USSR-Yugoslavia

General Secretary Gorbachev used his recent visit to Yugoslavia to bolster bilateral relations and to issue the bluntest rejection ever by a top Soviet leader of intervention in other communist states. Despite the clarity of the statement, skeptics—including some communists—are likely to reserve judgment until the Soviet commitment to nonintervention is tested in times of crisis. Gorbachev also used the visit to make a special pitch for Soviet proposals designed to reduce the U.S. naval presence in the Mediterranean.

Gorbachev Renounces Brezhnev Doctrine During Yugoslav Visit

The most dramatic development of Gorbachev's 14-18 March visit to Yugoslavia was his indirect but unmistakable disavowal of the so-called Brezhnev Doctrine of limited sovereignty—the rationale used to justify Soviet intervention in other communist states and specifically applied to the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968.[1] The joint Soviet-Yugoslav declaration of principles renounced "any threat or use of force or interference in other countries' internal affairs under any pretext whatsoever." This was amplified in the declaration's recognition of the independence and equal rights of other states regardless of their "size and potential, sociopolitical system, the ideas by which they are guided, the forms and character of their associations with other states, or their geographical position"—a range of criteria that seemingly could include the East European states in the Soviet bloc, even if they should diverge from ideological orthodoxy or withdraw from the Warsaw Pact (*Pravda* and *Borba*, 19 March).

Reflecting his apparent interest in spreading the word of Moscow's disavowal of the Brezhnev Doctrine, Gorbachev himself emphasized the broad applicability of the declaration. According to *Pravda*'s 19 March account of his final round of talks with Yugoslav leaders, Gorbachev asserted that the declaration "exceeds the bounds of bilateral relations. It touches upon questions of interest to the world communist and workers movement."

[1] Moscow has always denied the existence of the Brezhnev Doctrine. Thus, Moscow's renunciation of the doctrine must be made indirectly.

Key Statements on Sovereignty and Communist Independence

Soviet-Yugoslav Declaration (*Pravda*, 3 June 1955)

The two governments decided to proceed from the following principles: ... Respect for sovereignty, independence, integrity, and equality among states in mutual relations and relations with other countries; ... Adherence to the principle of mutual respect and noninterference in internal affairs for any reason [*prichina*] whatsoever, be it for economic, political, or ideological nature, since questions of internal order, of different social systems, and different forms of development of socialism are the exclusive business of the peoples of the respective countries.

General Secretary Brezhnev (*Pravda*, 13 November 1968)

It is known, comrades, that there are common laws governing socialist construction, a deviation from which might lead to a deviation from socialism as such. And when the internal and external forces hostile to socialism seek to reverse the development of any socialist country toward the restoration of the capitalist order, when a threat to the cause of socialism in that country emerges, a threat to the security of the socialist community as a whole exists; this is no longer a problem of the people of that country but also a common problem, a concern for all socialist states.

It goes without saying that such an action as military aid to a fraternal country to cut short a threat to the socialist order is an extraordinary enforced step; it can be sparked off only by direct actions of the enemies of socialism inside the country and beyond its boundaries, actions creating a threat to the common interests of the camp of socialism.

Soviet-Yugoslav Joint Declaration (*Pravda*, 19 March 1988)

The USSR and SFRY underscore the historical role and abiding value of the universal principles contained in the Belgrade (1955) and Moscow (1956) declarations, and in particular: mutual respect for independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity, equality, and impermissibility of interference in internal affairs under any pretext [*predlog*] whatever....

The USSR and SFRY confirm their commitment to the policy of peace and independence of peoples and countries, to their equal rights and the equal security of all countries irrespective of their size and potential, sociopolitical system, the ideas by which they are guided, and the forms and character of their associations with other states, or their geographical position....

The sides attach special significance to the strict observance of the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act, other fundamental international legal documents prohibiting aggression, the violation of borders, the seizure of other countries' territories, all forms of the threat or use of force, and interference in other countries' internal affairs on whatever pretext [*predlog*].

Gorbachev responds to reporters' questions in Dubrovnik. President Mojsov is on the right. (Soviet television, 18 March)

The declaration's commitment to diversity and independence goes beyond the assurances contained in the 1955 and 1956 Soviet-Yugoslav declarations that had previously defined the principles of relations between the two countries. The 1955 document had bound the two sides to adherence to the principle of "mutual respect and noninterference in internal affairs for any reason whatever" and condemned "aggression" in general terms. But it had stopped short of spelling out the criteria found in the new declaration that indicate its applicability to the rest of the communist world. The 1956 party document had similarly recognized the validity of varied ways of developing communism and committed the two sides to refrain from "any tendency to force its views" on the other.

The new declaration's explicit rejection of armed intervention builds on but goes beyond previous assurances by the Gorbachev regime of a greater tolerance for differences among communist parties and states.[2] In statements on related issues, the leadership has sought to project increased tolerance for differences with other communists but has generally coupled such assurances with indications of concern for common interests. Gorbachev, for example, in his speech to the 1987 October Revolution anniversary celebrations,

[2] Although spokesmen for the current regime have previously indicated that Moscow would not again intervene militarily in a communist state, these earlier statements have been delivered to Western audiences and have not been publicized by Soviet media. In an interview on British television, for example, Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman Gerasimov asserted that the "time" for Soviet armed intervention in other communist states is "over" (ITV television, 3 December 1987).

emphasized that relations between communist states are based on "unconditional and total equality" and that communist countries "do not and cannot have a model against which all are compared." But he added that communist leaders "know what damage" can result from a "weakening" of international cooperation and a "lack of attention to the general interests" of communism (Moscow television, 2 November 1987).

While spokesmen for the Brezhnev regime had also proclaimed a tolerance for diversity among communists, such assertions were balanced by clear indications of the limits of Soviet acceptance of differences. In particular, Soviet spokesmen had continued to affirm the legitimacy of the Soviet interest in maintaining communist regimes wherever they exist. In justifying the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, Brezhnev had asserted that when a threat "to the cause of socialism" emerged in one country, then a "threat to the security of the socialist community as a whole exists" (*Pravda*, 13 November 1968).

Reaction Media commentary in a number of communist countries took note of the renunciation of the Brezhnev Doctrine, but reaction was diverse. Presumably concerned about the implications of nonintervention for the legitimacy of the current regime, a Czechoslovak commentary provided the clearest indication of dissent. While praising the principles of independence and noninterference, it warned that socialism would succeed "only if every party takes care not merely of its own interests but also of our common interests" (*Rude Pravo*, 21 March). East German and Romanian media have provided minimal attention to the visit and were not observed to comment on the implications of the declaration for Soviet-East European relations.

In contrast, Budapest and Warsaw—the most likely of Moscow's closest allies to test the limits of diversity—have highlighted the significance of the declaration in terms of relations between communist countries. A 19 March commentary in *Magyar Nemzet*, suggesting that the declaration will serve as a model for documents between other communist countries, singled out for praise the document's defense of "equal rights" and respect for "particular features" of each country. A Polish commentary similarly welcomed what it called a "new climate" in relations among communist states created by the declaration, noting that the principles of "equality and mutual respect were confirmed several times" during the visit (*Zycie Warszawy*, 19-20 March).

Chinese commentary was even more explicit in drawing implications from the declaration, while evincing some skepticism about the Soviet commitment to noninterference. A Xinhua analysis on 20 March quoted the document at length, concluding that it "appeared to be an attempt by Gorbachev to scrap the policies of former Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev, under whose leadership the Soviet Union exercised tightened control over its allies and Soviet troops invaded Czechoslovakia in 1968." Other Chinese reports highlighted the declaration's recognition of independence and diversity, but were less direct in imputing any significance for broader intercommunist relations.

Implications The fact that the disavowal of interference was clearly intended—and has been so interpreted by others—to apply broadly to relations among communist countries has raised the stakes of any future Soviet intervention. A future reversal of this new policy would prove extremely costly to Moscow's credibility throughout the world. Nevertheless, lingering skepticism about Soviet motives and willingness to relinquish completely its control over its allies, particularly the members of the Warsaw Pact, will remain until Soviet assurances are tested in times of crisis. Indeed, the clarity of the declaration's language may prompt some reformers in East Europe to press harder for liberalizing policies of a kind that would test that very commitment. (U/FOUO)

Moscow, Belgrade Play Up Cordiality of Relations

Both Belgrade and Moscow emphasized the visit's positive impact on developing bilateral relations. This was the first visit by a Soviet party chief since Brezhnev attended Tito's funeral in May 1980. In addition to reaffirming the principles enshrined in the 1955 and 1956 documents—independence and equality in international relations and the legitimacy of policy diversity among communists—the leaders of the two countries were effusive in evaluating their exchanges. In his summary assessment of the visit, Yugoslav party President Krunic concluded that the "frank [*otvoreni*] and comradely" talks were "not a series of monologues," but rather a "dialogue" in which "better solutions were sought." He praised Gorbachev personally, saying the Soviet leader is a "very communicative and direct politician," a man of "great experience and broad education, a man who can listen" (*Borba*, 19-20 March). In the final Soviet reports on the visit, Gorbachev described his talks as "a productive dialogue and a serious and open [*otkrytyy*] exchange of