created a suitable climate for entering the twenty-first century.¹⁴²

To gain control over the formulation and implementation of foreign policy, Gorbachev and Shevardnadze pre-empted the Communist party institutions involved in national security policy — the Politburo and the foreign ministry's main bureaucratic rival, the Central Committee's International Department.¹⁴³ As Shevardnadze stated himself, perestroika could not wait and therefore he believed that the foreign policy department needed to be a flexible production, that was capable to quickly readjust to produce exactly what it needed:¹⁴⁴

[...] for the practical implementation of the policy of curbing the arms race and solving the security problems by peaceful means, a new structural subdivision was created — the Directorate for Arms Limitation and Disarmament. New approaches to the protection of human rights and the proclaimed principle of the rule of law required the formation of special units — the Department for International Humanitarian Cooperation and Human Rights and the International Legal Department.¹⁴⁵

In creating the arms control and disarmament administration and the peaceful uses of atomic energy and space department, he signaled that issues of arms control was no longer left to the military.¹⁴⁶ Further, new offices were created to oversee relations with Communist countries in Europe and in Asia and with non-Communist countries in the Middle East and North Africa, in sub-Saharan Africa, in North America, and in Southeast Asia and the Pacific.¹⁴⁷ Several other new agencies were established within the MFA to carry out specific functional duties: a Directorate for Humanitarian and Cultural Ties, an International Economic Relations Directorate, a Directorate for Liaison with Soviet Embassies, a Non-Aligned Movement Department and a Directorate for Information.¹⁴⁸ The latter was created in order to avoid the public relations problems that accompanied Gorbachev's first summit meeting with President Ronald Reagan in 1985 and the Chernobyl tragedy of 1986,

¹⁴² E. Shevardnadze, *Kogda Rukhnul Zhelezny Zanaves*, p. 76.

¹⁴³ C. Ekedahl, M. Goodman, "Eduard Shevardnadze", p. 225.

¹⁴⁴ E. Shevardnadze, *Moi Vybor*, p. 89.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ C. Ekedahl, M. Goodman, *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze*, p. 78.

¹⁴⁷ M. Kramer, "The Role of the CPSU", p. 436.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

when the ministry denied that a disaster occurred.¹⁴⁹ The MFA also expanded and improved the quality of its publications directed at domestic and foreign audiences. In August 1987 it launched a Bulletin of the Foreign Ministry of the USSR, which mainly published documents and official notes.¹⁵⁰ As Shevardnadze recalls himself, the principles of *glasnost* and openness prompted the improvement of relations with the public and the press, which is why regular briefings, press conferences of the minister, his deputies and ambassadors were introduced into practice.¹⁵¹ Giving the importance to East European region, Shevardnadze created a new Institute of Europe in 1987, headed by Vitaly Zhurkin.¹⁵² This demonstrated his intention to put relations with Eastern Europe on a state-to-state rather than party-to-party basis.¹⁵³

The changes that Shevardnadze brought showed its results quite fast. On 14 March 1989, during the meeting of CC CPSU on foreign policy, progress was noted with pleasure in improving the international situation. Real encouraging shifts included the successful completion of the Vienna meeting of the states participating in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and the start of relevant negotiations between representatives of 33 European states, the US and Canada, positive efforts to untie the “knots” of international tension on various continents and an increase in political role of the UN.¹⁵⁴ Shevardnadze developed a plan to take Soviet diplomacy to all corners of the globe with the specific intent of building geographic and functional interrelationships in the following priority — maintaining relations with socialist countries, enhancing relations with nonaligned countries and ultimately opening dialogue with all nations.¹⁵⁵

¹⁴⁹ Interview with Gennady Gerasimov, who was recruited by Shevardnadze as a head of Directorate for Information, cited in C. Ekedahl, M. Goodman, *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze*, p. 78.

¹⁵⁰ ¹⁵⁰ J. Van Oudenaren, “The Role of Shevardnadze”, p. 18.

¹⁵¹ E. Shevardnadze, *Moi Vybor*; p. 90.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 79.

¹⁵³ Vitaly Churin was an arms control expert and former deputy director of the Institute of the US and Canada. Shevardnadze consolidated Eastern European affairs into a single department and placed a deputy minister in charge of the region. *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ “Zasedanie Komissii Tsk KPSS po voprosam mezhdunarodnoi poliki”, *Pravda*, 15 March 1989, p. 2.

¹⁵⁵ “Eduard Shevardnadze. ‘New Thinking as a Principal Export’”, National Defense University, 1997, p. 6.

3. Human rights dimension

During his first speech to the nation and colleagues in 1985, Gorbachev made sure that all the upcoming reforms were mainly done in order to improve the life of Soviet people. According to him, the CPSCU saw the highest meaning of accelerating the socio-economic development of the country in steadily, step by step increasing the well-being of the people, creating favorable conditions for the harmonious development of the personality of everyone.¹⁵⁶ That included ensuring equal access to vital benefits, such as health care and education, improving the material situation of labour veterans, living conditions for young families, protecting mothers and children, and increasing efforts to solve housing problems.¹⁵⁷ That, according to William Pfaff, was thanks to the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, according to which Mikhail Gorbachev owes a new skill in communication, a new assurance, but also a new uncertainty on matters of human rights.¹⁵⁸¹⁵⁹ The fundamental documents signed in Helsinki contained the participants' commitment in three key areas, or "three baskets," as they were called in the Helsinki jargon: security, economic cooperation, and humanitarian cooperation. The third basket included the important issues of human rights, freedom of movement, and the exchange of ideas.¹⁶⁰ From the very outset of the negotiations, the Soviet leadership was interested only in the first two baskets and laid principal stress on recognition of the postwar boundaries of Europe dividing it into East and West. At the same time the Soviet Union did all it could to diminish the significance of the third basket, for it believed humanitarian issues to be domestic matters.¹⁶¹ The situation slightly changed by the time Shevardnadze entered the office. For its ten years anniversary of Helsinki Final Act, Shevardnadze made a speech and stated, that the

¹⁵⁶ "Doklad General'nogo Sekretarya TsK CPSS M.S. Gorbachev," *Pravda*, 24 April 1985, p. 1.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹⁵⁸ W. Pfaff, "Rights, ideology and 'new' Russians," *Chicago Tribune*, General CIA Records, Declassified in Part, 22 October 1985, p. 13. Available at: <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP90-00965R000605060009-9.pdf>

¹⁵⁹ According to Ernest Conine, after signing the Helsinki Final Act in 1975, the Soviets were not able to fully comply with the human rights promises, although some changes were evident. Conine stated that in order to gain Western approval of this portion of the agreement, the Soviets had to accept a package of human rights guarantees covering such things as freedom of thought, religion and emigration, and "the right of the individual to know and act upon his rights." See E. Conine, "Soviets' Empty Promises on Rights. Reviews Focus Attention on Failure to Live Up to Helsinki Pact," *Los Angeles Times*, General CIA Records, Declassified in Part, 5 August 1985, Part II. Available at: <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP90-00965R000201230003-4.pdf>

¹⁶⁰ A. Dobrynin, *In Confidence*, p. 350.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

human rights dimension was taken seriously throughout the Soviet leadership, although was still kept a domestic issue, and did not require an outside intervention. According to him, the Soviet Union never allowed anyone to interfere in its internal affairs, and any kind of slander against its system, against socialist democracy would continue to meet a proper rebuff.¹⁶² He also noted that although the country made large improvements in socio-economic condition of the nation and specifically in human rights dimension, there still was a lot of work to do. In his words, upcoming improvements on domestic and foreign policy were yet to be discussed during the XXVII Congress of the CPSU:

In the Soviet Union, both legislatively and materially, the entire completeness of economic, political, social and cultural rights and personal freedoms of citizens was guaranteed. As a result of the socialist reorganization of society in the country, unemployment, poverty, homelessness, and all forms of discrimination on racial or ethnic grounds were permanently eliminated. Regardless, the foreign policy of any state is inextricably linked with its internal life. Our party and our state direct their main efforts to accelerating socio-economic development in order, relying on its achievements, to steadily increase the well-being of the people, improve all aspects of the life of Soviet people, and create favorable conditions for the harmonious development of the individual.¹⁶³

Shultz did not agree with Shevardnadze's statement. Early in the opening session he delivered a hard-hitting speech on Soviet violations of the human rights provisions of the Helsinki Final Act: denial of emigration and travel, suppression of religion, repression of individuals who constituted a Helsinki watch group (including Andrey Sakharov and Yuri Orlov), and jamming of radio and TV transmissions.¹⁶⁴ Shevardnadze later asked him if he had to deliver such a tough speech, to which Shultz replied that he only stated the facts and would look forward to discuss this subject privately.¹⁶⁵

A fundamental change in the Soviet attitude toward human rights was necessary if the transformation of Soviet-American relations was to occur.¹⁶⁶ Not long after being named to head the foreign ministry, Shevardnadze defined "new thinking" as looking at the world "through the eyes of

¹⁶² "Konstruktivnye Vzaimnye Obyazatel'stva," *Pravda*, 31 July 1985, p. 5.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ G. Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, p. 573.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ C. Ekedahl, M. Goodman, *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze*, p. 133.

humanity.”¹⁶⁷ He exaggerated the binding nature of the Helsinki Act to his colleagues in order to further his policy agenda. He argued that, in order to abide by the final act, Moscow could no longer hold such prisoners of conscience as Andrey Sakharov, that “loony bins” for political dissidents must be closed, and that divided families must be reunited. As with arms control, the issue of human rights was critical to the development of closer relations with the West.¹⁶⁸ During his first official visit to the US, Shevardnadze made some implications on human rights for the first time, which surprised American delegation. According to the CIA letter from 19 September 1985 from Robert Gates to William Casey, on Shevardnadze’s upcoming visit to the US, it was expected to see new commitments on human rights, especially on Jewish immigration and perhaps even release of a dissident or two to appear.¹⁶⁹¹⁷⁰ Shevardnadze was virtually alone among Soviet leaders in understanding that, in large part, the Soviet Union’s international isolation reflected its alienation from Western world due to its repression of the individual.¹⁷¹ By accepting — as did Shevardnadze in his meetings with Shultz — that the human rights issues had a regular place on the agenda (in contrast with the previous defensive Soviet insistence, which implicitly conceded the vulnerability of their position, that they were entirely the ‘internal affair’ of the Soviet Union), Gorbachev not only took the opportunity to attack aspects of the American record at home and abroad but also, and more importantly, brought into harmony his domestic and foreign policy objectives.¹⁷² Shevardnadze shared such view by stating that even with all the upheavals of time, the prevailing drive was still toward the renaissance of humanist ideas, toward the return to the individual and the human scale:

The architects of politics often thought in categories that leave no room for the human being: “the people,” “the country,” and “national security,” that is, the sum of sublime values, ignored the most important detail, human life. It appeared to be taken for granted that a collective approach would guarantee the welfare of each individual. “Human dimension” presupposes a proportionality between a

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ C. Ekedahl, M. Goodman, *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze*, pp. 134-135.

¹⁶⁹ “Letter to William Casey from Robert Gates,” CIA, Secret, 19 September 1985. Available at: <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP90G01359R000200020013-2.pdf>

¹⁷⁰ See “USSR: Dissident Scene,” National Intelligence Daily Cable, Top Secret, 2 July 1977. Available at: <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP79T00975A030200010053-7.pdf>
“USSR: Soviets Extend Shcharansky investigation,” CIA Operations Center, White House Spot Report, 15 December 1977. Available at: https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/DOC_0005301379.pdf

¹⁷¹ C. Ekedahl, M. Goodman, *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze*, p. 130.

¹⁷² A. Brown, *Gorbachev Factor*, p. 237.

person and his dwelling, between the environment and its inhabitants. The disruption of this proportion results in discomfort and severe psychological, physical, and social consequences.¹⁷³

Shevardnadze criticized the “rules of games” that were already posed at the ministerial meetings. When he made his appearance “on the field,” he understood that the Soviet position was quite vulnerable on questions of human rights, on Afghanistan, and on other conflicts.¹⁷⁴ During his second meeting with Shultz, he proposed that from then on they begin their negotiations with questions of human observance:

I think my “preemptive game” surprised George. Human rights were the American’s favorite hobbyhorse, and a taboo for us. Suddenly, here was the Soviet minister making a move like this. After a while my suggestion became our tradition, steering our talks, to use his words, onto a two-way street.¹⁷⁵

The turning point on human rights took place in the spring of 1986, when Shevardnadze created a Department for Humanitarian and Cultural Contacts in the foreign ministry under Yury Kashlev, a veteran ministry official with considerable CSCE experience.¹⁷⁶ During his first trip to Washington in the summer of 1986, Kashlev indicated that Moscow was developing a new approach to emigration. Several months later, Tass announced that the Council of Ministers adopted a new policy to allow emigration for those persons, who had a spouse, parent, child or a sibling living abroad.¹⁷⁷ Proper personnel changes also contributed the improvement in humanitarian affairs. The Reagan administration made a surprise appointment to the post of human rights negotiator, Assistant Secretary of State Richard Schifter, a Washington lawyer who embraced liberal causes and democratic politics.¹⁷⁸ Shevardnadze also turned to a group of “Westernizers” in the foreign ministry, including Deputy Foreign Minister Anatoly Adamishin and Alexander Glukhov. Being involved with human rights issues in the Helsinki process, Adamishin was a natural choice to serve as intermediary with Schifter.¹⁷⁹ Outlining the Soviet view on human rights, Adamishin stated that “it implied the unity of political, civil, social and economic rights.” During his speech as a part of

¹⁷³ E. Shevardnadze, *The Future*, pp. 66.

¹⁷⁴ E. Shevardnadze, *The Future*, pp. 84-85.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ C. Ekedahl, M. Goodman, *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze*, p. 137.

¹⁷⁷ *Tass*, 16 July 1986 cited in Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ C. Ekedahl, M. Goodman, *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze*, p. 136.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 138.

the CPSU Central Committee's greetings to Twenty Fourth National Convention of CPUSA, Adamishin noted that over the nine months that passed since the time when Shevardnadze put forward the proposal at the meeting in Vienna, the Soviet Union took into account a whole number of considerations and wishes which were set out by representatives of Western countries.¹⁸⁰ In his words, the Soviet leadership was convinced that they solved a whole number of problems in the field of human rights, ranging from people's opportunity to influence production and social life, and to the refinement of legislation and the adoption of laws defending the lawful interests of citizens, including laws on the rights to appeal against the actions of officials; from changing the practice of exit from the USSR, people-to-people contacts, and to vigorous blossoming of cultural and creative life.¹⁸¹

Following that, during their meeting in September 1987, Shultz and Shevardnadze discussed changes in the internal condition of human rights in Soviet Union. Shevardnadze began by describing what he described as the main trend in the Soviet Union at the time, whether in the field of politics, social development, economics or culture — *demokratizatsia* — democratization was the "basis for everything." To understand the importance of the term, Shevardnadze explained, that after the Revolution, there was a dictatorship of the proletariat, which therefore led to direct restraints on individual liberties. In 1987, there was already a feeling that Soviet society became ripe for a policy of total democracy, it was a multifaceted process, the question of individual liberties was being reconsidered.¹⁸² Democratization was part of a general perestroika, but the change did not come immediately. Among those who did not change were too many who sat in offices and it was hard to effect a revolution in their minds.¹⁸³ In his words, early on in perestroika, resistance was strong. Statements about human rights and freedoms remained on paper since many of powerful opponents "could not forgo their principles," and their logic followed the former regimen:

It was one thing to make declarations, but let Andrei Sakharov and other prisoners of conscience serve out their sentences. Let the number of refusenik cases pile up, and let the divided families stay divided.

¹⁸⁰ "Anatoly Adamishin on human rights," *Soviet News*, 19 August 1987, p. 299.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸² "Memoranda of Conversations Pertaining to United States and USSR Relations, 1981-1990," Lot 93D188, Shultz-Shevardnadze-Wash-9.87. Secret; Sensitive. Drafter by Parris, Department of State, Executive Secretariat, S/S Records. Available at: <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1981-88v06/d66>

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

Let the “loony bins” keep on working, and not a whisper from anyone about giving international experts access to these prison “hospitals.” What about the stripping of citizenship and expulsion from the country of writers and artists? [...] It cost immense efforts to bring back from exile and banishment several outstanding scientists, writers, and theater directors — honest, conscientious people whose only offense was refusing to accept the canon of violence and falsehood. But it was even harder to restore the good name of the country where the best people were treated that way.¹⁸⁴

Further, Shevardnadze raised a delicate issue, which stated that Secretary was well aware that the Soviet Union was a multinational state composed of many ethnic groups. Briefly describing the structure of the Soviet state, he noted that, if the Secretary reviewed what some “ideologically oriented” US institutions were writing about Soviet ethnic issues, he would find it hard to believe. Shevardnadze wanted the Secretary to know that an irresponsible approach on such matters was unacceptable as far as Moscow was concerned.¹⁸⁵ Turning to what he described as another important question, Shevardnadze observed that there was no accident that the Soviet proposal for a Moscow humanitarian issues forum arose in the context of democratization.¹⁸⁶ At the opening of the Vienna meeting,¹⁸⁷ Shevardnadze proposed holding an international conference on humanitarian problems in Moscow. Although it was preceded by stormy debates in the Politburo, he was convinced that the conference was essential in order to show the country and the world how far Soviets intended to go and, beyond that, to provide an impetus for democratization and the perestroika of legislation in everything relating to human affairs.¹⁸⁸ Shevardnadze simply wanted people to know the truth about what was happening in the Soviet Union — how Soviet citizens lived, what was changing, and in what directions. Therefore, he suggested that the US would consider whether or not it could take a more positive stand on this issue.¹⁸⁹ The problem was, according to Shultz, that the “experts” were too mired in their own pet positions. They were hooked on the idea of trading Soviet actions on human rights for US actions on trade. Shevardnadze told him that the Soviets would do what made sense from the stand point of their society.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁴ E. Shevardnadze, *The Future*, p. 86.

¹⁸⁵ Drafted by Parris, “Memoranda of Conversation.”

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷ In November 1986, a follow-up meeting to review the Helsinki Final Act opened in Vienna, attended by the thirty-five signatories.

¹⁸⁸ E. Shevardnadze, *The Future*, p. 86.

¹⁸⁹ Drafted by Parris, “Memoranda of Conversation.”

¹⁹⁰ G. Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, p. 588.

Throughout his years as foreign minister, Shevardnadze tried to improve human rights issues inside the Soviet Union, but as he admitted in October 1989, he was ashamed that the Soviet leadership perceived it as “so-called human rights” and that it argued that there were no problems with them. He argued that in the formulation and resolution of humanitarian issues they made a genuine psychological, political, legal breakthrough and reached world standards.¹⁹¹

New political thinking brought the Soviet Union to a different scale of assessments and criteria for its own behavior. We stated that we would be guided by universal human values. We could talk about common human interests, being confident that our country saw its main interest in the combination of the national and international. We could talk about the democratization of international relations, knowing that we ourselves live in democratic, legal society and are guided by the highest standards of democracy. We could talk about the humanization of international relations as representatives of a country professing humanism in its practice.¹⁹²

4. Peredyshka: Solving the “American Problem”

From the outset, Shevardnadze focused his energy and diplomatic effort on solving the “American problem” in order to gain breathing space (*peredyshka*) for reviving Moscow’s failed economy.¹⁹³ His focus on the US stood stark contrast to the limited attention Shevardnadze gave other countries in his first years as foreign minister. Western Europe seemed almost nonexistent, and his visionary talk about the “common European home” was just that — mere talk. Third World leaders criticized his lack of attention of their problems.¹⁹⁴

Not seeing the US as a central problem and an “enemy” first came with the new thinking of Mikhail Gorbachev. Shevardnadze shared such view and stated that it was not easy to accept the new thinking, just as it was not easy to overcome the inertia of the old in the oneself. In foreign policy, new thinking also entailed a rejection of the outdated, a reappraisal of what was believed to be correct for many decades.¹⁹⁵ First of all, he claimed, it was not easy to overcome the stereotypes of

¹⁹¹ “Vneshnyaya Politika i Perestroika,” *Pravda*, 24 October 1989, p. 3.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*

¹⁹³ C. Ekedahl, M. Goodman, *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze*, p. 100.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 100-101.

¹⁹⁵ E. Shevardnadze, *Moi Vybor*, pp. 122-123.

the existence of the “enemy,” which were approved by centuries of wars and redistribution of the world:

[...] but how often the idea of the enemy was artificially implanted in the interests of the ruling regimes and the ruling persons, in national interests. The curves of the ideology distorted the real image of the “enemy” to the point of absurdity, instilling fear, hatred and readiness to accept the existing “order of things” as something natural and due. By presenting an “enemy” to your own people, you can make them endure any hardships, make any sacrifices, and refuse the most necessary things. There comes, however, a moment when the reserves of patience are running out, and most importantly, the constant belittling of the human principle dooms the country and the people to the risk of exclusion from the general civilization process, and therefore there is a real threat to its safety.¹⁹⁶

Although Gorbachev did not officially call the US an enemy, he nevertheless accused the US of the fact that the international situation was alarming and dangerous during his first speech as General Secretary in April 1985:

The ruling circles of the US are primarily responsible for the current situation, and this must be said with all certainty. They continue to act as the initiators of the arms race and sabotage disarmament, which the world community is well aware of. The US openly claims the “right” to interfere everywhere, ignore, and often directly trample on the interests of other countries and nations, the traditions of international communication, treaties and agreements in force.¹⁹⁷ They are constantly creating hotbeds of conflict and military danger, heating up the situation in one or another area of the world.¹⁹⁸

According to Robert Gates, Deputy Director for Intelligence, the Soviets believed President Reagan and his long-time, closest advisers share a conscious, deep-seated hostility to the Soviet Union and would like to turn back the clock of history if they could. They saw the President as much more of an ideological warrior than his predecessors: they believed that while the latter also would have liked the USSR to be different, they thought this impossible to bring about, accepted the Soviet Union as a second superpower, accorded it a grudging respect, and pursued policy lines that

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Here Gorbachev made an emphasis on the following issue: the completed first stage of the Geneva talks gave reason to say that Washington was not heading for an agreement with the USSR. That was evident at least from the fact that the US generally refused to discuss the issue of non-proliferation of the arms race in outer space, simultaneously with the discussion of the issue of limiting and reducing nuclear weapons. This position of the US was explained by the fact that certain circles in the US wanted to achieve a dominant position in the world, especially in the military field. Evidence of that was the introduction by the Soviet Union of various unilateral commitments and moratoriums of 1982 and 1983, where the US government did not respond to any of these initiatives with a single gesture of goodwill.

¹⁹⁸ “Doklad General’nogo Sekretarya TsK CPSS M.S. Gorbachev,” *Pravda*, 24 April 1985, p. 2.

acknowledged a Soviet role in all aspects of international affairs.¹⁹⁹ The Soviets found ideological confirmation of this view in the President's muscular support of individualism, private enterprise, less government, and what they termed "capitalism" at home and "imperialism" abroad. They regarded references to the USSR as the "evil empire" and jokes about declaring the USSR "illegal" and 'start the bombing in five minutes' as indicative of deeply held feelings. They regarded US support for insurgents in Afghanistan, Nicaragua, Angola, and elsewhere as rejection of the status quo and attempt to reverse Soviet gains in the Third World. They believed the Administration's commitment to SDI and the other strategic programs it would like to pursue were aimed at outmoding Soviet strategic forces and regaining US strategic superiority for the purpose of dictating political terms to the USSR. They thought the Administration wished to create political and military pressures that would undermine the Soviet economy enough to make it unable to compete militarily and force internal changes in the Soviet system that would threaten its very nature.²⁰⁰

According to Gorbachev, the Soviet government was willing to improve the relations with the US and did not need an American "enemy image" neither for domestic needs, nor for foreign policy interests:

We [the Soviet government] would like to express the hope that the position [on foreign policy] of the US would be corrected. This would open an opportunity for reaching mutually acceptable agreements. There is such willingness on our part.²⁰¹ [...] A mythical or real enemy was required if one was tuned in to maintain tension, to confront far-reaching and, I would add, unpredictable consequences. We focused on something else. As for us, in the Soviet Union there was no propaganda of hatred towards Americans, disrespect towards America. You would not find this either in politics, or in teaching, or anywhere else. We criticized policies we disagree with. This does not mean that we are showing disrespect to the American people.²⁰²

Regarding the above mentioned position of Gorbachev, Gates claimed that to be sure, the Soviets did not consider the Administration to be threatening war or even seriously raising the risk of it in the foreseeable future, notwithstanding their frequent rhetoric about the "risk go war." They saw the Administration as hostile and tough, but not crazy or violent; their vociferous rhetoric results from

¹⁹⁹ R. Gates, "Note to VADM J. Poindexter, The Honorable M. Armacost, The Honorable F. Ikle. An Assessment of the Soviet gameplan leading up to and following the summit," CIA, Secret, 9 September 1985, p. 8. Available at: <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP89G01126R000100120005-1.pdf>

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ "Doklad General'nogo Sekretarya TsK CPSS M.S. Gorbachev," *Pravda*, 24 April 1985, p. 2.

²⁰² M. Gorbachev, *Perestroika*, pp. 227-228.

their having to face rather unexpectedly, in light of their experience in the 1970s, an adversary that rejected assumptions that implicitly accorded the USSR a global role which Moscow came to take for granted.²⁰³

Although Gorbachev and Shevardnadze were ready to eliminate such image and move to a peaceful coexistence, it was not possible until the words became full actions. Shevardnadze stated that it would take a long process for the Soviet nation to change its perspective, especially until the domestic reforms were not finished and while the Soviet troops were still placed in Afghanistan:

It was on this issue that we and the Americans had to come to an agreement and formulate a common position. The General Assembly demanded the same from us. The example of Afghanistan could prove to the world that the Soviet Union really changed. However, we were not yet ready to interact with the United States on an equal footing. We could not talk with the West and at the same time not see the transformation of the “enemy image,” conduct a pragmatic, honest dialogue, taking into account common interests. First, there had to be changes in the internal policy of the state.²⁰⁴

Gates also claimed that Soviets perceived that elimination of such “enemy image” was also profitable for the US. He claimed that the Soviet leadership did not believe the US had the capacity to accomplish above stated goals, being encouraged by what they considered Reagan’s Administration vulnerabilities. They believed that the US had its own economic problems and that the prevailing high interest rates, budget deficit, and trade deficit could ruin the US economy; and even if they did not, it would be at the cost of a lower defense budget and worsened relations with US allies and the Third World.²⁰⁵ Further the Soviets believed that the American public, pluralist US political system, and the Congress imposed severe constraints on the Administration;s preferred policies and provided major avenues for Soviet manipulation. Similarly, Moscow saw the NATO allies and Japan as having concerns and agendas that offered major opportunities to constrain Washington or cause the allies to diverge from Washington to Soviet again.²⁰⁶

With his commitment to rapprochement with the US, Shevardnadze brought to the foreign ministry a willingness to compromise. In his first two years, he offered concessions on issues that he believed would have resonance in Washington, particularly disarmament and human rights, making

²⁰³ R. Gates, “Note to VADM,” p. 8.

²⁰⁴ E. Shevardnadze, *Kodga Rukhnul Zanaves*, p. 80.

²⁰⁵ R. Gates, “Note to VADM,” p. 9.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

one gesture after another in his efforts to forge a new relationship.²⁰⁷ Shevardnadze's compromises on nuclear testing, naval nuclear weapons, and anti satellite weapons attracted no response from the US. His support for deep reductions in the Soviet arsenal, however, led to disarmament agreements that were overwhelmingly favorable to the US.²⁰⁸ During the personal meeting with Shevardnadze, George Shultz claimed that foreign minister understood, in contrast to Gromyko, that there was more to the world than the US, Soviet Union and Europe, and that he suddenly presented a broad, active and more flexible Soviet diplomacy.²⁰⁹ Shevardnadze himself proclaimed, that if foreign policy was "guilty" of anything, it was overcoming the country's isolation from the rest of the world and providing Soviet citizens with the chance to see for themselves that it was better off, more tolerant, and more humane than the champions of ideological messianism painted it.²¹⁰ Foreign policy freed Soviet man of his innate xenophobia, just as it freed society of the image of an external enemy and turned the "opponent" into a "partner":²¹¹

Maybe this is not the right analogy, but when we began to deal with Mr. Reagan, he called us the "evil empire." Even so, he initiated dialogue with us, with this "evil empire." And we were willing to have discussion — although we ourselves believed that America was the center of global imperialism [...] I recall Geneva. How difficult was Mikhail Sergeevich's first summit with Reagan! While Shultz and I were waiting, we thought, "Let them sit and talk — the more, the better." And they sat till late and kept on talking. I know that those were very pointed, sometimes unpleasant discussions. But they were indeed dialogue.²¹²

The Soviets also may believed the Administration, in its second term, was somewhat more pragmatic and less ideological than it was previously insofar as they perceived US economic problems and domestic and allied pressures for positive developments in US-Soviet relations growing. Moscow also may believed that National Security Advisor McFarlane's replacement of Judge Clark in practice meant a shift toward a more pragmatic policy perspective.²¹³ It is believed that the key progress in solving the "American problem" was Shevardnadze's close personal

²⁰⁷ C. Ekedahl, M. Goodman, *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze*, p. 101.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ G. Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, p. 702.

²¹⁰ E. Shevardnadze, C. Fitzpatrick (trans.), *The Future Belongs to Us*, London, The Free Press, 1991, p. 75.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² E. Shevardnadze, V. Chernetsky (trans.), "No One Can Isolate Us, Save Ourselves. Self-Isolation is the Ultimate Danger," *Slavic Review*, vol. 51, n. 1, Cambridge University Press, Spring 1992, p. 120.

²¹³ R. Gates, "Note to VADM," p. 9.

relations with his US counterparts, Secretaries of State Shultz and Baker, whom the Soviets viewed more favorably than Secretary Weinberger and who gained greater influence.²¹⁴ Shevardnadze used his innate graciousness and sense of humor to insinuate himself with both men and to leaven the opposition of anti-Soviets in the Reagan and Bush administrations. He used his access to Gorbachev to isolate the anti-Americanists at home.²¹⁵ The professional and personal relations between Shultz, Baker and Shevardnadze will be precisely discussed further, but according to Ekedahl and Goodman, President George Bush came to office believing that Shultz was too impressed with Shevardnadze and too eager to improve bilateral relations. Baker, initially skeptical, came to believe that Moscow was genuinely committed to redefining relations and persuaded President Bush to continue negotiations with Moscow.²¹⁶

5. Cutback on defense spending

Shevardnadze's early pronouncements on international issues were by no means conciliatory, and gave no hint of the strongly antimilitary posture he was to adopt in mid-1988.²¹⁷ During his speech to the CSCE anniversary meeting in Helsinki, Shevardnadze stated his concern about rapidly growing components of the US strategic offensive nuclear potential, the use of which was fraught with serious negative consequences for security both in Europe and the throughout the world:²¹⁸

The Vienna talks on the mutual reduction of armed forces and armaments in Central Europe were not able to budge. In Vienna we heard continually — give the numbers. The USSR and its allies gave figures, but apparently they did not like them. It was clear that the numbers were not the issue, but that our partners had no desire to negotiate.²¹⁹

Further, Shevardnadze made sure that the Soviet Union did not want to apply any military actions, but in case if needed, it would respond fully:

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ C. Ekedahl, M. Goodman, *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze*, p. 102.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ J. Van Oudenaren, "The Role of Shevardnadze", p. 7.

²¹⁸ "Konstruktivnye Vzaimnye Obyazatel'stva. Yubileynaya Vstrecha v Helsinki. Vystupleniye E. Shevardnadze", *Pravda*, 31 July 1985, p. 4.

²¹⁹ Ibid., p. 4-5.

Confrontation, however whether it be in the military, political or economic, is, in our firm conviction, not the path that Europe should take. [...] but something else should also be clear. If someone expected to conduct negotiations with the Soviet Union "from a position of strength," then let them abandon these illusions. In the face of the buildup of military preparations by NATO bloc, the Soviet Union and its allies would be able to take care of their security and protect their legitimate rights and interests. Any attempts to upset the existing military equilibrium and gain unilateral advantages would meet with effective opposition from our side.²²⁰

The drive for superiority and the increases in US defense expenditure made contribution to the conflict with the USSR, namely the cost which they imposed on the Soviet Union itself. Even if not used, weapons cost money, and the expenditure burden which the USSR, carried, with a GNP less than half that of the US, had enormous debilitating consequences for the rest of the economy. Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger, was particularly clear about the impact of US military development upon the USSR: without any of the weapons being used, they nonetheless served to weaken the enemy camp.²²¹ Shevardnadze's changes in the foreign ministry enabled the new leadership to proceed rapidly with new thinking and develop a counterweight to the military community.²²² In order to effect deep cuts in military spending, Gorbachev and Shevardnadze weakened the leverage of military institutions and reduced the myth of the military's infallibility.²²³ According to Shevardnadze, there was no sense in defending a system that led to economic and social dislocation. There was only one solution: politics must take on the task of creating a reverse of security while cutting spending on arms.²²⁴ In late May 1988 the Central Committee issued ten theses for the conference, the last of which was devoted to the international aspects and implications of restructuring.²²⁵ It stated that a critical analysis of the past showed that dogmatism and a subjective approach also left an imprint on the Soviet foreign policy. It was admitted that it lagged behind fundamental changes in the world, new opportunities for reducing tension and greater mutual understanding between people were not fully realized.²²⁶ Striving for military-strategic

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ F. Halliday, *The Making of the Second Cold War*, London, Verso, 1983, p. 51.

²²² C. Ekedahl, M. Goodman, *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze*, p. 81.

²²³ Ibid., pp. 82-83.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ J. Van Oudenaren, "The Role of Shevardnadze, p. 19.

²²⁶ "Tesisy Tsentral'nogo Komiteta KPSS k XIX Vsesoyuznoi Partiinoi Konferentsii", *Pravda*, 27 May 1988, p. 2.

parity, in the past the opportunities to ensure the security of the state by political means were not used, and as a result, allowed to be drawn into the arms race, which could not but affect the socio-economic development of the country and its international position.²²⁷ Defense outlays traditionally were drain on the Soviet economy in more than simply monetary terms.²²⁸ The disproportionately large share of industrial and high-technology production allocated to defense diverted resources from other sectors, sacrificed capital which might have been devoted to future innovation, and helped to account for the low growth of productivity.²²⁹ At an unusual Ministry of Foreign Affairs “scientific-practical” conference, held 25-27 July 1988, several speakers echoed conclusions similar to those in the Izyumov-Kortunov article.²³⁰ Most notably, Shevardnadze stated that “the economic aspect of national security comes to the forefront” in the modern era, and that in the competitive struggle with the West, socialism must show that it can offer more than any other sociopolitical system through “economic successes and higher individual and social labor productivity.” This, he said, was the main national interest, and “the category of national security and all of its aspects can and should be viewed solely in this connection.”²³¹

The first changes towards military spendings were seen in May 1987, when the prestige and authority of defense ministry weakened and strengthened that of Shevardnadze and the foreign ministry.²³² In late July 1988, at a conference attended by much of the national security elite, Shevardnadze put forward the unprecedented demand that henceforth, “major innovations in defense development should be verified at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to determine whether they correspond juridically to existing international agreements and to stated political positions.”²³³ On the face of it, this would seem to claim for the foreign minister a right of personal veto over the defense-industrial programs presented to the Defense Council by the Ministry of Defense and its

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ U.S. Congress, Subcommittee on National Security Economic of the Joint Economic Committee, Allocation of Resources in the Soviet Union and China-1986, p. 6. Report given by CIA and DIA on March 19, 1987 to the 100th Congress, 1st Session cited in K. Knotts Jr., “Mikhail Gorbachev’s ‘New Thinking’: Implications for Western Security”, 1991, Unclassified, Naval Postgraduate School, 55, p. 21.

²²⁹ K. Knotts Jr., “Mikhail Gorbachev’s ‘New Thinking’”, p. 21

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²³¹ S. Atkinson, “CNA Research Memorandum. Downgrading the Military in Soviet Foreign Policy,” Center for Naval Analyses, 4 October 1989, p. 9.

²³² E. Shevardnadze, “The Foreign Policy and Diplomatic Activity of the USSR”, *International Affairs*, n.1, 1990, p. 9 cited in C. Ekedahl, M. Goodman, *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze*, p. 83.

²³³ footnote 2 in Harry p. 25.

various allies.²³⁴ According to Ambassador Dobrynin, with Dmitry Yazov as the new defense minister, Shevardnadze felt much more at ease during the talks and opposition by the military became more moderate.²³⁵ By the end of 1988, the minister of defense, all deputy defense ministers but two, all the first deputy chiefs of the General staff, the commander and the chief of staff of the Warsaw Pact forces, all the commanders of the groups of forces and fleets, and all of the military district commanders were changed.²³⁶ Turning to his advisers for assistance, Shevardnadze encouraged them to debate the military on security issues dominated by the General Staff. He created special departments in the foreign ministry on national security and used their analyses to justify unilateral cuts in conventional arms, as well as deep strategic reductions.²³⁷ In one of his speeches to Ministry of Foreign Affairs conference, Shevardnadze stressed that the “forthcoming work” of the ministry included full anticipation in a range of issues which traditionally belonged to the armed forces.²³⁸

In the military area it was necessary, in conjunction with the Ministry of Defense, the Gosplan, and other departments, to develop detailed plans and measures for carrying out all the tasks set by M.S. Gorbachev. [...] The withdrawal of troops and arms from allied countries, the reformation of the remaining divisions, and the reduction of troops and arms on the territory should be taken in the near future.²³⁹

During his speech to United Nations in December 1988, Gorbachev, accompanied by Shevardnadze, publicly stated Soviet goals on disarmament and domestic defense cutbacks. He claimed that the Soviet Union made a decision to reduce its armed forces, which was carried out unilaterally, outside of the negotiations on the mandate of the Vienna meeting:²⁴⁰

[...] by 1990, the numerical strength would be decrease by 500.000 people, and the volume of conventional weapons would also be significantly reduced; by 1991, in agreement with Warsaw Pact allies, the Soviet Union would withdraw six armored divisions from GDR, Czechoslovakia and Hungary and disband them; Airborne assault and a number of other formations and units would also be

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ A. Dobrynin, *In Confidence*, p. 632.

²³⁶ C. Ekedahl, M. Goodman, *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze*, p. 84.

²³⁷ Ibid., p. 86.

²³⁸ J. Van Oudenaren, “ The Role of Shevardnadze, p. 29.

²³⁹ *Vestnik Ministerstva Inostrannykh Del SSSR*, no. 23, 1988 cited in Ibid.

²⁴⁰ “Vystuplenie M.S.Gorbacheva v Organizatsii Ob’edinennykh Natsii”, *Pravda*, 8 December 1988, p. 2.

withdrawn from the groups of Soviet troops stationed in these countries, including the airborne convoys with weapons and military equipment; the military troops found in these countries were reduced by 50.000 people and the armament by 5.000 tanks. At the same time the number of troops and weapons were reduced in European and Asian parts of the Soviet Union. All in all, in this unit and on the European territory, the Soviet Armed Forces would be reduced by 10.000 tanks, 8.500 artillery systems and 800 combat aircrafts.²⁴¹

Further, Shevardnadze bitterly criticized the buildup of chemical weapons, stating that it costed a “colossal amount” of money and diverted “production capacities, manpower, and resources.”²⁴² In a harsh attack on the military leadership, he called its rationale for chemical weapons the “most primitive and distorted idea of what strengthens and what weakens the country.” In view of Moscow’s reliance on large ground forces, he said, chemical weapons were far more dangerous for the USSR than for the US.²⁴³ In his speech to the January 1989 Paris conference on chemical weapons, he declared that in the previous two years, the Soviet position on chemical weapons had undergone a “fundamental revolution.”²⁴⁴ The Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs was authorized to report that the stocks of chemical weapons in the Soviet Union did not exceed 50.000 tons of toxic substances and that they were all located on the territory of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union stopped the production of chemical weapons, never used these weapons, did not transfer them into the wrong hands or deployed them outside its borders.²⁴⁵

During his speech on foreign policy and perestroika in October 1989, Shevardnadze noted that with the decision to reduce the armed forces and the concomitant reduction in armaments and military equipment, the Soviet government gave confident course to promising negotiations on deep cuts in troops and conventional weapons in Europe. This allowed not only to reach more equal levels of the armed forces, but also to obtain huge savings in funds and resources:²⁴⁶

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn*, September 1988, p. 16. cited in C. Ekedahl, M. Goodman, *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze*, p. 90.

²⁴³ C. Ekedahl, M. Goodman, *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze*, p. 90.

²⁴⁴ *Izvestia*, 9 January 1989 cited in J. Van Oudenaren, “The Role of Shevardnadze, p. 31.

²⁴⁵ “Zayavlenie MID SSSR”, *Pravda*, 27 December 1987, p. 4.

²⁴⁶ “Vneshnyya Politika i Perestroika”, *Pravda*, 24 October 1989, p. 3.

At the time there were many people who accused diplomats of making concessions, giving up our positions and not taking into account the interests of defense. But the treaty²⁴⁷ exists and we lived with it. The Soviet people felt calm and confident — there were no nuclear missiles on the other side, capable of hitting a target in the European part of the country within seven minutes with an accuracy of meters. And we already saved 400 million rubles per year on this agreement, and after the liquidation was completed, this amount increased. This was the price of “concession”. There is no compromise without concessions, and without compromises there will be no agreement, there will be no diplomacy at all.²⁴⁸

By taking these fundamentally important decisions, the Soviet State maintained country’s defense capability at the level of reasonable and reliable sufficiency, so that no one was tempted to encroach on the security of the USSR and its allies.²⁴⁹ As a result of such cuts in defense spendings, the Soviet government managed to improve its economic condition by presenting military production conversion. Within the framework of economic reform, they were ready to develop and present their internal conversion plan; during 1989 to prepare, as an experiment, plans for the conversion of two or three defense enterprises; publish their experience of employing specialists from the military industry, as well as the use of its equipment, buildings and structures in civilian production.²⁵⁰ Later in his book Gorbachev answered to some concerns on workplaces:

Firstly, for each workplace in the military-industrial complex, funds were spent two to three times more than in the civilian industry; that is, three workplaces could already be created here. Secondly, the sectors of the military economy were connected with the civilian sectors, and they were doing a lot for them. Therefore, they could deploy their capabilities for peaceful purposes. Thirdly, the Soviet Union and the US could think over major joint programs, combining the resources, scientific and intellectual potential for the sake of solving a variety of problems for the benefit of humanity.²⁵¹

Regarding the data on the Soviet defense spendings, different experts concluded that the information presented by the Soviet Union was doubtful and did not match the one presented by CIA reports. For example, in the memorandum for CIA in 1987, members of the Office of Soviet Analysis claimed that verification of any defense spending figures announced by the Soviets would

²⁴⁷ The Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty was an arms control treaty between US and the Soviet Union on the limitation of the anti-ballistic missile systems used in defending areas against ballistic missile-delivered nuclear weapons. Under the terms of the treaty, each party was limited to two ABM complexes, each of which was to be limited to 100 anti-ballistic missiles.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ “Vistuplenie M.S. Gorbachev”, *Pravda*, 8 December 1988, p. 2.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ M. Gorbachev, *Perestroika*, p. 145.

be extremely difficult in the absence of highly detailed data on the coverage of the reported outlays and the prices and quantities of the programs and activities included in defense.²⁵² Further, according to the research prepared for CIA in 1990, the Soviet defense budget submitted to the United Nations contains serious problems in three areas: inconsistent data, incomplete data and unrealistic prices.²⁵³ The CIA estimated that defense spending in constant (1982) rubles grew from 60 billion rubles in 1965 to about 110 billion rubles in 1985, which presented an increase in the defense share of GNP from 12-14 percent to 15-17 percent.²⁵⁴ In brief, the ambitious goals were to accelerate economic growth and technological progress and to improve markedly the quality of industrial goods.²⁵⁵ Among the claims and announcements made by party and state leaders, the following was known: defense spending was frozen in 1987-88 and this generated a saving of 10 billion rubles from the expenditure approved by the twelfth Five Year Plan for 1986-90.²⁵⁶ Nevertheless, based on speech by Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, Nikolai Ryzhkov, taking into account the proposed cost cuts for the next two years (1989-91), the total

²⁵² Reconciling Western estimates of defense spending with Soviet reported figures would be especially difficult. Even if detailed data were available, the state's control of the prices of weapons and military equipment would make it possible for Gorbachev to change the defense budget without affecting the level of resources actually going to the military. "Gorbachev and the Defense Budget: the Prospects for Glasnost", *Office of Soviet Analysis*, CIA, Declassified in part, 10 July 1987, p. 6. Available at: <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP90T00114R000800320001-5.pdf>

²⁵³ Despite assurances by Soviet officials, including Marshal Akhromeyev, that the Soviet UN budget is comparable in "form, volume, and makeup" to the US defense budget, it is not. As soon as the budget appeared, it was roundly criticized in the West and also in the USSR for not capturing the full cost of Soviet defense activities, primarily because of incomplete coverage, suspect accounting practices and artificially low prices for weapons and equipment. "The Soviet Release of Defense Spending Data to the United Nations: Less than Meets the Eye", CIA, Secret, May 1990, p. iii. Available at: https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/DOC_0000499530.pdf See also: F. Holzman, "CIA and DIA Estimates of Soviet Military Spending", *International Security*, Vol. 14, n. 2, 1989, pp. 101-131.

²⁵⁴ Information about trends in Soviet defense spending is provided in: CIA (1978); Becker (1985); CIA (1987); CIA/DIA (1988); CIA (1988, Figure 4, p. 10); Steinberg (1989); and Michaud (1990) cited in C. Wolf, S. Popper (ed.), "Defense and the Soviet Economy: Military Muscle and Economic Weakness", *RAND*, RAND's National Defense Research Institute, N-3474-USDP, Santa Monica, 1992, p. 142. Available at: <https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/notes/2007/N3474.pdf>

²⁵⁵ C. Wolf, S. Popper, "Defense and the Soviet Economy", p. 143.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

savings in defense spendings in relation to the approved Five Year Plan²⁵⁷ was almost 30 billion rubles.²⁵⁸ According to him, in 1989, out of the total expenditures in the amount of 77.3 billion rubles, it was envisaged to allocate: for the purchase of weapons and equipment — 32.6 billion rubles, for seraph and development work — 15.3 billion rubles, for the maintenance of the army and navy — 20.2 billion rubles, for military construction — 4.6 billion rubles, retired servicemen — 2.3 billion rubles, other expenses — 2.3 billion rubles:²⁵⁹

We intended to persistently follow the path of disarmament, strived to reduce the share of defense spending in the national income by 1.5-2 times by 1995. Taking into account the consistent reduction in defense spending, the government strove to provide the Soviet Armed Forces with everything necessary, while at the same time realizing the principle of reasonable sufficiency.²⁶⁰

The allocation of resources to the defense sector in the Soviet Union was dependent not only on macroeconomic priorities expressed in economic plans but also on those associated with the strategy adopted to promote the security of the country.²⁶¹ Although in theory Shevardnadze surrendered some of his power to Supreme Soviet, in practice his authority over foreign and defense policy was enhanced, as the military and the KGB were placed under stricter and more hostile parliamentary supervision than the MFA.²⁶² His influence on Soviet national security policy derived from various sources. First of all, Shevardnadze had a political stature unmatched by any military officer of defense official. As foreign minister, he was ex officio member of and undoubtedly Gorbachev's closest ally in the Defense Council.²⁶³ Further, Shevardnadze had 31 meetings with US

²⁵⁷ In addition to policy guidance on doctrine and other matters that influence defense planning, leadership oversight of the FYDP process amounts to the formulation of policy guidelines on resource allocation to defense and the subsequent review, revision, and approval of draft plans. Both functions are technically the prerogative of the Politburo, although its role in plan review and approval generally amounts to the pro forma acceptance of recommendations by the Defense Council. Due to Shevardnadze's influence on the Ministry of Defense and close connection with Gorbachev, it is believed that Shevardnadze played a crucial role in planning FYDP, which also included defense cutbacks. See "Preparing the Soviet Five-Year Defense Plan: Process, Participants, and Milestones", CIA, Secret, 21 November 1988. Available at: <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP89T01451R000600730001-9.pdf> "The Changing Role of Civilian Advisers in Shaping Soviet National Security Policy", CIA, Secret, January 1989.

²⁵⁸ "Sluzhit' Interesam Naroda. Dolan N.I. Ryzhkova: O Programme Predstoyaschey Deyatelnosti Pravitelstva SSSR", *Pravda*, 08 June 1989, pp. 2-5.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ C. Wolf, S. Popper, "Defense and the Soviet Economy", p. 148.

²⁶² J. Van Oudenaren, "The Role of Shevardnadze, p. 63.

²⁶³ Ibid., p. 2.

Secretary of State George Shultz and was present at Gorbachev's five meetings with President Reagan. The imbalance between the stepped-up activism of the MFA and the background role of the military redressed only partially by the participation of Soviet defense officials in high-level US-Soviet meetings, and the opening of a direct US-Soviet military and defense dialogue.²⁶⁴ Lastly, Gorbachev's "new thinking," in addition to being partly the result of Shevardnadze's role, was a further source of power for him and his ministry. Backed by a doctrinal line that downplays the importance of military power in international politics, by mid-1988 Shevardnadze had great latitude to make proposals affecting the Soviet armed forces, but about which many military officers clearly were unenthusiastic.²⁶⁵

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 3.

Chapter 3

Steps towards new World Order

1. Diplomacy as the key instrument

Public criticism of the Soviet foreign policy was always an especially delicate issue. Even at the time, with glasnost flourishing in the Soviet Union, Soviet analysts had to tread very carefully when discussing the record of Soviet diplomacy.²⁶⁶ In the closed atmosphere that existed prior to Gorbachev, it was easy for the Soviet leadership to ignore — or even be ignorant of — pressing domestic problems. With glasnost this was no longer possible.²⁶⁷ Foreign minister Shevardnadze was especially outspoken in his indictment of the failings of past policies, and in addressing Soviet diplomacy personnel on 27 June 1987, when he used some of the bluntest language about the shortcomings of Soviet diplomacy ever to appear in the press.²⁶⁸ After detailing how Soviet foreign policy personnel contributed to the decline of Soviet Union's position as one of the leading industrially developed countries, he stated:

If we are finally honest, we frequently encouraged and at times even induced enormous material investments in hopeless foreign policy projects and tacitly promoted actions which both in the direct and the indirect sense costed the people dearly even to this day. [...] The fact that the foreign policy service — one of the most important and most sensitive links in the system of state management — carried out of touch with the country's fundamental vital interests is in our conscience.²⁶⁹

Reversing the trend of the Brezhnev period, Gorbachev and Shevardnadze worked to enhance the status of Western (and other foreign) ambassadors in Moscow. In December 1985 Gorbachev met with the Moscow diplomatic corps and declared that “trust between states begins with ambassadors.”²⁷⁰ In Shevardnadze's thinking, diplomacy and negotiations were the only reasonable means to achieve conflict resolution.²⁷¹ During one of his interviews to a Soviet journalist,

²⁶⁶ P. Marantz, “Changing Soviet Conceptions of International Security” in S. Woodby, A. Evans Jr. (eds.), *Restructuring Soviet Ideology: Gorbachev's New Thinking*, Colorado and Oxford, Westview Press, 1990, pp. 113-114.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p.111.

²⁶⁸ “Shevardnadze's speech at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, 4 July 1987”, *Vestnik Ministerstva Inostrannykh Del SSSR*, 1987, n. 1 in FBIS 2 September 1987 cited in *Ibid.*

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁰ “Vstrecha v Kremle. Vystuplenie M.S. Gorbacheva”, *Pravda*, 28 December 1985, pp. 1-2.

²⁷¹ B. Saylor, “New Thinking as a Principal Export”, p. 6.

Shevardnadze claimed that the principal task of diplomacy was to ensure a state's normal activity on the international scene as a sovereign, independent, territorially integral entity in conditions which are maximally auspicious for its political and socio-economic development.²⁷² The principal threat to this was lack of trust in the West of Soviet motives and intentions and, equally significant, domestic hard-liner resistance and undercutting of new thinking reforms.²⁷³ Therefore Shevardnadze made himself more accessible to foreign ambassadors than Gromyko did and used meetings with groups of ambassadors for certain symbolic purposes.²⁷⁴ Whereas in the past Soviet domestic needs were often sacrificed in the pursuit of an overly ambitious foreign policy, Shevardnadze called for a very different conception of the relationship between domestic and foreign policy, especially that "the most important function of the Soviet foreign policy was to create the optimal conditions for the economic and social development of the country."²⁷⁵ During his report to the Foreign Ministry, he also stated that:

The restructuring in diplomatic work is primarily the fundamental awareness, to a greater depth than ever before, of the interrelationship between the foreign and domestic policy of the Soviet Union. [...] Without an awareness of the fact that diplomacy must create for domestic restructuring a favorable foreign policy environment and conditions, we do not have and cannot have today a qualified, competent diplomat to a competent diplomatic service.²⁷⁶

The shift from the Brezhnev-era emphasis on ritualized meetings to concrete agreements on the central issues — recognition of the European Community, arms control, and perforce the reunification of Germany — entailed a new role for negotiation, not all of which could be conducted at the summit level.²⁷⁷ Having analyzed the international situation, Soviet diplomacy put forward a concept providing for international economic security and submitted it to the United Nations.²⁷⁸ In his speech to the United Nations in December 1988, Gorbachev coined a phrase that

²⁷² M. Kondratyev, "Eduard Shevardnadze", p. 7.

²⁷³ "New Thinking as a Principal Export", p. 6.

²⁷⁴ J. Van Oudenaren, *Détente in Europe. The Soviet Union and the West since 1953*, Durham and London, Duke University Press, 1991, p. 107.

²⁷⁵ P. Marantz, "Changing Soviet Conceptions", p. 112.

²⁷⁶ "Shevardnadze's report at a conference at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, 3 May 1987", *Vestnik Ministerstva Inostrannykh Del SSSR*, 1987, n. 1 in FBIS, 2 September 1987 cited in *Ibid.*

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁸ I. Ivanov, "Perestroika and Foreign Economic Relations" in A. Aganbegyan (ed.), *Perestroika Annual*, London, Futura, 1988, p. 161.

had considerable resonance in the post-Cold War era. He declared that further world progress would be possible only if there were progress toward creation of “a new world order.”²⁷⁹ Shevardnadze became the most vocal and consistent proponent of the new Soviet goal of redefining the international environment and creating this new world order.²⁸⁰ To a considerable extent this was the result of changes in Soviet foreign policy, where the Soviet diplomacy changed drastically in the last four years of 1980s.²⁸¹ Two things, in particular, illustrated the contrast with old ways. First, Soviet officials began to admit quite openly that the Soviet Union had domestic and external problems and that some of these were the fault of past and present practices.²⁸² Second, the way in which Soviet diplomats conducted business changed radically. They became more affable and flexible, showed more individual initiative and soon proved that they were adept at using the media to communicate and to project a positive image of perestroika.²⁸³ Shevardnadze’s bilateral meetings with foreign counterparts also became more complex and results oriented, as plenary sessions were supplemented with subministerial working groups tasked with finding solutions in specific problem areas.²⁸⁴ According to Shevardnadze himself, following a pattern established in US-Soviet talks, during his official visit to Bonn in January 1988, him and West German Federal Minister Genscher agreed to expedite their work by setting up working groups concerned with bilateral affairs, questions on security and disarmament, and humanitarian problems.²⁸⁵

We had extremely intense negotiations with the Deputy Federal Chancellor, Federal Minister Genscher. For the first time, we practiced the parallel discussion of individual sections of our agenda in specially formed groups of experts, which eventually presented ministers with oral reports on the solid, serious work they had done. In particular, it was stated that the positions of both sides on the issue of banning chemical weapons coincide, and an agreement was reached to hold consultations on legal and humanitarian issues. Both sides expressed pleasure in new forms of discussion at the expert level of problems of interest to the USSR and the FRG.²⁸⁶

²⁷⁹ C. Ekedahl, M. Goodman, *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze*, p. 53.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁸¹ M. Light, “Foreign Policy,” in M. McCauley (ed.), *Gorbachev*, Essex, Pearson Education Limited, 1988, p. 77.

²⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 179.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁴ J. Van Oudenaren, *Détente in Europe*, p. 95.

²⁸⁵ “Zavershenie peregovorov”, *Pravda*, 20 January 1988 cited in *Ibid.*

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

When summing up the results of the negotiations, it was noted that this visit and the agreements reached in the course of it were another important step forward in the development of political contacts between the two countries. The signing of bilateral documents took place: a protocol of consultations, a protocol of negotiations on issues related to the establishment of consulates general of the USSR in Munich and the one of FRG in Kiev. Further, an exchange of notes was made on the extension for the next five years, starting from 26 December 1988, of the agreement on the development and deepening of long-term cooperation between the USSR and the FRG in the field of economics and industry of 6 May 1978. The ministers expressed the hope that these documents, which significantly expanded the legal basis of relations, would serve to dynamic them and contribute to strengthening mutually beneficial cooperation and trust between the people of two states.²⁸⁷ The similar actions took place during Shevardnadze's official visit to France in October of the same year. This time, Shevardnadze was received by French President François Mitterrand, during which a final agreement was reached on the exchange of high-level visits between the USSR and France. On both sides, there was confidence that the forthcoming meetings of the leaders of two countries would set a new political pace for Soviet-French cooperation and would contribute to expanding the spheres of constructive interaction between the two countries in the international arena.²⁸⁸ Later, a conversation between Shevardnadze and French foreign minister Roland Dumas took place, at which some fundamental issues of Soviet-French relations were discussed in the light of upcoming contacts at the highest level between the USSR and France. On the same day, official Soviet-French negotiations began at the French foreign ministry, where working groups created by mutual agreement started their work on discussing disarmament issues, regional problems, various aspects of humanitarian and cultural cooperation, as well as bilateral relations.²⁸⁹ During his interview to the Soviet journalist, Shevardnadze answered to a question of why was the Soviet foreign policy activity so intensive specifically on the European continent? What were the aims of Soviet so-called Eurodiplomacy? In his words, the Soviet leadership started shaping the concept of its relations with European states, envisaging the deepening of the Helsinki principles, at the April 1985 plenary meeting.²⁹⁰ Within the framework of the Warsaw Pact, serious work started on

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ "Sovetsko-frantsuzskii dialog", *Pravda*, 11 October 1988, p. 4.

²⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 5.

²⁹⁰ M. Kondratyev, "Eduard Shevardnadze", p. 22.

correcting military doctrines and working out new proposals on reducing regular arms and military forces in Europe.²⁹¹

With time, humanitarian cooperation was broadening, Soviet traditional contacts with France regained their normal course. Soviet contacts with Britain were developing on a qualitatively new basis and a new chapter opened in relations with the FRG. We were indeed advancing to the uppermost positions. The Soviet interest in European matters emerged when Europe of peace and cooperation started to emerge before our eyes. The “iron curtain” was finally tumbling. Mikhail Gorbachev’s trips to Britain, the FRG, France and his statement at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg — all fitted into the concept of a common European home with room available for the US and Canada, which was developing into a structure with a clear outline, one resting on trust and expanding ties between states at all levels and in all areas.²⁹²

Soviet diplomatic ties did not end only in Europe. Years 1988 and 1989 were the most fruitful ones in Soviet diplomacy, as joint documents, treaties and agreements were signed and concluded. That included Soviet-Swedish agreement on the principles of the delimitation of territorial waters in the Baltic Sea; agreement on prompt notification of a nuclear accident and exchange of information on nuclear installations, along with an agreement on cooperation in the sea of environmental protection between USSR and Norway, signed in January 1988. Further, in the spring of 1988 US and Soviet Union, serving as guarantors, concluded Geneva Accords on Afghanistan, where the agreement on the settlement of the situation in Afghanistan was signed between Afghanistan and Pakistan.²⁹³ Secretary of State Shultz recalled the time, when before and during the Washington summit, he worked hard at nailing down the terms of a Soviet withdrawal. In his words, the US sharpened its position in January 1988, but only in the light of Soviet insistence on continuing their own supply operations.²⁹⁴ He further stated that the issue on Afghanistan brought him to one of the most difficult meetings with Shevardnadze, as they knew that he was in charge of the Politburo effort on Afghanistan. Later, at Geneva, after negotiations and signing of the agreement, Shevardnadze said:

The importance of these instruments and of this moment can hardly be exaggerated. [...] we fully agreed with those who regarded the Geneva Agreement as the first example of a peaceful resolution of regional conflicts on the basis of the principles of new political thinking.²⁹⁵

²⁹¹ I. Ivanov, “Perestroika”, p. 224.

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ M. Kondratyev, “Eduard Shevardnadze”, p. 28.

²⁹⁴ G. Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, p. 1087.

²⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 1094.

A month later, agreement as to the application of the INF Treaty to “intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles flight-tested or deployed to carry weapons based on either current or future technologies” was signed directly between US and Soviet Union. During his speech at the Second Session of the Supreme Council of the USSR, Shevardnadze stressed that both the Soviet and American leadership were guided by the long-term prospect of growing positive and constructive cooperation in bilateral relations and not the entire range of world problems. The dialogue between the two powers reached a new level of openness, business saturation, the breadth of posing questions, the degree of mutual understanding and goodwill.²⁹⁶ In 1989, the treaty of friendship and cooperation with Cuba; Sino-Soviet Joint Communiqué; agreement on the establishment and operation of a cultural-information centre of the GDR in the USSR; declaration on the principles of relations and friendly cooperation between the USSR and the Islamic Republic of Iran; USSR-Philippines agreement on economic and technological cooperation; Warsaw Treaty statement on confidence and security building measures and disarmament in Europe, along with document of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty Member States “For a stable and safe Europe, free from nuclear and chemical weapons, for a substantial reduction of armed forces, armaments and military spendings” and many others were signed.²⁹⁷ For the first time the visit of the Soviet foreign ministers to Nicaragua took place in 1989. In Shevardnadze’s words, the Soviet Union attached great importance to stabilization and a joint decision with the allies to suspend the supply of weapons to Nicaragua. He noted that the talks with the Nicaraguan leadership were necessary and important in terms of their own outcome, and therefore were characterized by a spirit of camaraderie and complete understanding.²⁹⁸ Shevardnadze was also actively involved in international negotiations for a settlement in Cambodia, where he urged the Cambodian government to compromise, criticizes the Khmer Rouge for boycotting the negotiating process and issued a joint statement with the Chinese promising not to arm Cambodian factions.²⁹⁹ With respect to South Korea, increasing ambivalence within the Soviet leadership was evident, when Moscow was moving toward establishing diplomatic ties with Seoul at Shevardnadze’s urging. Yevgeny Primakov, an adviser to Gorbachev, accompanied the General Secretary to the meeting with South Korean President No Tae-U in San Francisco in June 1990, there he indicated that he favored

²⁹⁶ “Vneshnyaya Politika”, *Pravda*, 24 October 1989, p. 3.

²⁹⁷ M. Kondratyev, “Eduard Shevardnadze”, p. 28.

²⁹⁸ “Vneshnyaya Politika”, *Pravda*, 24 October 1989, p. 3.

²⁹⁹ C. Ekedahl, M. Goodman, *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze*, p. 46.

slowing the pace of relations.³⁰⁰ When Shevardnadze met with the South Koreans in New York in September, he preempted Primakov and immediately established relations.³⁰¹

Such positive changes in Soviet diplomacy were also in virtue of Shevardnadze's efforts towards Soviet embassies abroad. Many cases of expulsion of Soviet diplomats from US and Europe left its imprint on the image and effectiveness of embassies in foreign countries. New ambassadors were appointed to virtually all major countries, and Shevardnadze displayed an interest improving the day-to-day work of Soviet representatives that was largely absent in Gromyko.³⁰² Shevardnadze called Soviet embassies laboratories of innovative diplomatic thought, and stated that the growing prestige of Soviet foreign policy and diplomacy was largely due to the operation of Soviet embassies too.³⁰³ Soviet embassies began holding frequent formal press conferences for the first time in 1986, following the Twenty-Seventh Party Congress.³⁰⁴ Soviet diplomatic personnel stepped-up informal contacts with Western journalists, and even Soviet military attachés began to meet with the foreign media, usually to promote Soviet arms control initiatives.³⁰⁵ Although such active actions were taken by embassies to promote Soviet foreign policy position, Shevardnadze was still unhappy with their narrow vision of themselves. In the interview to Novosti Press Agency, Shevardnadze blamed Soviet embassies in viewing themselves as authorities that can deal with their host countries, which was not always justified. The embassies, in his [and Soviet leadership's] opinion, were supposed to share in developing regional and global components of the foreign policy course and each diplomat's goal and ideal should be an ability to apply the principles of the new political thinking at his specific workplace and to specific sections and directions of activity as a daily work instrument, and not only as a philosophical category.³⁰⁶ That included diplomacy precepts, namely that diplomacy should be guided by the truth that a state does not exist outside of remaining world and even if the world is hostile to it, it all the same reacts with the world through

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

³⁰¹ *Moscow International Service*, 20 June 1990 cited in Ibid.

³⁰² "Shevardnadze's speech at the July 1988 MFA Conference", *International Affairs*, n. 10, 1988; Also the section reports from the conference in *International Affairs*, n. 11, 1988 and the articles by L. Ilichev and I. Kvitsinskii, *International Affairs*, n. 5, 1989 cited in J. Van Oudenaren, *Détente in Europe*, p. 106.

³⁰³ M. Kondratyev, "Eduard Shevardnadze", p. 24.

³⁰⁴ The Soviet ambassador to Finland gave the first such conference in Arpli 1986. Biweekly press conferences at the Soviet embassy in Lisbon were instituted in late 1986. J. Van Oudenaren, *Détente in Europe*, p. 106.

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

³⁰⁶ M. Kondratyev, "Eduard Shevardnadze", p. 23.

diplomatic means; that diplomacy actively projects outward the political and social ideas of its state as well as its spiritual and moral values; that the mission and duty of diplomacy is to pursue policy and defend the state's interests and to also shape correct and moral impressions of the state's policies and interests and that Soviet diplomatic actions are subject to strict approval by the nation.³⁰⁷ While embassies played important symbolic and public relations roles, after World War II their involvement in negotiations was largely supplanted by direct high- and working-level talks between governments. Given the importance of agenda, representation, and other procedural matters, ambassadors continued to play an important role in preparatory and exploratory talks before formal meetings and conferences.³⁰⁸

Shevardnadze's effort for a better diplomacy also brought him to close relations with some of his counterparts. Shevardnadze's energy and self-assurance enabled him to develop extremely close relations with Secretary Shultz, who in turn waged a long and intense bureaucratic battle to convince the White House that the Kremlin was genuinely interested in rapprochement. Shultz had major differences with Secretary of Defense Weinberger, CIA Director Casey, National Security Council adviser Poindexter, and Arms Control and Disarmament Agency Director Kenneth Adelman over Soviet-American relations and arms control.³⁰⁹ Other than first lady Nancy Reagan and Ambassador Matlock at the National Security Council, Shultz had few allies outside the State Department.³¹⁰ The first impression that Shultz had about Shevardnadze was that he "would incline more to the pragmatism than to ideology."³¹¹ That, according to Shultz, was because the people rising to the top in Moscow were coming from outside Moscow, from the republics, where they had to face, and deal with, the problems created by their system.³¹² That was confirmed in words of Shevardnadze himself, when he stated that on a long-ago day in July 1985, when he first time met his foreign colleagues in Helsinki, he passionately wanted each one of them to accept his chosen criteria:

³⁰⁷ "New Thinking as a Principal Export", p. 11.

³⁰⁸ J. Van Oudenaren, *Détente in Europe*, p. 107.

³⁰⁹ C. Ekedahl, M. Goodman, *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze*, p. 104.

³¹⁰ See G. Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph* cited in *Ibid.*

³¹¹ G. Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, p. 571.

³¹² *Ibid.*

I wanted us to talk among ourselves as people with common concerns: peace for our families, the future of our children and grandchildren, and the welfare of our fellow citizens. I did not want the walls of mistrust and fear to divide us.³¹³

Shultz recalled, that he expected Shevardnadze would be gregarious, energetic, full of economic hustle, with more subterranean private enterprise than commonly found in the USSR. Therefore, Shultz and his wife O'Bie decided to make every effort to get to know Shevardnadze and his wife, and establish a friendly personal relationship, however strained the relations between the two countries.³¹⁴ Shevardnadze liked to overdraw about the first time he personally met Shultz in Helsinki in 1985. He joked that as the story goes, he placed his Georgian *kinzhal*³¹⁵ on the table in front of the US Secretary of State and said: "I have disarmed. Now it's your turn."³¹⁶ That was not true, and in addition, their first meeting happened in Finlandia Hall, while the room quieted and more and more delegates saw what was happening. When Shultz reached Shevardnadze, they shook hands, and the latter broke into a broad smile.³¹⁷ Shultz recalled that there was a sense of relief and shared drama, but they chatted in a friendly, open manner.³¹⁸ Shevardnadze, seeking an opportunity to end "suspiciously hostile and vengeful" relations between the US and the Soviet Union, warmed to Shultz after their firm handshake. He claimed that he softened passages in his statements in order to foster close ties, and he turned his energy and charm to building the personal relationship that would play the leading role in Soviet-American relations.³¹⁹ However, during business meetings, Shultz was not as friendly and warm as Shevardnadze would expect him to be. Ambassador Dobrynin recalled the conference at the end of July 1985, when Shevardnadze made a suggestion to accompany him. He stated that "Shevardnadze was surprised at the tone of a speech Shultz made there on human rights in the Soviet Union, which he felt exceeded all the habitual limits of hostility."³²⁰ He added that Shevardnadze was more conciliatory, and after the speech, he asked his American counterpart if he "really had to make such a speech?"³²¹ The similar approach can also be

³¹³ E. Shevardnadze, *The Future*, p. 70.

³¹⁴ G. Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, p. 573.

³¹⁵ *trans.* sword

³¹⁶ E. Shevardnadze, *The Future*, p. 70.

³¹⁷ G. Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, p. 573.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*

³¹⁹ C. Ekedahl, M. Goodman, *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze*, p. 106.

³²⁰ A. Dobrynin, *In Confidence*, p. 582.

³²¹ *Ibid.*

found in Shultz's memo for President Reagan on the upcoming visit of Shevardnadze in October 1987. According to Shultz, he expected to use Shevardnadze's visit to tie up a few loose ends, namely to extract essential Soviet compromises on remaining INF issues, particularly regarding inspection; to turn Gorbachev's proposal on START sublimits to our [the US] advantage by placing the proposed Soviet numbers into the sublimit structure we [the US] prefer; reiterate a willingness to address the concerns the Soviets expressed on the need for greater predictability on strategic defense, without limiting US freedom to conduct a vigorous SDI program.³²² Achieving those goals and therefore using less friendly approach was important for Shultz, despite their already established warm relationship. According to US Secretary of Defense Frank Carlucci, the Soviet s understood that if the meetings with Shevardnadze ended without the announcement of a fall summit, the US press would term the meeting a failure. Therefore, it was important to attain as much as possible, so that the Soviets would not get what they wanted, specifically a US agreement to include in the INF Treaty text, or in a document that could be associated with that Treaty, some provision covering the US warheads for German Pershing IA missiles, and US agreement that it would conclude both an INF Treaty and a "framework agreement" covering START and Defense and Space at fall summit.³²³ Shevardnadze also admitted that the dialogue between them did not always unfolded early or simply, and before the matters reached a stage of normal human cordiality, they had occasions to get on each other's nerves terribly.³²⁴ According to him, the reason for that were not the character flaws, but the nature of Soviet-American relations themselves at the time. It determined the rules of the game: endless, relentless pressure all over the field.³²⁵ That was due to Shultz's role, which was almost as important as that of Reagan. Certainly the appointment of Shultz in succession to Alexander Haig made progress easier than it otherwise would once the Soviet Union had a leader ready to embrace change.³²⁶ Reagan found that Haig made a difficult subordinate, saying that he discovered "only few months into the administration that Al [Haig] did not want anyone other, me included, to influence foreign policy while he was Secretary of State"

³²² "George Shultz to Reagan on Shevardnadze's Visit", Secret/Sensitive, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, H. Baker Jr. Files, Shevardnadze [Foreign Minister, USSR], Box 4, 29 October 1987.

³²³ "Frank Carlucci to Reagan on arms reduction framework agreement", Secret/Sensitive, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, H. Baker Jr. Files, Shevardnadze [Foreign Minister, USSR], Box 4, 14 September 1987.

³²⁴ E. Shevardnadze, *The Future*, p. 79.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*

³²⁶ A. Brown, *Seven Years*, p. 269.

and he “was never shy about asserting this claim.”³²⁷ Matlock noted that General Haig “was less sanguine than Reagan and Shultz that the Soviet Union could change, and therefore posed more limited goals for US policy than they eventually did.”³²⁸ Gorbachev also saw the importance of Shultz and was very impressed after holding negotiations with him twice. He saw Shultz as a great statesman who considered not only American interests, but also the full scope of global development.³²⁹ In Shultz, Gorbachev saw a man who did not come to destroy or undermine the Soviet Union. In a friendly way, he mentioned to Shultz a few times, “Let us not play games, it will not work, we know everything about one another. We know who the main spies are — Shevardnadze and Shultz are the main spooks, and your ambassador, sure. Let us play fair and straight.”³³⁰ Shevardnadze himself of course noticed changes in Shultz’s behavior, and in his book he stated that he always felt his firm handshake, which sometimes weakened for reasons that did not depend on them:

[...] circumstances related to the serious differences in our countries’ positions, unforeseen situations that arose in spite of us brought elements of frustration and irritation into our meetings. But the obstacles were never stronger than our mutual desire to listen to and understand each other and to achieve a mutually acceptable outcome. That was how it was at the most dramatic moments: after Reykjavik, at the final stages of the drafting of the treaty on IRBMs, and before the signing of the Geneva accords on Afghanistan. Even at those moments, we always found a way to communicate our positions like human beings and to search for ways out of whoever situation developed. [...] we spent many hours, meeting either late at night or at the beginning of negotiations, but we did not give up seeking a mutually acceptable resolution to the problems that arose.³³¹

Shultz also warmly remembered some personal moments during meetings with Shevardnadze, where he would make sure that “Shevardnadze and his group had a hearty breakfast when they came to the room at the US mission at the UN,” how on the way to Moscow airport his motorcade suddenly slowed to a crawl, because it was Shevardnadze, hastening to arrive before him to bid a farewell in proper protocol style, and jokes they shared during the dinner the Gorbachevs were

³²⁷ R. Reagan, *An American Life*, p. 360 cited in Ibid.

³²⁸ J. Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, p. 24 cited in Ibid.

³²⁹ S. Savranskaya, T. Blanton (trans./ed.), “Dialogue: The Musgrove Conference, 1-3 May, 1988”, in *Masterpieces of History*, p. 190.

³³⁰ Ibid.

³³¹ E. Shevardnadze, *The Future*, pp. 71, 87.

hosting.³³² On the other hand, Shevardnadze compared his relationship with Shultz to an American football:

American football, they tell me, involves two kinds of play: either the forward pass, which, if successful, will gain dozens of yards at once, or carrying the ball in your hands, conquering ground a yard at a time. George Shultz and I carried the ball of Soviet-American relations toward a common goal. It was physically, intellectually, and psychologically hard work.³³³

Based on the foregoing, it became clear that Shevardnadze developed a plan to take Soviet diplomacy to all corners of the globe with the specific intent of building geographic and functional interrelationships at the following priority: maintaining relations with socialist countries, enhancing relations with nonaligned countries, and ultimately opinion dialogue with all nations.³³⁴ In its practical activities, the foreign ministry under Shevardnadze paid priority attention to relations with the countries participating in the Warsaw Pact, with socialist states, and also assigned the main role to the United Nations Organization and international institutions. This included creating conditions for participation in the international division of labor and membership in the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, GATT and other financial and economic institutions; establishing international cooperation in order to protect and preserve the environment, as well as establishing contacts with compatriots abroad, whose position the Ministry of Foreign Affairs would keep in sight and protect their rights.³³⁵ When Shevardnadze just started as a foreign minister, the number of countries with which Soviet diplomatic relations were established was even to 131, along with 110 diplomatic missions of foreign states in Moscow and 117 of Soviet ones abroad. The figures changed slightly and by 1989, the numbers increased by 6, 3 and 7 respectively.³³⁶

According to Anatoly Dobrynin, the head of the International Department of Central Committee and Ambassador of the Soviet Union to the US, all the efforts that Shevardnadze put into developing Soviet diplomacy and international connections, became progressively less effective from 1989, because of the urgent pressure of Gorbachev's domestic political agenda and his efforts to sustain

³³² G. Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, pp. 571-603.

³³³ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

³³⁴ "New Thinking as a Principal Export", p. 6.

³³⁵ "Vneshnyaa Politika", *Pravda*, 24 October 1989, p. 3.

³³⁶ M. Kondratyev, "Eduard Shevardnadze", p. 9.

his weakening reputation at home by what appeared to be successes abroad.³³⁷ In his words, in exchange for the generous Soviet concessions offered to the West, they both should have obtained a more important role for the Soviet Union in European security and a stronger Soviet voice in European affairs.³³⁸

2. Shift to Political Interaction in Europe

In early years of perestroika, the new leadership waged an ongoing battle for the hearts and minds of West Europeans, both politicians and populations, with the goal of pulling them away from the intransigent US of the Reagan administration.³³⁹ According to Ekedahl and Goodman, before the perestroika, the Soviets isolated themselves from Western Europe by walking out of arms control negotiations and meddling in German elections. They continued to subsidize Eastern Europe heavily, but they lost credibility and leverage there because of the prolonged economic decline that was forcing non-Soviet members of Warsaw Pact to explore new economic models and Western assistance.³⁴⁰ The same opinion was shared in the Izyumov-Kortunov article, where authors contended that from the mid-1970s onward, the USSR experienced a declining rate of political return from military investments. Moreover, the buildup of Soviet forces led to an overall weakening of the Soviet position in the world.³⁴¹ As an example, the situation in Europe at the end of 1970s and in the early 1980s was described:

Never was the military balance in Europe so favorable for the USSR and its allies as at the start of the decade. However, it was precisely in this period that our European position began to weaken, the most

³³⁷ A. Dobrynin, *In Confidence*, p. 634.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*

³³⁹ S. Savranskaya, "The Logic of 1989: The Soviet Peaceful Withdrawal from Eastern Europe", p. 19 in S. Savranskaya, T. Blanton, V. Zubok (eds.), *Masterpieces of History. The Peaceful End of the Cold War in Europe, 1989*, Budapest and New York, Central European University Press, 2010.

³⁴⁰ C. Ekedahl, M. Goodman, *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze*, p. 152.

³⁴¹ S. Atkinson, "CNA Research Memorandum", p. 5.

important political initiatives began to “misfire,” and anti-Soviet and conservative elements in Western Europe grew.³⁴²

The question of whether the Soviet leadership viewed the socialist commonwealth as a burden and how that perception contributed to the reformulation of Moscow’s East European policy is also raised in Jacques Levesque’s work. In one of his book, *Enigma*, the Quebec political scientist and an expert on Soviet Union, Levesque, writes that the “cost” of Eastern Europe was not a significant factor in Gorbachev’s thinking at the time, and he compared the region to nuclear weapons in terms of its value to the Soviet Union, noting that the fraternal allies were expensive but “essential attributes of Soviet power.”³⁴³ Shevardnadze himself did not agree with a statement, especially with the one on self-isolation, and in his article for *Slavic Review* in 1991, he stated that a self-isolation was the ultimate danger.³⁴⁴

A self-isolation can arise as a consequence of policy or as a result of unmanageable events within the country, which would result in the West erecting a protective cordon against the advancing chaos. If we were able to solve our ethnic, economic and political problems and create a law-abiding, democratic state, we could participate in the common European process and form together with Europe a unified economic, legal, humanitarian, cultural and ecological space.³⁴⁵

Shevardnadze stressed that the US formed the main “strategic front” confronting the Soviet Union and that a major objective of Soviet policy ought to be not only the neutralization of this front, but the prevention of the formation of additional strategic fronts.³⁴⁶ Thus, he condemned the Soviet departure in late 1983 from the Geneva INF talks, which “hastened and facilitated the formation of the second strategic front in Europe standing opposed to us.”³⁴⁷ As perestroika progressed, and especially as Gorbachev’s contacts with West European leaders led him to see them as his primary peer group, his appreciation and understanding of Europe became richer and his approach less

³⁴² Ibid., it is noteworthy that this depiction of the European correlation of forces in the late 1970s-early 1980s was repeated almost exactly by A. Arbatov, “About Parity and Reasonable Sufficiency,” *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn*, September 1988, pp. 80-92. Also very close is O. Bykov, “To Break the Logic of the Arms Race,” *Pravda*, 11 August 1988, p. 4, and I. Malashenko “Security: Non-military Aspects,” *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn*, December 1988, pp. 44-55.

³⁴³ J. Levesque, *The Enigma of 1989*, University of California Press, 1977 cited in S. Savranskaya, “Soviet Reassessment of Eastern Europe: From a Crown Jewel to a Burden,” *Masterpieces of History*, p. 14.

³⁴⁴ E. Shevardnadze, “No One Can Isolate Us”, p.118.

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

³⁴⁶ J. Van Oudenaren, “ The Role of Shevardnadze, p. 27.

³⁴⁷ *International Affairs*, n. 10, 1988, p. 17 cited in Ibid.

tactical.³⁴⁸ Europe, including the “return to Europe,” was one of the earliest ideas of perestroika, always invoking Russia’s identity as a European state and the implicit hope of pulling Europe away from the US. In fact, Shevardnadze’s first trip abroad as foreign minister was to participate in the CSCE Vienna conference, at which the Soviet side made an unprecedented proposal to host a future CSCE meeting in Moscow on the humanitarian dimension of security. The Soviet proposals of late 1989 calling for regular summits under CSCR auspices also envisioned new and highly formalized roles for the foreign ministers. In his December speech in Brussels, Shevardnadze suggested the establishment of an all-European committee of foreign ministers that would receive directives from and present proposals to meetings of national leaders.³⁴⁹ To make this possible, Kremlin undertook significant changes in Soviet human rights practices, including releasing political prisoners and putting an end to the persecution of prominent dissidents.³⁵⁰ More than Gorbachev, Shevardnadze understood that Moscow could not improve its international economic position and implement domestic economic reform until it significantly changed its relations with Western and Eastern Europe, as well as with the US.³⁵¹ In contrast to Gorbachev’s increasingly “global” perspective, Shevardnadze’s views on Eastern Europe had rather more “provincial” roots. They were, first, those of a republican leader who studied Hungarian reforms for their application in Georgia.³⁵² But his was also the outlook of the “governor” of a “Russian colony” that long chafed under Moscow’s control, and so one who understood intrinsically the long-term untenability of imperial diktat — and the likelihood of recurrent crises — in Eastern Europe.³⁵³ His calls for global interdependence and a “common European home” required increased political independence for Eastern Europe, and his pursuit of closer economic links with Western Europe required the absence of military confrontation in Central Europe.³⁵⁴ Such opinion was shared by Jack Matlock, Foreign Service Officer and a US

³⁴⁸ S. Savranskaya (ed.) et al. *Masterpieces of History*, p. 19.

³⁴⁹ J. Van Oudenaren, *Détente in Europe*, p. 95.

³⁵⁰ Y. Kashlev, “Helsinki Protess 1975-2005: Svet i Teni glazami uchastnika”, *Izvestia*, Moscow, 2005, pp. 154-157, 172-175 cited in *Ibid.*

³⁵¹ C. Ekedahl, M. Goodman, *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze*, p. 153.

³⁵² L. Mgaloblashvili (author’s interview: Tbilisi, 21 April 1990); Shevardnadze, *Moi vybor*, pp. 193–197 cited in R. English, *Russia and the Ideas*, p. 203.

³⁵³ Shevardnadze himself drew this parallel, complete with reference to Imperial Russia’s rule in Georgia; “Ubezhdai pravdoi,” *Ogoniok*, no. 11 (1990): 2–6. An aide recalled that “unlike other Soviet leaders, Shevardnadze was not a man without ethnic memory,” and his “extreme sensitivity to national and ethnic feelings” eased his acceptance of German unification and Communism’s demise in Eastern Europe; Palazchenko, *Interpreting the Whirlwind*, pp. 191–92, 242; see also Kornilov, “Leonid II’ich ne znal” cited in *Ibid.*

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

ambassador to the Soviet Union. In his report on USSR's relations with its East European allies he stated that in the decades since World War II, the USSR sought to bind these members of the "socialist commonwealth" into a tight alliance through a program of military, economic, and political integration.³⁵⁵ That included a variety of institutional links and trade patterns that developed over the years between itself and other members of the Warsaw Pact, such as giving the USSR full control of most non-Soviet Warsaw Pact forces in the event of war; substantially tying the industry of the region to that of the USSR through dependency on Soviet raw material and energy sources as well as markets; and regularizing coordination of Warsaw Pact foreign policy positions on major issues.³⁵⁶ Despite Soviet efforts to weave a strong net of common ties, developments such as the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, unrest in Poland, and NATO intermediate-range nuclear forces deployment and USSR counter deployment exacerbated this relationship to the point where the USSR was encountering serious problems with more countries on its western periphery than at any time since the death of Stalin.³⁵⁷ The controversy regarding the seriousness of the remaining threat from the West was also linked to two additional policy issues on which there seems to be differences between the MFA and the military: the pace at which the Soviet Union should press for the conclusion and implementation of a first-stage Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) agreement, and the advantages and disadvantages for the Soviet Union of a long-term conventional "zero option" for Europe, i.e. an agreement to withdraw all Soviet forces from Eastern Europe in exchange for the removal of US forces from Western Europe and non indigenous allied forces from the Federal Republic of Germany.³⁵⁸ In understanding that, Shevardnadze took an extremely risky approach to Europe, which concluded that Moscow had to remove the obstacles complicating relations with the West, particularly its presence in Afghanistan and the Soviet decision to break off arms talks with the US and Europe in 1983 in retaliation for US INF deployments in Europe, that had to be reversed.³⁵⁹ Strategic arms agreements with the US captured the headlines, but the real savings in the defense budget were to be found in conventional arms agreements and unilateral reductions in Eastern Europe, which meant ending the Brezhnev

³⁵⁵ J. Matlock, "The USSR's Relations with its East European Allies", USSR-Eastern Europe General, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Secret, Box 25, NLRRF06-114/7, 11 January 1985. Available at: <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/public/digitalibrary/smof/nsc-europeanandsovietaffairs/matlock/box-025/40-351-7452065-025-001-2018.pdf>

³⁵⁶ Ibid.

³⁵⁷ Ibid.

³⁵⁸ J. Van Oudenaren, "The Role of Shevardnadze, p. 36.

³⁵⁹ C. Ekedahl, M. Goodman, *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze*, p. 155.

Doctrine.³⁶⁰³⁶¹ Although this was a high-risk strategy, the Soviet leadership recognized that military intervention was hardly possible in any Eastern European country without aborting reforms in the bloc and even threatening perestroika at home.³⁶² By wanting to improve relations with Eastern Europe, Shevardnadze faced two requirements, that were set by East European governments. That included maintaining the leading role of the Communist Party and maintaining a firm commitment to the Warsaw Pact. As long as these states met these requirements, they were relatively free to seek their own solutions to domestic economic and political problems.³⁶³ Shevardnadze believed that reform in Eastern Europe could serve as a model for the Soviet Union, because it would be easier to introduce reforms into the USSR if they were already successful in Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland.³⁶⁴ Thus, the vision of Europe and especially the idea of a common European home over time became central to Gorbachev's thinking about the future of the socialist community. He was concerned that in the eyes of West Europeans the image of the USSR was linked with invasions and therefore, correcting this image was seen as a necessary condition for being accepted as one of the civilized nations of Europe.³⁶⁵ By 1986, Shevardnadze had the Foreign Ministry studying variants for troop withdrawals from Eastern Europe. Though they did not foresee the bloc's sudden collapse, there was a growing understanding among the new thinkers that these countries would inevitably evolve toward the West.³⁶⁶ In 1988, Shevardnadze emphasized Moscow's commitment to non-use of force and non-intervention, telling James Baker that the use of force to stop reform in Eastern Europe would "be the end of perestroika."³⁶⁷ Almost a year later, on 24 February 1989, the Soviet

³⁶⁰ Ibid., p. xx.

³⁶¹ The Brezhnev Doctrine was a Soviet foreign policy that proclaimed any threat to socialist rule in any state of the Soviet bloc in Central and Eastern Europe was a threat to them all and proclaimed Moscow's right to intervene to defend communist regimes and enforced Eastern Europe's submission to Moscow.

³⁶² In resisting military intervention in Eastern Europe, Shevardnadze explicitly rejected the scenarios of 1956 and 1968 by arguing that, "Leaving aside the impossibility of operating in the new conditions with the old methods, we could not sacrifice our own principles regarding the right to peoples to freedom of choice, noninterference in internal affairs, and the common European home." See E. Shevardnadze, *The Future*, p. 120; Beschloss and Talbott, *At the Highest Levels*, p. 64 cited in R. Koslowski, F. Kratochwil, "Understanding Change in International Politics: The Soviet Empire's Demise and the International System", *International Organization*, Spring 1994, vol. 48, n. 2, p. 234. Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2706931>

³⁶³ C. Ekedahl, M. Goodman, *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze*, p. 156.

³⁶⁴ Ibid.

³⁶⁵ S. Savranskaya, "Soviet Reassessment", p. 19.

³⁶⁶ R. English, *Russia and the Ideas*, p. 224

³⁶⁷ D. Oferdorfer, *The Turn: From the Cold War to the New Era*, New York, Posiedon, 1991, p. 360 cited in C. Ekedahl, M. Goodman, *Eduard Shevardnadze: Leading the Soviet Union*, p. 230.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs gathered for the evaluation of changes in the Eastern European countries and measures that needed to be taken in order to maintain ties with these countries. In the following memorandum it is noted, that an extremely complex situation arose in Eastern Europe, namely the fate of socialism in a number of countries of this region, the future of the Warsaw Pact, and the fundamental interests of the Soviet Union.³⁶⁸ Further, it claimed that without question, the course of perestroika in the Soviet Union was exercising and would still exercise a decisive influence on the character of the processes in socialist countries. The surmounting of a negative legacy and the renewal of socialism were occurring with difficulty and conflict, namely that the ruling parties of a majority of countries delayed carrying out reforms and several of them lost confidence in the public³⁶⁹ and were losing control over the course of events (this chiefly concerns Poland and Hungary).³⁷⁰ In countries where authoritarian methods of leadership were being retained [Romania, GDR, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria], the ruling parties were experiencing growing difficulties in resolving social economic, political and ideological problems. Hidden dissatisfaction with their policy was intensifying and in some parts, it was already displayed in the creation of alternative associations, in demonstrations and strikes. In addition to that, both in the West and in the socialist countries, predictions were more spread about a transformation of the existing regimes in Eastern Europe into “post-capitalist societies” and their “Finlandization.”³⁷¹ In response, the

³⁶⁸ V. Zubok, G. Goldberg (trans.), “The Political Processes in the European Socialist Countries and the Proposals for Our Practical Steps Considering the Situation Which Has Arisen in Them,” 24 February 1989, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Donation of Professor Jacques Levesque. Available at: <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/112489>

³⁶⁹ The population associated existing problems and failures mainly with oversights and obvious distortions [deformatsii] in the policy of the ruling parties on which all the responsibility for the resulting crises lied. All this led to a fall of their authority among the population, including the working class. The situation in several ruling parties was aggravated by factional struggle [and] a split in the leadership. In these conditions opposition forces sharply stepped up their activity, and therefore was striving to weaken the influence of the ruling parties in all spheres of social and political life and acquire access to power. The question of power in such countries as Poland and Hungary was coming to the surface all the more.

³⁷⁰ Ibid.

³⁷¹ In the political dictionary this term mostly signifies the return of our [Soviet] neighboring states to the bosom of capitalist development while preserving special, friendly relations with the Soviet Union which would guarantee the security of its borders. Such an understanding of the notion “Finlandization” overlooks two significant aspects in the relations between the USSR and Finland. First, they are built on neutrality of its northern neighbor who does not join any military bloc; second, the Finnish communist party by definition cannot come to power and carry out a revolutionary coup, which guarantees the stability of the [Finnish] social-political structure. Since the countries of Eastern Europe would hardly raise the issue of leaving the Warsaw Pact in the near future and the ruling parties, given even their rapid weakening, would retain for a while some social base, the term of “Finlandization” can be used here only with very significant reservations.

authorities were intensifying their repressive measures and using their harsher methods³⁷² of regulating public political life.³⁷³ The Soviet Foreign Ministry evaluation noted that though Soviet allies might received the impression that, in conditions of an intense dialogue between the USSR and the US, relations with socialist countries became secondary to them, the socialist countries had a special significance as a genuinely high-priority main thrust of Soviet foreign policy.³⁷⁴ Therefore, the Soviet Foreign Ministry concluded following principles in its further work with Eastern Europe: need to strengthen the emphasis on work with friends in the political and ideological sphere and substantially increase comradely attention to the leaders of the fraternal countries; work to prepare new treaties on friendship, cooperation, and mutual aid between the USSR and a number of allied states in connection with the expiration of already existing ones, which would acquire great significance for the further development of relations with the European socialist countries in the spirit of equality, partnership, trust and mutual responsibility; keep limited military presence in Eastern Europe as a stabilizing factor and maintain uncertainty as regards the possible role of Soviet troops in a critical domestic political situation.³⁷⁵ In connection with the ambiguous perception of Soviet perestroika by the leadership of the European socialist countries, Soviet attitude toward those³⁷⁶ of them who restrained attitude toward the reforms in the USSR, should be distinguished by self-restraint and calm.³⁷⁷³⁷⁸ Inasmuch as in a number of socialist countries there could be created state structures based on a coalition system of power with the participation and significant influence of the opposition, and therefore it is advisable to make it [our] business to establish contacts with reemerging political parties, organizations, and associations, including trade unions acting in a constitutional framework. The question of the maximum removal of restrictions on trips

³⁷² Such a practice provoked even more dissatisfaction in society, and a sharper negative reaction abroad. It came in a contradiction with the general tendency in the world community toward democratization and with the principles and provisions of the final document of the all-European Conference and the Vienna meeting.

³⁷³ Ibid.

³⁷⁴ Ibid.

³⁷⁵ Ibid.

³⁷⁶ GDR, Romania, and partially Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria

³⁷⁷ Ibid.

³⁷⁸ Soviet MFA: Considering that the creation of new models of socialism is an objective process, in our relations with fraternal countries [we] ought to avoid any kind of attitude of exhortation [nazidatel'nost'] regarding various models, attempts at hanging labels, and more broadly share experience in the area of the theory and practice of socialism. The main thing should be mutual understanding with friends so that reforms be carried out on a socialist basis. [If] the situation worsens in one or another socialist country, we ought to refrain if possible from giving public support to repressive actions of authorities which contradict international norms in the field of human rights.

of citizens of socialist countries to the USSR and of Soviet citizens to these countries and the creation of corresponding facilities for this became unavoidable. In accordance with the proposals advanced by us to improve the mechanism of cooperation within the framework of the Warsaw Pact, it is necessary to follow a line of maximum politicization of the activity of the alliance, democratization of the forms of its operation, an increase of the contribution and interest of each of the member states.³⁷⁹ The Hungarian Foreign Minister, Gyula Horn, during his official visit to Austria, confirmed Soviet Foreign Ministry's above mentioned principles by stating that the development in the Soviet Union was extremely important for Hungary and that the Soviet Union maximally supported it. He also noted that their relations were at the moment dominated by their past (not only 1956, but also 1968), which vexed some other allies, and therefore this process could not continue infinitely and must be "modernized."³⁸⁰ Horn also noted on the domestic reform policy, where he claimed that Hungary was consciously pushing the change process to exploit the favorable internal and external conditions, which also included the Warsaw Pact policy objectives, which were yet to be defined.³⁸¹ The objectives of [near]future Warsaw Pact consisted of coordinating its defense policies (in which substantial reforms should included a revision of the ratio of the common and national forces); defining the fundamental position on international issues and preserving the member states' sovereignty (in internal affairs, bilateral issues as well as in protecting national interests towards third countries and integration areas). The Austrian Foreign Ministry also commented on such new changes in Eastern Europe in its assessment paper. There it is noted that the socio-political process [in means of 1989] in the reformist Eastern Europe countries could be described as unique: simultaneously the Soviet Union, the previous communist power center, as well as Hungary and Poland were promoting reform with surprising determination.³⁸² In addition to that, Austrian Foreign Minister Alois Mock stressed a possibility of integration of Hungary into the European Communities. During the working breakfast and a work meeting between ministers Mock and Horn, the latter informed that Hungary aspired in the short-term for an

³⁷⁹ Ibid. This would be aided by an atmosphere of a genuine comradely, free, and unstructured exchange of opinions at meetings of the PCC [Political Consultative Committee], KMID [Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs], and KMO [Committee of Ministers of Defense]

³⁸⁰ M. Gehler, M. Graf (trans.), "Memorandum of Conversation Foreign Ministers Alois Mock (Austria) and Gyula Horn (Hungary)," June 26, 1989, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, II-Pol 1989, GZ. 222.18.23/35-II.SL/89. Available at: <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/165709>

³⁸¹ Ibid.

³⁸² M. Gehler, M. Graf (trans.), "Assessment Paper by the Austrian Foreign Ministry, '[Excerpt] Eastern Europe; General Assessment'," 12 October 1989, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, II-Pol 1989, GZ.713/24-II.3/89. Available at: <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/165712>

agreement on tariff preferences with the EC, similar to that of Yugoslavia, and in the medium-term a genuine free trade agreement. At the same time, Hungary wanted to step up its cooperation with the EFTA,³⁸³ in which it could imagine a joint statement as to Yugoslavia.³⁸⁴ The Austrian minister assured political support for Hungarian efforts and stressed that Austrian European policy rested upon two pillars: participation in Western European integration (EC/EFTA/CoE) and neighborhood policy (in the broader sense). In view of the situation and foreseeable development of the EC he saw — even if certain problems could not be ruled out — no reason for Hungarian concerns.³⁸⁵ Thereof arose the first real chance to transform the previously dictatorial government system based on the communist party's sole claim to power, and turn it into a societal system based on democratic rules in which human and fundamental rights were respected.³⁸⁶ Moreover, the acceleration of revolutions across Eastern Europe during the winter of 1989 ushered in Austrianization, which originally meant neutrality through great power agreement as exemplified by the 1955 Austrian settlement. Unlike Finlandization though, Austrianization could not be a unilateral measure because it required agreement with the West.³⁸⁷ Regarding the Western Europe, unlike his predecessors, who viewed Europe as a tool of US interests, Shevardnadze believed that it became an independent power center, capable of challenging the US in areas where Washington exerted undisputed dominance, and that it no longer gave “unquestioning obedience” to Washington.³⁸⁸ Shevardnadze first made a statement during his official visit to Vienna in January 1989, where he met with Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Deputy Federal Chancellor and Foreign Minister of FRG, Italian Foreign Minister Giulio Andreotti and French State Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Roland Dumas. There he noted that “the Soviet Union and the FRG attached particular importance to parallel and mutually complementing negotiations on armed forces and conventional armaments in Europe and on measures to strengthen confidence and security;” expressed satisfaction with the development of the Soviet-Italian political dialogue, with growing cooperation between the two countries in various areas and went on record for furthering and consolidating Soviet-French

³⁸³ European Free Trade Association

³⁸⁴ M. Gehler, M. Graf (trans.), “Memorandum of Conversation”.

³⁸⁵ Ibid.

³⁸⁶ M. Gehler, M. Graf (trans.), “Assessment Paper”.

³⁸⁷ R. Koslowski, F. Kratochwil, “Understanding Change”, p. 244.

³⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 156.

interaction in the implementation of the Vienna accords.³⁸⁹ He also added that the Soviet government exerted every possible effort to promote substantially all-European cooperation in the humanitarian, economic, ecological, cultural and scientific domains.³⁹⁰ In addition to that, number of Austrian ambassadors to European countries shared their opinion on the state of Eastern Europe, their relations with the Soviet Union and possible German reunification. During the Ambassadors' Conference at the Austrian Foreign Ministry, in September 1989, the positions of Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Yugoslavia, Luxembourg and others' were presented, confirming possibilities of cooperation, stated by Shevardnadze. Namely, Austrian ambassador to France, Wolfgang Schallenberg noted that after initial skepticism towards perestroika, France shifted in line for a positive development and support, along with other western states. He also claimed that France showed a strong interest for Poland and Hungary, and had a certain fear of possible German reunification, and therefore was endeavoring to involve FRG in the closest possible cooperation.³⁹¹ Accordingly, ambassadors Weinberger [to Belgium] and Mussi [to Sweden] stated a positive modification towards perestroika, shared a great interest in developments in the USSR, claiming a de facto good relationship in-between. Ambassador Hoess claimed that Gorbachev's reform path was an ideological success for the US, and therefore perestroika was supported, but expected to be carried out by the USSR itself.³⁹² Overall, the US was quasi the only Western country, which did not fear a reunification of Germany, and therefore it was concluded that the transformation process in the East was desired by the West, yet was completely unprepared for it. The reduction of tensions resulted from the economic impossibility of a permanent arms race, which was predictable. Processes in the East were to be assessed positively, but with a danger of it spiraling out of control and resulting in destabilization.³⁹³ Hence, a more complicated transformation toward some form of multilateral arrangement began. This was evident by the February 1990 agreement to begin the "two-plus-four talks"³⁹⁴ on the status of Germany. The introduction of multilateral concerns would

³⁸⁹ "Soviet Foreign Minister's Vienna Meetings", *Soviet News*, n. 6459, 25 January 1989, p. 23.

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁹¹ M. Gehler, M. Graf (trans.), "Ambassadors' Conference at the Austrian Foreign Ministry, Vienna," September 08, 1989, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, II-Pol 1989, GZ. 502.00.00/13-II. 1/89. Available at: <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/165710>

³⁹² *Ibid.*

³⁹³ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁴ The two-plus-four talks were the negotiations on German reunification between Big Four power, i.e. the US, the Soviet Union, Britain. France and two German states.

be minimal if the German problem was solved by Austrianization of East Germany.³⁹⁵ The collapse of East German communism and the 18 March 1990 victory of the electoral coalition Alliance for Germany, however, prompted the acceleration of German reunification. By opting for a united Germany within Western European structure, the Soviet leadership decided that such solution was likely to serve Soviet security interests better than a neutral Germany.³⁹⁶ Gorbachev eventually admitted that the process would lead to reunification, but he still hoped against hope that the GDR could survive thanks to its own “perestroika.”³⁹⁷ Obviously, such a policy was not unopposed, as the debate within the Soviet leadership indicated.³⁹⁸ Aware of domestic opposition to reunification, Shevardnadze stayed in touch with European leaders who were concerned about the emergence of a unified Germany, particularly British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.³⁹⁹ In her memoirs, *The Downing Street Years*, Thatcher revealed that she held three private meetings in December 1989 and January 1990 with French President François Mitterrand, who also feared the “consequences of German domination” and recognized the need to “check the German juggernaut.”⁴⁰⁰ Mitterrand shared the concern of Shevardnadze and Thatcher that a reunited Germany would dominate Europe, but he believed that the process could not be stopped and hoped that it could be contained by a more integrated Europe.⁴⁰¹ Nevertheless, the fact remains that Gorbachev and Shevardnadze made their definition of Soviet interests stick, thereby contravening the traditional “realist” positions espoused by their opponents.⁴⁰² According to Shevardnadze himself, in Berlin in June 1990, the Soviet delegation submitted for the consideration of its partners in the Six a draft document, “Fundamental Principles of the Final International Legal Settlement in Germany.”⁴⁰³ The document included following proposals and issues to be covered: the question of the borders of a future Germany; an agreement that a future Germany would not launch military actions against anyone, except to exercise its rights to self-defense; measures aimed at reducing the military presence on German soil

³⁹⁵ R. Koslowski, F. Kratochwil, “Understanding Change”, p. 244.

³⁹⁶ Ibid.

³⁹⁷ V. Zubok, *A Failed Empire*, p. 330.

³⁹⁸ Beschloss and Talbot, *At the Highest Levels*, p. 239 cited in Ibid.

³⁹⁹ C. Ekedahl, M. Goodman, *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze*, p. 165.

⁴⁰⁰ M. Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, London, HarperCollins, 1993, pp. 797-799 cited in Ibid.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid.

⁴⁰² R. Koslowski, F. Kratochwil, “Understanding Change”, p. 245.

⁴⁰³ E. Shevardnadze, *The Future*, p. 140.

— to renounce the production, possession, receipt, and deployment of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons; a reaffirmation that all international treaties and agreements signed by East and West Germany would be valid for a period of five years [starting 1990]; and finally the principle of synchronization.⁴⁰⁴ Shevardnadze also stressed that proposals were supported by the partners in the Six, and therefore it was a mutually acceptable decision that in no way infringed the interests of the Soviet Union.⁴⁰⁵ However, the two-plus-four notion, introduced in a memorandum from the State Department's policy planning staff and spelled out by Baker's key aides, Dennis Ross and Robert Zoellick, was designed primarily to help Kohl and Genscher with the internal aspects of reunification. Only secondarily was it directed at easing Moscow's concerns.⁴⁰⁶ The Germans would decide their legal, political and economic future; the big four powers would discuss the external problems of reunification. Zoellick subsequently rationalized that if the US were to protect Kohl's domestic position in the short term during the process of reunification, then Kohl would be in a position to provide economic assistance to a beleaguered Soviet Union over the long term.⁴⁰⁷ Although Baker, Ross and Zoellick understood the need to make Moscow part of the diplomatic architecture for reunification, they underestimated the personal and political risks that Shevardnadze was taking and the strength of Shevardnadze's opposition. The Bush administration concluded that it was far more important to preserve Kohl as a vital ally than protect Gorbachev and Shevardnadze.⁴⁰⁸ In his article for *Slavic Review* in 1991, Shevardnadze claimed that the Soviet leadership "had to plan to prevent unwanted complications and a dangerous, unmanageable situation, to prevent them by means purely political."⁴⁰⁹ He also sharply responded to the criticism that arose toward the solution of Eastern European question, German reunification, and especially perestroika and its consequences on relations with Europe. In his words, there were alternatives, but they were not reasonable:

There was pressure on us to use force, to restore traditional doctrine and to resolve by military intervention a crisis of legitimacy in one of the countries of the "socialist commonwealth." We were pressured to follow the scenarios of 1953, 1956 and 1968. "Even if it meant risking the politics of perestroika?" I asked; and the reply was, "If there were no perestroika, nothing like that would have

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁶ C. Ekedahl, M. Goodman, *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze*, p. 167.

⁴⁰⁷ Interview with Robert Zoellick, Washington, D.C., 20 April 1994 cited in Ibid.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁹ E. Shevardnadze, "No One Can Isolate Us", p.118.

happened in the socialist bloc.” This is not true! The discontent in Eastern Europe began long before perestroika [...] Unfortunately, with few exceptions, those who were our partners there, the leaders of Eastern Europe, understood little of what was happening. Alluding to our experience, we delicately made recommendations to our allies [...], we tried to make them understand that if they did not accept change, they would face extremely serious problems.⁴¹⁰

3. Analysis and criticism of Shevardnadze’s role and ideologies

Communist apparatchiki, the officials who spent their careers toiling away within the Party bureaucracy, were not usually thought of as individual with strong principles and well-developed moral codes, but were proven to be opportunists, careerists or worse.⁴¹¹ Yet Eduard Shevardnadze may well be a striking exception, when even though his ambitions and well-developed political skills brought him to the highest levels of the Communist Party and government of the Soviet Union, it appears that he somehow retained a strong sense of personal morality and a belief that principles must play an important role in guiding policy.⁴¹² Shevardnadze came to the job nearly devoid of foreign affairs experience, but intellectually driven by the need to change the basis of Soviet strategic thinking.⁴¹³ He claimed that he became disillusioned with the Soviet system in the 1950s, when like many Soviets, he was shaken by Khrushchev’s speech in 1956, describing Stalin’s crimes, particularly the campaign of terror.⁴¹⁴ Shevardnadze was horrified when Georgian demonstrators, protesting what they considered the affront to Georgian pride in Khrushchev’s speech, were moved down by machine-gun fire. Speaking out against the accusation that demonstrators were the ones of “bourgeois nationalism,” Shevardnadze argued that dismissing the protesters as nationalists was morally reprehensible and politically dangerous.⁴¹⁵ Further on in his career Shevardnadze believed, that after the events of Tbilisi in 1956, members of his generation

⁴¹⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹¹ P. Marantz, “Eduard Shevardnadze and the End of the Soviet System”, p. 181 in C. Nolan, *Ethics and Statecraft. Moral Dimension of International Affairs*, Westport, London, Praeger Publishers, 2004.

⁴¹² Ibid.

⁴¹³ E. Shevardnadze, *The Future*, p. 50 cited in L. Belgard, “The Strategic Vision of Eduard Shevardnadze”, National Defense University, 1997, p. 2.

⁴¹⁴ C. Ekedahl, M. Goodman, *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze*, p. 16.

⁴¹⁵ Y. Ligachev, *Inside Gorbachev’s Kremlin: The Memoirs of Yegor Ligachev*, New York, pantheon Books, 1993, p. 168 cited in Ibid.

acquired the “1956 complex” — rejecting the use of force as a political instrument.⁴¹⁶ In the interview for *Slavic Review*, Shevardnadze argued that “a state needed order, especially a state like ours, which then was in a severe crisis.”

After the events in Tbilisi, a parliamentary commission declared it unacceptable to use military force against the people in a society of democratization and glasnost. But although I agreed with the commission, others tried to refute it by essentially justifying violence and placing blame on the victims of punitive action.⁴¹⁷ I consider such views a relapse to old ways, an attempt to curtail and replace the policies of perestroika.⁴¹⁸

For Shevardnadze, it was vitally important that the Soviet Union became a full member of “the civilized world.” This could only be done by admitting past errors, putting new policies in place, winning the trust of other nations, and restoring — as he put it — “the good name of the country.”⁴¹⁹

The analysis of Shevardnadze’s personal ideologies towards the Soviet foreign policy shows that his approach was different from Gorbachev’s initial “new thinking”. In his research thesis for National Defense University, William Bartlett stated that the central pillar of Shevardnadze’s vision was that a nation’s security rested not on its ability to project military power, but on its internal strength and ability to compete in an independent world.⁴²⁰ Similar opinion was shared in another thesis, prepared by Leonard Belgard, who argued that Shevardnadze emphasized the roles of science, technology, information access, and innovative thought. He clearly had in mind the dangers of imperial overreach,⁴²¹ though he never used the phrase in his criticism of maintaining vast quantities of arms and keeping forces abroad to the detriment of the basic elements of national power.⁴²² In contradiction to Shevardnadze’s ideas, Gorbachev tried to play it around with numbers

⁴¹⁶ *Zarya Vostoka*, 4 May 1982, as quoted in Baruch Hazan, *From Brezhnev to Gorbachev: Infighting in the Kremlin*, Boulder, Colo, Westview Press, 1987, p. 40 cited in *ibid*.

⁴¹⁷ I believe here Shevardnadze referred to the Tbilisi events of 1989, when an anti-Soviet demonstration was brutally crushed by the Soviet Army, resulting in 21 deaths and hundreds of injuries.

⁴¹⁸ E. Shevardnadze, “No One Can Isolate Us”, p.117.

⁴¹⁹ *Pravda*, 24 October 1989, as translated in FBIS, 24 October 1989, p. 24; E. Shevardnadze, *The Future*, p. 87 cited in P. Marantz, “E. Shevardnadze”, p. 187.

⁴²⁰ W. Bartlett, “Eduard Shevardnadze - A Prophet without Honor in His Own Land”, National Defense University, 1996, p. 7.

⁴²¹ P. Kenneth, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, Glasgow, William Collins and Co., 1988 cited in L. Belgard, “The Strategic Vision”, p. 5.

⁴²² L. Belgard, “The Strategic Vision”, p. 5.

and secrecy, as in the example of troops reduction and proper information access to it, which Shevardnadze heavily criticized during the CC CPSU Politburo session on 27-28 December 1988. There, Shevardnadze did not agree with how the Ministry of Defense draft issued glasnost, which was of principal importance.⁴²³ He added that the military proposed not a maximal level of openness, but a level that would be acceptable, and what “acceptable openness” was not clear, especially because it was only applied to the withdrawal of Soviet troops from allied territory, and not as to reduction measures domestically.⁴²⁴ In addition to that, John Van Oudenaren suggested that another reason Shevardnadze became increasingly critical of the Soviet military was because it resisted Ministry of Foreign Affairs intrusions into its domain, because Gorbachev’s new political thinking downplayed the importance of military power⁴²⁵ in international politics, and was interpreted by Shevardnadze as a mandate to the MFA to monitor the actions of the military to ensure that they were consistent with the USSR’s newly proclaimed international obligations.⁴²⁶ Differences on matters of policy between Gorbachev and Shevardnadze, according to Ekedahl and Goodman, could be best seen at the end of 1990, when Gorbachev sponsored a series of steps to appease the military, including measures to allow soldiers to defend themselves; and allowing the Soviet military to move more than 16000 tanks west of the Ural to avoid having to destroy them under the terms of the Conventional Forces in Europe treaty — which Shevardnadze apparently was not informed about.⁴²⁷ Shevardnadze was caught off guard and embarrassed during negotiations with the US.⁴²⁸ Vladislav Zubok, Anatoly Chernyaev and Oleg Skvortsov also raised a question on duplicity of Gorbachev’s policy, especially in Eastern Europe, namely when Shevardnadze raised a question whether it was time to withdraw troops from Hungary, Gorbachev responded “no, no, we should cut the number of troops, but we should not withdraw at once.”⁴²⁹ In addition to that, Thomas Blanton noted that according to the evidence that was available, although limited at the time, Shevardnadze began exercising a somewhat independent role, at least after the event in Tbilisi

⁴²³ “Doc. 35: Transcript of CC CPSU Politburo Session, 27-28 December 1988”, cited in S. Savranskaya, *Masterpieces of History*, p. 336.

⁴²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 337.

⁴²⁵ Here I would assume that Van Oudenaren meant the level of military power, and importance of reducing it in order to achieve the goals of new thinking.

⁴²⁶ J. Van Oudenaren, “The Role of Shevardnadze”, p. v.

⁴²⁷ C. Ekedahl, M. Goodman, *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze*, p. 45.

⁴²⁸ E. Shevardnadze interview with *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, n. 4, 22 January 1992, p. 11. cited in *Ibid.*

⁴²⁹ S. Savranskaya, T. Blanton (trans./ed.), “Dialogue: The Musgrove Conference, 1-3 May, 1988”, in *Masterpieces of History*, p. 142.

in 1989. The confirmation to that can be found in the interaction between Jacques Levesque and Sergey Tarasenko, when during the Musgrove Conference, Levesque asked Tarasenko to confirm Shevardnadze's "green light" response to Hungarians on the intention to open the border. Tarasenko gave his confirmation and added that Shevardnadze sided with the Hungarians on this issues, and not only in wording, but generally too.⁴³⁰ This, according to Tarasenko, was not because Shevardnadze wanted to do more, or because he wanted to show himself off more, but simply because many problems needed to be solved, and he often had to make decisions without any directives, without consultations with the center and often during his trips.⁴³¹ Tarasenko also added, enlisting support from Anatoly Dobrynin, that Shevardnadze often sent telegrams to Gorbachev which stated that they achieved such-and-such compromise, such-and-such package deal, especially on missiles, on disarmament — and if he could not get an affirmative response until, let say 10 p.m. Moscow time, he would do this and this. That forced the center to either make a decision or to let it pass automatically, which rarely happened.⁴³² From Western counterparts though, it seemed that relations between Gorbachev and Shevardnadze were seen in a positive light only. In Memorandum for Central Intelligence Deputy Director from Robert Blackwell, the Source⁴³³ found Shevardnadze - Gorbachev working relationship easy and comfortable. The Source added that Shevardnadze clearly had enormous personal respect for Gorbachev, and there was no sense of his toadying up to him in any way.⁴³⁴ On the issue of the role of Shevardnadze, the Source's opinion coincided with the above mentioned ones. It claimed that Shevardnadze clearly grown into his role; he was on top of the issues and could handle himself in ad hoc topics that came up; he had a good idea of where his leash was, but he clearly had a lot of authority to work out most details and issues.⁴³⁵ The Source also provided one possible example of where Shevardnadze's limits were seen. That is, on his marching orders in his fall 1987 meetings with US officials in planning for the December summit: Shevardnadze was prepared to agree to joint wording that there would be a Fall 1987 summit, but unwilling to add "in the US" to the formal statement, even though he did not object to

⁴³⁰ Ibid., p. 163.

⁴³¹ Ibid, p. 161.

⁴³² Ibid.

⁴³³ I assume the Source is George Shultz, based on the information provided in memorandum

⁴³⁴ "Memorandum from Robert Blackwell. Shultz Debriefing", 3 December 1987, NIO/USSR, Secret. Available at: <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP90G00152R000600790002-6.pdf>

⁴³⁵ Ibid.

US officials using that formulation informally as their own presumption.⁴³⁶ There were also policy differences between Gorbachev and Shevardnadze on Third World issues. Shevardnadze was actively involved in international negotiations for a settlement in Cambodia, where he urged the Cambodian government to compromise, criticized the Khmer Rouge for boycotting the negotiating process, and issued a joint statement with the Chinese promising not to arm Cambodian factions.⁴³⁷ In late 1990, however, when the Cambodian government rejected key provisions of the peace plan, the Soviets implicitly endorsed its recalcitrance; this vacillation suggested that Shevardnadze's approach was being challenged.⁴³⁸ Another contradiction in ideologies was also seen between CC Secretary Yegor Ligachev and Eduard Shevardnadze on the issue of "class struggle." In a major speech to a conference at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the summer of 1988, Shevardnadze virtually called for taking ideology out of international relations and said that peaceful coexistence could no longer be considered a specific tactical form of "class struggle."⁴³⁹ Ligachev implicitly, but unmistakably attacked Shevardnadze's position, asserting publicly that "class struggle" must predominate in international relations and that "raising the question in another way" would only cause confusion among the forces of "social and national liberation," a reference to Moscow's traditional left-wing allies.⁴⁴⁰ In addition to that, in July 1990, two months before Shevardnadze's third visit to Japan, Soviet Vice President Gennady Yanayev was named party leader in charge of Soviet diplomacy toward Japan — a clear slap at Shevardnadze.⁴⁴¹ During his visit to Tokyo in September, Shevardnadze indicated willingness to negotiate the territorial dispute over the Northern Territories with Japan, in which Yanayev tried to intervene, and a month later visited Tokyo and repeated the old intransigent Soviet position.⁴⁴²

Shevardnadze's statements regarding his "new thinking" were so effusive that one might ask whether he was not cynically using all of his dramatic talents to assuage the doubts of a hostile US

⁴³⁶ Ibid.

⁴³⁷ C. Ekedahl, M. Goodman, *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze*, p. 46.

⁴³⁸ Tass, 8 June 1980; Phnom Penh Domestic Service, 10 September 1990 cited in Ibid.

⁴³⁹ Doc. 33: CIA Intelligence Assessment, "Gorbachev's September Housecleaning: An Early Evaluation", December 1988 cited in S. Savranskaya, *Masterpieces of History*, p. 328.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁴¹ C. Ekedahl, M. Goodman, *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze*, p. 46.

⁴⁴² D. Sanger, "Soviets Say Dispute on Islands Can Be Negotiated with Japan," *New York Times*, 8 September 1990; *Asahi Shimbun*, 14 October 1990 cited in Ibid.

administration in order to realize the Gorbachev's foreign policy agenda.⁴⁴³ Undoubtedly, he placed a high priority on convincing Western counterparts that Soviet foreign policy was based on a radically different view of the world.⁴⁴⁴ On balance, however, the totality of Shevardnadze's statements as well as comments about him by James Baker indicate that he sincerely believed what he was saying.⁴⁴⁵ Some analysts, according to Cathal Nolan, argued that the key explanatory variable accounting for the alteration in Soviet policy was not changes in the belief system or values of the Soviet leadership but irresistible economic, social, and political forces which were largely beyond their control.⁴⁴⁶ Nolan added that for Shevardnadze, who played such a critical role in Soviet foreign policy, support for "new thinking" was much more than a propaganda ploy or the forced and grounding acceptance of declining Soviet power. In his case, it represented nothing less than a paradigm shift, a fundamental change in how the world was understood.⁴⁴⁷ He moved away from class perspectives that emphasized division and antagonism between "the two camps" to a more complex perspective that stressed the common concerns and interests that all nations shared regardless of ideological divisions.⁴⁴⁸

Regardless, according to Shevardnadze himself, he was heavily criticized on certain issues, that he later commented on in his memoirs. The most harsh blame Shevardnadze received was after the resolution of German question, when German historians and political scientists raised following questions in Moscow. The first question stated that critics in the Soviet Union reproached Shevardnadze for agreeing to the reunification of Germany, and therefore blamed him for "loss" of the Victory of 1945, and that it did not guarantee that Germany would not start a new war.⁴⁴⁹ Shevardnadze sharply answered by stating that the word "loss" was in quotation marks, but even in this highlighted form, none of his critics, even the most fierce, would dare to use the word. The moral and political risk was too great in suggesting that there was some kind of "game," since the stakes were so exceptionally high. Shevardnadze also added on the overall future of Germany:

⁴⁴³ L. Belgard, "The Strategic Vision", p. 5.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁵ J. Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy*, New York, GP Putnam & Sons, 1995, p. 146 cited in Ibid.

⁴⁴⁶ P. Marantz, "E. Shevardnadze", p. 190.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁹ E. Shevardnadze, *The Future*, p. 142.

The Victory of 1945 and the unification of Germany are different, incomparable events. I would prefer simply to speak of the guarantees that Germany will not start a war. In these recent months, starting from the end of last year [1989], the goal of our effort was to formulate and obtain such guarantees. I think we obtained them. Briefly, they are the correct solution to the external aspect of the German settlement, its linkage to the pan-European process, to the design of institutions for European security, and to the transformation of the military-political alliances; the formation of effective contractual-legal mechanisms; and finally, the will of the Germans themselves.⁴⁵⁰

Shevardnadze's second justification for "playing the game" was that it was necessary if he were to have a chance to reform the system.⁴⁵¹ In an emotional speech after being harshly criticized at the Party Congress in July 1990, Shevardnadze described the environment in which he operated as

[...] a system where a certain selection of words represents a ritual sign of devotion to that system — and if you fail to do homage to it you run the risk of being deprived of any opportunity to do anything. [...] God forbid you ever say anything contrary to the ritual. You will be an anthem in an instant. To have an opportunity of doing anything my way, I was quite frequently forced to speak like everyone else. For instance, that meant paying homage to the "number one." [...] I say this with sadness, recognizing the definite morale damage implicit in such an admission. But I am saying it, [...] and let he who has not experienced this split personality cast the first stone. [...] These "rules of the game" made no provision for any exception. There was just one way out — not taking part.⁴⁵²

Whether Shevardnadze's foreign policy is considered success depends largely on an observer's perspective. The conservative political elite of Russia viewed Shevardnadze's tenure as a time of capitulation to the West in return for little in terms of tangible benefits.⁴⁵³ Shevardnadze would later claim that he took many risks to pursue his policies:

A great deal of what we did in the republic party organization was contrary to top-level directives and rejected all-powerful centralism as a principle. There was a great risk inherent in this willfulness and it was often intimidating to me that I might have to pay for it.⁴⁵⁴

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁵¹ Shevardnadze interview in *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 3 August 1991 cited in C. Ekedahl, M. Goodman, *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze*, p. 16.

⁴⁵² Ibid.

⁴⁵³ W. Bartlett, "Eduard Shevardnadze", p. 6.

⁴⁵⁴ Shevardnadze interview in *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 3 August 1991 cited in C. Ekedahl, M. Goodman, *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze*, p. 16.

In his interview for *The Brown Journal of World Affairs* in 1995, Shevardnadze stated that he already knew that the Soviet Union would fall apart, and even knew who would be behind it.⁴⁵⁵ The journal posed a question of whether Shevardnadze expressed his fear of an impending dictatorship, and if so, where did he see it arising from? Shevardnadze replied that it would come from those people that organized the putsch, and Gorbachev failed to recognize the danger.⁴⁵⁶ Shevardnadze also added that in the Supreme Soviet, reactionary forces were coming back into power while the influence of democratic forces was becoming increasingly limited:

I realized that the Soviet Union would break apart when I moved to Russia and became foreign minister. But I was dead against the speedy disintegration of the Soviet Union. Personally, I felt that there should have been a transition phase so that it would be less painful, and maybe not even painful at all. However, that was not the way things turned out.⁴⁵⁷

Shevardnadze's perception for securing his nation's future was, according to Bartlett, classically idealist, because he rejected the notion that the security of the nation was determined largely by external forces, and for the first time highlighted the importance of domestic policies.⁴⁵⁸ Bartlett also rejected the notion that Shevardnadze was just an "activist" with no strategic game plan for implementing his vision. He added, sharing his opinion with Ekedahl and Goodman, that it was unlikely that the radical change in the Soviet foreign policy achieved by Shevardnadze was accomplished by mere ad hoc activism.⁴⁵⁹ Needless to say, the rethinking of Soviet foreign policy did not happen in a vacuum. In response to the domestic problems, new thinking was embraced by Gorbachev and promoted by Soviet scholars and policy-makers. Shevardnadze was not an isolated figure.⁴⁶⁰ But at the crucial time in world affairs, he helped the Soviet Union navigate through a very dangerous passage and achieve a safe landing under very difficult circumstances.⁴⁶¹

Although the grand strategy Shevardnadze played, and a pivotal role in crafting and implementing did not achieve his ultimate personal aims, it did yield impressive achievements in global

⁴⁵⁵ E. Shevardnadze, A. Loewenstein, M. Rhee, "Beyond Russia: Thoughts on the New East", *The Brown Journal of World Affairs*, Summer 1995, vol. 2, n. 2, pp. 106-107. Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24590078>

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁸ W. Bartlett, "Eduard Shevardnadze", p. 7.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁰ P. Marantz, "E. Shevardnadze", p. 194.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid.

relations.⁴⁶² In particular, it facilitated an era of new cooperation between the Soviet Union and US in bilateral relations to include historic agreements reducing weapons of mass destruction and the risk of nuclear conflict;⁴⁶³ the ability to modify policies that disturbed and taxed his Western counterparts and the withdrawal from Afghanistan.⁴⁶⁴ Shevardnadze carried out his policies well, but both him and Gorbachev overestimated their ability to shape events with remaining resources. They might have used the available concessions in a more demanding manner, but in doing so the already skeptical West might have seen them as more of the same old thinking. Hence, the international atmosphere would not have changed enough to provide the needed breathing space.⁴⁶⁵

4. Reevaluation and analysis of the existing knowledge

The end of the Cold War and especially the collapse of the Soviet Union undoubtedly were the most discussed and analyzed topics by scholars and political experts by the end of the twentieth century. As an example, two years before Mikhail Gorbachev's accession to power in 1985, Georgetown University sponsored an intense eighteen-month effort by thirty-five experts and scholars to study the Soviet Union, which did not provide clues to the strange death of Soviet communism less than ten years later. According to Ekedahl and Goodman, it reiterated much of the mythology about the Soviet empire that led the West to miss the signs of its coming collapse; they attributed to the Soviet Union the second largest economy in the world — a typical mistake on the part of Western scholars.⁴⁶⁶ In post-Soviet historiography, however, after almost a ten-year pause in the 1990s, the study of the problems of Soviet foreign policy during the perestroika period intensified. This topic is reflected in educational works on the history of international relations and foreign policy, both by western and nowadays Russian scholars.⁴⁶⁷ Moreover, as this work comes to its conclusion, it is important to note that although a lot of academic works were devoted to Soviet Union, only few of them focused on Eduard Shevardnadze and his role in the collapse of the Soviet empire. The research on this topic showed that most of the times, scholars placed their attention on Mikhail

⁴⁶² “New Thinking as a Principal Export”, p. 10.

⁴⁶³ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁴ L. Belgard, “The Strategic Vision”, p. 10.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 11.

⁴⁶⁶ C. Ekedahl, M. Goodman, *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze*, Preface.

⁴⁶⁷ M. Polynov, “Soviet Union-United States”, p. 7.

Gorbachev and even if Shevardnadze was mentioned, he was always a part of the Gorbachev-Shevardnadze tandem. That of course changed with time, as more works were written and more information became available. As an example, the second edition of the book *Ethics and Statecraft*, edited by Cathal Nolan, a Director of International History Institute, included a chapter dedicated to Shevardnadze and fall of the Soviet Union. That is because it was decided that an overview of the enormity of the Cold War in just one chapter, as it was in the first edition, offered readers less insight into the role of moral reasoning in statecraft than a close study of one major issue.⁴⁶⁸ The same opinion was shared by a number of works presented by RAND Corporation as an analytical assistance to the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense on the subject of developments in Soviet Union. That is, particularly, reports and theses prepared by John Van Oudenaren on *The Role of Shevardnadze and the MFA in the Making of Soviet defense and arms control policy*; *Eduard Shevardnadze and a New Thinking as a Principle Export* by Ben Saylor, *Eduard Shevardnadze — a Prophet Without Honor in His Own Land* by William Bartlett; *the Strategic Vision of Eduard Shevardnadze* by Leonard Belgard, and of course, *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze* by Carolyn Ekedahl and Melvin Goodman. Although above mentioned works were dedicated to Shevardnadze, they were all written after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and some of them even in the beginning of the twenty-first century, which makes it clear that the available information is not primary and is still limited. That can be seen in Paul Marantz's chapter in above mentioned book, where he stated that despite the greater openness of Soviet political discourse in the late 1980s, there is much that we still do not know. The memoirs of Shevardnadze and other top Soviet officials are not especially revealing about the leaders' private thoughts or how key decisions were reached.⁴⁶⁹ Scholars were searching for answers to following questions: How far did Shevardnadze go in his questioning of the basic features of the Soviet political system? What was he trying to change and what was he trying to save? How much of his seeming moral conviction was genuine and how much was skillful political packaging aimed at selling needed changes to resistant Communist officials at home and skeptical policy-makers abroad?⁴⁷⁰

Throughout working on this paper, it became clear that the information provided in above mentioned sources, memoirs and even some primary sources was very similar to one another. Thus, the sources stated that Eduard Shevardnadze was previously known for his economic developments

⁴⁶⁸ C. Nolan, *Ethics and Statecraft*, *Preface*.

⁴⁶⁹ P. Marantz, "E. Shevardnadze", p. 194.

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

in Georgia; that he was fortunate to become Soviet Foreign Minister, although without any previous experience at such position; that reaching this position was only available due to the friendship with Gorbachev; that he was welcomed by his new colleagues at first, but then criticized harshly and finally, that Shevardnadze was one of few people in Soviet leadership that understood the importance of domestic change. Now, thirty years after the collapse, it is important to look at the existing information with a new perspective, considering that more information appeared with time. Thus, in the process of writing this work, a fairly wide range of sources was used, among which it is worth highlighting the materials of plenums, decisions and resolutions adopted by the Central Committee of the CPSU and the Council of Ministers of the USSR, conferences and congresses of the CPSU, speeches and publications of top party and state leaders on foreign policy issues. First of all, they included materials from press conferences, official speeches, as well as reports on foreign visits of Gorbachev, Shevardnadze, Dobrynin and others published in the newspapers Pravda, Izvestia, Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn, Soviet News, Slavic Review and others. They were also analyzed, translated and published, as in Masterpieces of History, edited by Svetlana Savranskaya, Thomas Blanton and Vladislav Zubok; Seven Years that Changed the World and The Gorbachev Factor by Archie Brown; Vneshnyya Politika Gorbacheva by Matvey Polynov; Democratization and Revolution in USSR by Jerry Hough; Soviet Union in Foreign Relations of the US by James Wilson and Adam Howard. In addition to that, with the help of digital archive centers, such as Central Intelligence Agency, Ronald Reagan Library, Gorbachev Foundation and Wilson Center, it was possible to have an access to western secret documents, that were declassified with time. That included Western perception of Soviet domestic and foreign policy changes, minutes of official meetings of Reagan administration, reports on preparations for meetings with Soviet delegates, talks between Western leaders and representatives of Europe, as well as personal talks between the President and his aides.

One of the important questions still remains why political experts and scientists on the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union did not and still do not give due attention to Shevardnadze. Whether the reason is the lack of the necessary information for a complete analysis or the reluctance to break the Gorbachev-Shevardnadze tandem, because looking at the existing information, Shevardnadze was and remains a part of it. Perhaps the reason might be that scholars did not want to destroy the charismatic nature of Gorbachev's leadership, presenting Shevardnadze to the world as truly responsible for changes not only in the USSR, but also in the international arena. Nevertheless, it is rather difficult to answer this question even now, not to mention the time of

perestroika. However, considering all the information gathered and the analysis made, this work concludes the following evaluation of Eduard Shevardnadze and his role in the making of Soviet foreign policy. Firstly, it is important to understand that even if major decisions were made under the leadership of Gorbachev, their implementation stood behind Shevardnadze, which makes one think about revising the work of the Soviet leadership. This will not be possible while certain personal conversation between Gorbachev and his aides are still classified, and while reports of meetings of Soviet ministry of Foreign Affairs are not available publicly. Secondly, Shevardnadze's interference in military affairs and subsequent criticism against him should be considered unfounded, since the Foreign Ministry understood the seriousness of material law and the danger of not taking the necessary measures. As Shevardnadze was one of the few wanting to improve relations with the West, it was important to take actions in his own hands, namely to intervene into the work of the Ministry of Defense, which later led to the normalization of international relations. Therefore, although Shevardnadze did exceed his powers as foreign minister, his actions were only criticized, but not refuted, and should be seen as actions of the whole Soviet leadership and not only his. Thirdly, human rights dimension was one of the hardest issues to make an analysis on, and it is so because just like human rights were not publicly discussed in the Soviet Union, they were neither discussed much in the academic works. Here, the credit should be given to Shevardnadze for bringing up human values as a part of his ideologies, and showing the example of how they should be implemented. By changing the personnel of MFA and by including more women and non-Russian employees into the ministry, Shevardnadze gave a start for the development of human rights not only in the Soviet leadership, but also in the Soviet society. It is also important to note that Shevardnadze wouldn't be able to affect human rights dimension without the help of George Shultz, to whom he promised a higher priority and greater openness of human rights in order to reach improved US-Soviet relations. Fourthly, Shevardnadze influenced diplomatic work of his ministry, which established number of new diplomatic ties, and improved the existing ones. By reorganizing the work of foreign ministry, Soviet embassies abroad and building trustful relations with foreign embassies in Soviet Union, Shevardnadze was able to bring the new Soviet change to most of the corners of the world. It also should be noted that Shevardnadze's personal contacts with foreign counterparts played a decisive role in the policy making, as he developed close ties not only with George Shultz and James Baker, but also with European, Asian and Middle Eastern leaders and foreign ministers. Lastly, as one of the most criticized decisions, political interaction in Europe and the reunification of Germany, were harshly blamed on Shevardnadze only, which makes one think that all the work and effort implemented by him was forgotten in the shadow of this "failure" and

considered as the main reason for the collapse of the Soviet Union. It was important to look at this problem under a new light, since from 1989, Gorbachev and Shevardnadze started having disagreements, and therefore the decisions were made under pressure.

In addition to the foregoing, it is important to answer not only the questions posed above, but also the ones that contributed to this work. First of all, how far did Shevardnadze go in his questioning of the basic features of the Soviet political system? In response to this, it is worth noting that Shevardnadze built a picture of the Soviet political system after the very speech of Khrushchev, which made him understand the essence of the Soviet power. It became clear to him that as long as the power belonged to the one who resorted to the use of weapons in solving the problem, it would be impossible to change the future of the country. Secondly, what was he trying to change and what was he trying to save? The answer to this question is simple — the image of the Soviet Union. It was important for Shevardnadze, as a Foreign Minister, and basically as the Soviet figure abroad, to not to humiliate himself, and more importantly, to save the face of Soviet Union. Thirdly, how much of his seeming moral conviction was genuine? His moral convictions may or may not be convincing, depending on observer's perspective, but the main thing is that during official visits, personal meetings and even public speeches, he never refused them. How much was skillful political packaging aimed at "selling" needed changes to resistant Communist officials at home and skeptical policy-makers abroad? As noted above, the image of Soviet Union was crucially important for Shevardnadze, and therefore he did the most not to "sell," but convince his Soviet and Western colleagues in the need for a drastic changes both domestically and abroad. Did the perception of Shevardnadze radically change as more information became available? The answer is no. Though Shevardnadze was criticized for his actions, he was always and still is seen in a good light only, both by his domestic and foreign counterparts. Can this work be considered a contribution to the new knowledge about Eduard Shevardnadze? As hopefully more information will be available, it is believed that this work will contribute to students or even scholars in the analysis, as it hold both primary and secondary sources, dated back to perestroika period and decades later. How did new sources help evaluate Shevardnadze's work during perestroika? With the help of above mentioned sources, this thesis concludes that information that was not available today holds important facts, that were missed in already existing academic works. That is, according to the memoirs of top Soviet leadership members, secret conversations and memorandums of conferences, it became clear that Shevardnadze acted independently in a number of major decision makings. The fact that he

sometimes took actions without acknowledging them to the Soviet leadership proves that at the time of perestroika Shevardnadze played bigger role than it was anticipated until now.

Conclusion

At the start of his career as Soviet Foreign Minister, Eduard Shevardnadze believed that the Soviet Union had a chance to change and tried to implement the most he could in order to achieve it, and therefore played a critical role in conceptualizing and implementing the Soviet Union's dramatic *volte-face*.⁴⁷¹ As this work shows, Shevardnadze predicted the collapse of the Soviet Union, but still tried to "save its face" in the international arena. That can be seen in the works of scholars and political experts in time of perestroika, but most importantly it can be found in newly available information that appeared decades after the collapse.

The role Shevardnadze played in the Soviet foreign policy making was underrated in academic works, and therefore it was important to use a new perspective on the existing knowledge and give Shevardnadze a due credit for his work. As this thesis uses primary sources, memoirs and secret documents that were not available at the time of perestroika, it concludes that Eduard Shevardnadze, although without previous knowledge in foreign affairs, achieved sufficient progress in the normalization of confrontation between two superpowers. That was possible thanks to his persistence, stubbornness and will to change the Soviet system. As he developed close relations with his counterparts and personally spoke to them on decisive issues, he was able to break the stumbling-block in US-Soviet relations. Though the Soviet Union collapsed, and Shevardnadze was harshly blamed for it, he was and still is presented in a good light only, as his achievements at the position of the foreign minister cannot overcome the "failure" of the whole Soviet leadership.

⁴⁷¹ *trans.* an abrupt and complete reversal of attitude, opinion or position

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