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Trends

This issue includes . . .

- *Pravda's* attack on "conservative opposition"
- Proposals for reforming the CPSU
- Gorbachev's disavowal of Brezhnev Doctrine
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USSR

Gorbachev Acts To Regain Offensive, Scolds Conservatives

The publication of a landmark editorial article in Pravda frontally attacking conservative foes of reform appears to mark a significant move by General Secretary Gorbachev. This article, combined with other signs—raising of new proposals for radical party reform for the coming June party conference, new proposals for agricultural reform, and new moves to cut ministerial bureaucracy—suggests that Gorbachev is regaining the momentum he lost last fall to conservative forces led by senior Secretary Ligachev.

The *Pravda* editorial article, published on 5 April, appears to be a manifesto of the proreform forces in the leadership and an effort to throw the conservatives into retreat. The polemical tone of the article registers the degree of tension and polarization currently existing between the political factions. The article focuses its attack on those who want to slow down reform, who are frightened by "the scale of the transformations," who understand restructuring as "just another cosmetic repair job," and who are asking: "Can't we get by without breaking things, without radical measures, can't we just confine ourselves to improving what was created earlier?" Depicting the conflict in terms virtually of class struggle, the article says that behind the "conservative opposition" to restructuring lay not only the weight of custom and habit but the "belligerent, selfish interests" of those "accustomed to living at others' expense."

The editorial article opens with a reference to the plenum three years ago that introduced the new Gorbachev leadership's *perestroyka* campaign, but it is framed mainly as a response to a full-page letter by Leningrad lecturer Nina Andreyeva published in the 13 March *Sovetskaya Rossiya*. Imputing major ideological significance to the letter, the editorial article says it presented an "ideological platform and manifesto for antirestructuring forces," adding that this is "probably the first time the readers have seen in such concentrated form" the "nonacceptance of the very idea of renewal." (The letter attacks reformers for undermining the system by excessive attacks on Stalin, by questioning collectivization, by attacking Russian nationalism, and by

spreading nihilism.) The *Pravda* article claims the letter was basically asking "whether we have not gone too far in questions of democratization and *glasnost*" and complains that readers are asking "if this is not a signal" of a return to the past.

The article even criticizes *Sovetskaya Rossiya*'s editors for printing the letter, saying it was irresponsible to publish such views, especially in such a way that it gave "readers the impression that they were being presented with some kind of 'new' political platform." It labels this "an attempt little by little to revise party decisions." It also suggests that *Sovetskaya Rossiya* editors had organized or drafted the letter themselves. *Pravda* repeatedly refers to the item as an article, not a letter, and defines it as "written in the form of a 'letter to the editors.'"

Targeting Ligachev? More significantly, the *Pravda* article appears to use the letter to take aim at views publicly expressed by leading conservative Politburo members Ligachev and Chebrikov. Ligachev particularly appears to be a target:

- The editorial article complains that some people are trying to "put the brakes on" change by shouting: "They are betraying ideals ... abandoning principles ... undermining foundations ... going in the direction of petty bourgeois socialism based on commodity-money [market] relationships." Ligachev has repeatedly warned against shaking the foundations and moving toward a market economy. In a March 1987 *Kommunist* (No. 4) article, for example, he insisted that "deep restructuring in no way means a break in our political system" In an April 1987 Budapest speech he stressed that restructuring "is not a denial of all previous experience," that its "essence is creation" and "improvement of developing socialism" (*Pravda*, 24 April 1987). In an August 1986 *Teatr* article he warned that all economic reforms must be "within the framework of socialism" and "there is no question, nor will there be, of a market economy"

- The article also tackles those trying to discourage revelations in history, acknowledging that "the truth has turned out to be bitter in many respects." It criticizes attempts to "whitewash the past and justify political deformations and crimes." Ligachev has led the way in arguing for a "balanced" presentation of Soviet history and warning against overly negative versions. In an August speech he assailed those who present Soviet history "as an unbroken chain of errors," who "use the instances of groundless repressions"

to obscure the accomplishments of the people, and who "speak of the tragic mistakes of those years with malicious delight" (*Uchitelskaya Gazeta*, 27 August 1987).

- The article polemicizes with those who have been attacking *glasnost* and the press, writing that "some people are ready to see all troubles and all unpleasant things of current life in the fact that newspapers 'have gotten out of hand,' pass judgment on everything, stir up public opinion, etc." Ligachev has repeatedly criticized the most outspoken weeklies and journals. In his March 1987 *Kommunist* article he assailed those who "understand *glasnost* one-sidedly, only as talking about the negative..." In his February 1988 plenum speech he complained about those who are blackening Soviet history "under the guise of *glasnost*" (*Pravda*, 18 February).

Some of the views in Andreyeva's letter were strikingly similar to Ligachev's statements. She attacked reformers who "are asserting that we supposedly have built the wrong socialism" and that there were "just errors and crimes in the country's past, while ignoring the magnificent achievements of the past and present." Ligachev in his February plenum report complained that "certain people arbitrarily are trying to present our path as a chain of errors and crimes, ignoring the great achievements of the past and present" and claiming that "we built the wrong socialism" (*Pravda*, 18 February).

The editorial article also appeared to take a swipe at Chebrikov by criticizing those who "play on the concept of patriotism," screaming about "a supposed 'internal threat' to socialism, who, joining with some political extremists, seek internal enemies, 'counterrevolutionary nations,' and so on everywhere." In a speech last August Chebrikov focused on "ideological subversion" aimed at "discrediting the Soviet state's historical path," foes trying to push the cultural intelligentsia into "blackening certain stages of our society's historical development," foreign intelligence services trying to "penetrate our society" and instill "political and ideological pluralism," and Soviet citizens "who hold ideas and views alien and even frankly hostile to socialism" (*Pravda*, 11 September 1987).

Significant Move

The *Pravda* article appears to be a major move in the current political maneuvering, since it sends a signal of Gorbachev's strength to the party and delivers an authoritative rebuff to the conservative wing that has grown increasingly influential in recent months. After the ouster of Moscow leader Yeltsin for challenging Ligachev and those dragging their feet on reform, Ligachev and other conservatives had appeared

to become even bolder and to indulge freely in attacks on champions of *glasnost*. Gorbachev, while not allowing any purge of outspoken editors, had conspicuously failed to defend *glasnost* in the clear terms he had used earlier.

The appearance as a *Pravda* editorial article of this condemnation of the "conservative opposition" suggests that Gorbachev has switched to challenging his conservative rivals, rather than placating them. His bolder stand may have been prompted by the approach of the June CPSU conference. If he failed to seize the initiative the conference could turn into a failure for reformers by its inability to make new advances or to dislodge entrenched foes of change.

In order to mount such a challenge to conservatives, however, Gorbachev almost certainly had to win Politburo backing. The full-page editorial article was an extraordinary statement—during the past 20 years there has been no comparable article on domestic affairs. It was clearly meant to carry great weight, to be an authoritative leadership statement condemning key conservative views as being outside the limits of party debate.¹ To win the backing of the Politburo for such a categorical and politically significant statement, Gorbachev must have presented condemnation of the *Sovetskaya Rossiya* letter as a virtual vote of confidence in his policies. As such, the appearance of the editorial article is a further sign of the sharpened tension within the leadership.

The impression that the article represents a return to the offensive for the reformist elements in the leadership is bolstered by other recent signs favorable to Gorbachev: the ouster of Gosplan Chairman Talyzin, moves to speed up cuts in the ministerial bureaucracy, increasing willingness of pro-*glasnost* editors to defy Ligachev, and Gorbachev's advancing of a new concept of agricultural organization at the recent congress of kolkhozniks.² Moreover, the surfacing of proposals for radical reforms in the party for discussion at the June CPSU conference suggests a reactivation of Gorbachev's drive to shake up the party (see following article). (U/FOUO)

¹ It was also given extensive publicity by Radio Moscow, which broadcast summaries of the article in its foreign language services. Moscow's Romanian service, for example, carried a 14-minute account of the article.

² See the *Trends* of 10 February, pages 9-12; 23 March, pages 9-19; and 30 March, pages 13-16.

Radical Party Reform Proposals Surface for 19th Conference

General Secretary Gorbachev appears to be making some progress in his campaign to raise key issues of democratization at the upcoming CPSU conference in June. The Soviet press has now begun publicizing such proposals for party reform as contested elections from top to bottom and limited terms of office for leaders, proposals that if adopted would change the face of the Soviet political landscape and curtail the party bureaucracy's ability to hamper reform. Little support for such sweeping political reform is yet apparent within the leadership, however, raising questions about the chances for its adoption at the conference.

The 19th CPSU Conference—the first in 47 years—was clearly Gorbachev's idea as a device for helping him gain more control over the party and build momentum for his drive for remaking the party and society. At the January 1987 plenum he outlined bold proposals for democratization—including election of party leaders with a choice of candidates and secret balloting—and raised the idea of holding a special CPSU conference to discuss progress on *perestroyka* and to adopt steps toward democratization. At the June plenum the Central Committee adopted a resolution that formally convoked the conference and declared its purpose to be to discuss “measures to further democratize the life of the party and society” (*Pravda*, 27 June 1987).

As a first step in the process, at the June plenum Gorbachev also pushed through the idea of holding special nationwide plenums to discuss *perestroyka*, replace inert or recalcitrant leaders, and develop proposals for the 19th conference. A late October 1987 Central Committee decree specified that the plenums, to be held from November to January, would develop proposals for democratization that would be used as material for the conference (*Pravda*, 31 October 1987).

Drive Bogs Down Gorbachev's drive appeared to bog down later in 1987, however, following the ouster of Moscow leader Yeltsin for pushing personnel changes and reform too fast. The initial step toward the conference—the *perestroyka* plenums in regional organizations—not only failed to remove many entrenched and uncooperative leaders but did little to promote a nationwide debate on reform. The plenums produced piles of proposals (Moscow city plenums alone produced 15,000 proposals,

according to the 11 February *Moskovskaya Pravda*), but few were published in the press and those that were turned out to be relatively innocuous.

A 17 March *Sovetskaya Kultura* article pointed out the disappointing nature of the campaign, charging that the proposals from the plenums published in the December-January papers called only for inconsequential innovations such as changing the periods between obkom plenums, tinkering with the system for admission to the party, and reshuffling of party committees' apparats. The article, by one of the paper's editors, complained that these proposals are "far from the level set a year ago at the January Central Committee plenum: election of secretaries of primary party organizations by all party members; introduction of secret balloting in electing raykom, gorkom, and obkom secretaries at plenums; granting members of an elective organ the right to nominate any number of candidates in voting; and democratization of the procedure for forming the party's central leading organs." An article on democratization by historian Nikolay Popov in the 28 January *Sovetskaya Kultura* also expressed impatience with the failure to publicize proposals for the conference: "Now we seem to be waiting for a signal to begin the debate before the party conference."

Signs of Rejuvenation

Despite the failure of the *perestroyka* plenums to give momentum to Gorbachev's drive, there are indications that the campaign for party reform is being revitalized. Gorbachev himself has on several occasions in 1988 mentioned the conference's agenda, including in his 8 January 1988 talk to media leaders (*Pravda*, 13 January) and again in his February plenum report (*Pravda*, 18 February). Moreover, in recent weeks signs have emerged that his numerous appeals are beginning to take effect. The press, including even relatively conservative organs like *Pravda*, have begun to publicize reform proposals for the conference that raise the most serious and contentious ideas—election of leaders by secret ballot with a choice of candidates, limits on the terms of office, changes in the composition of the Central Committee, reduction of the size of the party apparatus, and direct election of leaders by all party members, not just a narrow group of (more easily controlled) party committee members.

Newspapers and journals have now opened special columns for discussion of democratization and proposals for the 19th conference and these have included the following items:

- A 14 February *Pravda* article described proposals from activists that first secretaries at all levels should be elected by secret ballot with a choice of

candidates, with all members of an organization voting. There should be "a contest between party comrades standing on the same platform," it said, and "the rivalry that has always existed behind the scenes must come out into the open."

- A February *Kommunist* (No. 3) printed a letter urging that leaders—"from the general secretary of the Central Committee down to the secretary of a primary party organization"—should be elected by "secret ballot with preliminary discussion of several candidates." Another letter stated that there are "more and more insistent demands today" for "direct and secret balloting in electing secretaries and party committees and for nominating an unlimited number of candidates."
- A letter in the 9 March *Pravda* complained that too many members of the present Central Committee were longtime holdovers and were ministers and party secretaries. It urged "systematic renewal" in order to prevent officials from becoming entrenched and insensitive to the public.
- A letter in the 13 March *Sovetskaya Rossiya* proposed that "the excessively inflated staff structures of gorkoms, obkoms, and kraykoms" be cut "at least 60 percent;" that there should be a limit on terms of office ("for example, two terms"); that the Central Committee should include fewer ministers, obkom secretaries, and other officials, and more rank-and-file workers and farmers; that there should be a choice of candidates for every position; and that all members of a party organization, not just their delegates at a conference, should elect their party committee (obkom, gorkom, etc.).
- *Pravda* on 15 March printed a letter maintaining that party organizations' apparats could be cut in half and functions transferred to elected organs.
- A letter in the 5 April *Pravda* urged that the party statute provide for renewing the membership of party committees "at all levels" by one-third at each election and limit secretaries (at least on the local level) to three terms. The letter also called for a general cut in the party apparat, sneering that "the best buildings in cities are filled with chiefs, deputy chiefs, and instructors, who instruct no one and sometimes are incapable of this."

The appearance of these proposals appears to finally give Gorbachev some momentum. Senior Secretary and Moscow party boss Lev Zaykov recently expressed his support for Gorbachev's reform ideas, chiding his own party organization for not developing suggestions for the conference that would solve

the "exceptionally topical" but difficult question of the "demarcation of functions between party, state, and economic organs" (*Moskovskaya Pravda*, 13 March). In contrast, Gorbachev's democratization proposals at the January 1987 plenum had won little public support from most other leaders. Multicandidate elections for local soviets were held in some districts in June, and election, rather than appointment of factory directors, became widespread, but after an initial surge in the spring and summer, reports of local election contests in party organizations have appeared to decline. There were only occasional references to party election contests during the November-January *perestroika* plenums (for example, the Tambov plenum cited some recent contests in December, according to the 11 December 1987 *Sovetskaya Rossiya* account). Among top leaders only Ukrainian First Secretary Shcherbitskiy has repeatedly lauded contested party elections (most recently, in a February *Voprosy Istorii KPSS* article).

Opposition

Despite the new momentum, the proposals aired in *Pravda* and other leading party publications are certain to meet stiff resistance from the party apparatus whose interests would be harmed. Top conservatives like Ligachev are not criticizing them directly, or even indirectly (for example, by defending democratic centralism), but there is clearly much quiet opposition, especially to the proposals for limits on terms of office and contested party elections.

Proposals for limited terms have been repeatedly defeated in the past. As reformer Fedor Burlatskiy pointed out recently in a 24 February *Literaturnaya Gazeta* article about Khrushchev, the latter's proposal to limit leaders to two terms "met stormy protests from the younger leaders," who could see this meant only short careers for them. The proposal was watered down repeatedly until it became meaningless. Even the modest limit included in the final version of the statute was removed almost as soon as Khrushchev was ousted. Similar proposals for limits also were made on the eve of the early 1986 party congress but were beaten back, with second-ranking Secretary Ligachev himself opposing them. In a 21 May 1986 speech Ligachev ridiculed and assailed these proposals and declared that he knew of many factory directors who had been at their posts for 10 or 15 years and continued to do a good job.¹ Probably in view of the opposition to limits, Gorbachev did not even mention this proposal among his democratization proposals in his January 1987 plenum report.

¹ Ligachev's comments were included in the televised version of his speech, but not in *Pravda*'s 22 May 1986 version. His criticism of limits won a solid round of applause from the audience at the factory where he was speaking.

Opposition to secret balloting and contests for party leadership posts is also likely to be strong. Gorbachev's January 1987 plenum proposal for contested elections in the party was not endorsed by the plenum's concluding resolution and has been ignored by almost all top leaders. Ligachev had earlier indicated some lack of enthusiasm for secret balloting during discussion of proposed changes in the party statute prior to the early 1986 party congress. In a November 1985 *Kommunist* (No. 16) article, he applauded statute changes extending open balloting at the lowest level and allowing small primary party organizations to choose for themselves whether to use secret or open balloting, rather than being obliged to use secret ballots.

Even Gorbachev now seems unwilling to put his own political prestige on the line by publicly endorsing the current proposals for multicandidate party elections, shakeup of the Central Committee, limits on terms of office, and cuts in the apparat. In contrast to his January 1987 call for multicandidate elections, his February 1988 plenum speech only vaguely called for renewing the push for democratization, "restructuring the political system," creating "effective democratic controls" and "legal procedures" to check abuses, "enhancing the role of soviets," and "improving our electoral system" (*Pravda*, 19 February). Although he went on to raise as a "basic question of political reform" the idea of limiting the role of the party and the powers of central government in order to facilitate development of initiative by citizens, public organizations, and local authorities, and call for "widening the range of questions" that state organs could resolve only with the consent of nongovernmental public organizations, his February plenum statements were much less controversial than the proposals for party reform that are now being advanced.

**Progress Outside
Party**

While democratization within the party has made relatively little progress, democratization outside the party—which is less controversial and apparently is also included in the conference's agenda—continues to slowly move forward:

- New ground was broken in parliamentary elections in January, when the first contested Supreme Soviet election was held (in a province in Shcherbitskiy's Ukraine). The contest and results were publicized nationally in detail in the 15 January *Izvestiya* and 14 January *Sotsialisticheskaya Industriya*.
- A 28 October 1987 Academy of Sciences general meeting discussed amendments to the academy's statute that would provide for election, rather

than appointment, of institute directors. The reforms, initiated in June 1987, included use of secret balloting and choice of candidates (see the February issue of the academy's *Vestnik*). The academy has already adopted a mandatory age limit for institute directors and academy leaders.²

- A 1-2 March Writers Union board meeting heard a report on progress in drafting a new, democratized Writers Union statute that would include limits on terms of office, secret balloting, and choice of candidates. Writers Union Secretary Yu. N. Verchenko, in reporting on the work, noted that the first drafts had not included anything on limiting terms of office but that this had been raised at a Writers Union Secretariat meeting and "after heated arguments the Secretariat decided to set a limit on holding the post of secretary—10 years, that is, two terms" (*Literaturnaya Gazeta*, 9 March).
- Economic reformer Gavriil Popov even suggested in a 20 March *Moskovskiy Novosti* (No. 12) article that, in order to avoid abuses of power, prosecutors and militia chiefs should be elected, with secret balloting and choice of candidates. (U/FOUO)

² See the *Trends* of 21 October 1987, pages 11-12.

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).

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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

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Gorbachev and wife Raisa lay a wreath at Tito's grave. (Soviet television, 15 March)

opinions." He observed that the two sides had "not just exchanged compliments," but had "decided concrete questions and thought about the future, laying a foundation for the development of all-round cooperation" (*Pravda*, 19 March). In an earlier speech he had asserted that the Soviet Union is prepared to develop relations with Yugoslavia "as far as the leadership of the SFRY wants to go" (Moscow radio, 15 March).

In keeping with Soviet efforts to more boldly examine sensitive chapters in Soviet and communist history,³ Gorbachev went out of his way to raise and dispel historical Yugoslav-Soviet animosities, including Stalin's condemnation of Tito. Speaking to the Yugoslav Federal Assembly—the first Soviet leader to do so—Gorbachev praised the "acumen" of the leaders of the two countries who had restored relations in 1955 (*Pravda*, 17 March). A 15 March Moscow radio report on Gorbachev's talks with the Yugoslav leadership indicated that the Soviet leader had praised Khrushchev and Tito by name for taking a "farsighted step" when they normalized relations. Throughout the visit, Gorbachev repeatedly praised Tito both for his contributions to international communism and to the development of Yugoslavia. During his visit to Tito's grave, he wrote in the visitor's book that the Soviet people "profoundly honor" the memory of Tito as a "prominent figure in the international communist and workers movement," a "military leader" in the struggle against fascism, and a "theorist and organizer" in developing "a new life" in Yugoslavia (Tanjug,

³ Recent discussions and revelations of Soviet history are discussed in the *Trends* of 23 March, pages 14-19. Efforts to examine sensitive issues in Soviet-Polish history are discussed in the *Trends* of 30 March, pages 5-12.

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17 March). He told reporters he had visited the grave not just because of "a deep feeling" for Tito, but also out of "party obligation" (Tanjug, 17 March).

Taking their cues from their respective leaders, media commentary on both sides welcomed the visit as a sign of a new climate in bilateral ties, highlighting the equality and independence in their relations. A prominent *Borba* foreign affairs columnist, Vlado Teslic, claimed that "for the first time" a Soviet leader "did not demand anything" such as "military bases," "approval for military interventions," or "changes in our domestic and foreign policies." He came to talk on equal terms with the Yugoslavs (*Borba*, 19-20 March). A 26 March *Pravda* editorial praised the visit for promoting bilateral cooperation and suggested that Yugoslavia's "experience" in developing "the political system of socialist self-management" could be useful to the Soviet Union.

Despite all the outward cordiality, there were indications of continuing differences, particularly on economic issues. The authoritative Soviet summary report on Gorbachev's meetings with Yugoslav party and state leaders described the atmosphere as one of "frankness [*otkrovennost*] and openness" (*Pravda*, 17 March).⁴ Although Gorbachev sought to minimize the significance of this characterization, saying at a 17 March press conference that "such language is only used by communists who mean well to each other," he also acknowledged the existence of disagreements with his hosts. In a final statement to Tanjug, he remarked that "much more can be done in our mutual relations" and admitted that "certain difficulties" have emerged in economic relations. He added that both sides must "do everything in our power to prevent a decline in this area" (Tanjug, 18 March). The two sides agreed that Soviet Premier Ryzhkov would visit Yugoslavia at a date "to be confirmed later," apparently to discuss economic problems (*Borba*, 19-20 March). Commenting on the forthcoming Ryzhkov visit, Federal Assembly representatives recommended that "strengthening" economic relations, particularly a "solution to the problem of Yugoslavia's high trade surplus" with the Soviet Union, should be the "priority questions" discussed (Tanjug, 4 April).

⁴ There was no comparable authoritative Yugoslav statement on the talks. A 22 March Tanjug report on an LCY Presidium session reported that its overall assessment of the talks during the visit was that they were "frank [*otvoren*] and took place in a comradely atmosphere." The state presidency's assessment was that the talks were conducted "in a spirit of friendship, frankness, and full mutual respect" (Belgrade radio, 23 March). (U/FOUO)

Gorbachev Repackages Mediterranean Arms Control Proposals

Gorbachev used his visit to Yugoslavia to reiterate Soviet proposals on arms control in the Mediterranean, apparently seeking not only to appeal to Yugoslav national interests but to embellish Moscow's arms control image throughout Europe and to further Soviet efforts to curb U.S. naval activities in the region. In his 16 March speech to the Yugoslav Federal Assembly, he offered a number of repackaged Soviet proposals calling for limits on U.S. and Soviet naval activity in the Mediterranean:

- He suggested that as a "first step" toward the complete withdrawal of Soviet and U.S. naval forces from the Mediterranean, Washington and Moscow should freeze the number and "potential" of their naval ships in the Mediterranean beginning 1 July and subsequently establish ceilings on the number of naval vessels deployed there.
- He proposed the extension of naval confidence-building measures (CBM's) to the Mediterranean, including prior notification of "each other and all Mediterranean countries" before "sending naval ships" or staging military exercises and inviting "observers" to such exercises.
- In what was probably the most propagandistic of his proposals, he reiterated Moscow's interest in a conference of "representatives of Mediterranean states and other interested countries" to bring together the "many" initiatives on the Mediterranean set forth in recent years and to determine the "rational sequence and order of their implementation." He did not, however, indicate the venue for such talks, the types of activity they might cover, or methods for regulating discussions by such an unwieldy, and, in some instances, hostile group of states (TASS, 16 March).

Gorbachev's last comprehensive discussion of Mediterranean security issues came during the visit of Algerian President Benjedid to Moscow in March 1986. At that time, Gorbachev asserted that the Soviet Union would withdraw its fleet from the Mediterranean if the United States would do so, saying that the Soviet Union had "no need to have its naval fleet in the Mediterranean on a permanent basis" and kept it there only because of the "threatening" presence of the U.S. Sixth Fleet. He also reiterated earlier Soviet proposals for CBM's, a reduction of armed forces in the region, and a withdrawal of ships carrying nuclear weapons from the Mediterranean (*Pravda*, 28 March 1986).

Since becoming general secretary, Gorbachev has added fresh impetus to Soviet efforts to limit U.S. naval activity worldwide. During a visit to New Delhi in November 1986, he repeated earlier Soviet calls for reducing naval activity in the Indian Ocean, proposing that all states with naval vessels in the Indian Ocean negotiate on "substantial reductions" in the size and activities of those forces. He also called for negotiations on CBM's in both the Indian and Pacific Oceans (TASS, 27 November 1986). Gorbachev also made proposals for reducing naval activity in the Pacific Ocean in his July 1986 speech in Vladivostok and in the seas around northern Europe in his October 1987 speech in Murmansk.⁵

Soviet Objectives Gorbachev's call for the relatively quick imposition of limitations on the size and potential of the navies in the Mediterranean seems to represent an attempt to complicate NATO discussions of equipping U.S. vessels in the Mediterranean with sea-launched cruise missiles to compensate for systems to be removed under the INF Treaty. Soviet officials have strongly condemned this and other methods of compensation, and in his speech to the Federal Assembly Gorbachev himself labeled Western calls for such compensation one of the "absurdities" of the early March NATO summit in Brussels. (U/FOUO)

⁵ See the *Trends* of 21 October, pages 6-8.

China

The report presented to the new National People's Congress (NPC) by Acting Premier Li Peng endorsed key domestic reform policies laid out at the October party congress and the party's recent plenum, including the strategy for coastal development and a government reorganization plan that would streamline administration and facilitate indirect management of the economy. The content and phrasing of the NPC report suggest that while there is broad leadership agreement on the reform agenda, there remain differences of emphasis, particularly over such issues as how rapidly the economy should develop. On foreign policy issues, Li's report hewed closely to Beijing's standard line, conveying a sense of overall satisfaction with the relative relaxation of international tensions in the past year but continuing to press the superpowers to make greater strides in arms control and registering dissatisfaction with Vietnam on regional issues.

Li Peng Report to NPC Enunciates Gradualist Approach

Li Peng, who is to be named premier during the current First Session of the Seventh NPC, delivered his inaugural work report to the congress on 25 March. In setting out a reform agenda for the government's work over the next five years, he reiterated many themes adopted at the 13th party congress last October. He repeatedly invoked the Dengist dictum on "emancipating the mind," which the party leadership has been promoting since last fall in calling for ideological flexibility.¹ Li also called for resolute development of the "productive forces"—that is, the economy—and echoed the language of the congress report: "We must resolutely support all things favorable to development of productive forces and resolutely excise all those that are unfavorable to this development."

¹ Emancipating the mind was the subject of a 7 February *Renmin Ribao* article by party chief Zhao Ziyang. See the *Trends* of 16 March, pages 27-33.

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In addition, Li reiterated the congress's declaration that the goal of economic reform is to create an indirect control mechanism in which "the state regulates the market and the market guides enterprises." Recalling another theme previously endorsed by party leader Zhao Ziyang, Li also observed that unless science and technology are developed rapidly "the economic and technological gaps between China and the developed countries" will be enlarged and "China will not be able to achieve its proper international setting."

Li also called for a number of reform initiatives, particularly:

- selling property rights so that unused or underused assets of companies could be sold to enterprises better able to use them.
- reforming the tax system so that enterprises would have to repay loans after paying taxes. Currently, enterprises are able to deduct a portion of their loans from their tax burden. The reform would tighten budget constraints on enterprises and make them less willing to borrow funds.
- financing government deficits through bond sales so that inflationary pressures on the economy are reduced. In the past, budget deficits have been covered by overdrafts from the People's Bank of China. Moving to deficit financing through bonds might require the establishment of a secondary bond market, though Li made no mention of such an innovation.

Elements of Caution While the government work report registers leadership consensus on a broad reform agenda, it also reflects different emphases within the leadership and particularly Li Peng's concerns about the potential danger of rapid economic growth. This concern seemed apparent in Li's distinction between "objectives" and "steps." Making clear that the party congress only set out objectives, Li indicated that the government should pursue these goals carefully. According to Li: "After deciding on objectives, it is necessary to carefully formulate a plan, decide on the steps for implementing the plan, do well in conducting tests at selected points, and then popularize our experiences."

These different emphases can be seen in the contrast between Li's report and Zhao's address to the party plenum prior to the NPC session. In suggesting that growth and stability can be combined, Zhao reflected concern that failure to maintain a sufficient rate of growth could lead to social instability: "Without a certain level of economic growth, many contradictions will become more acute" (Xinhua, 19 March). Li, on the other hand, appeared to be more

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concerned with the potential for economic instability if the economy should become overheated. He noted that price rises over recent years were caused by "abnormal" factors, including the excessive issuance of banknotes, overexpansion of the scale of capital construction, and total demand exceeding total supply. In what could be read as a jab at Zhao's leadership, Li observed that over the past five years "many mistakes" were committed: "We were overanxious for quick results in economic work, and there was a tendency to neglect economic returns."

These differing appraisals of the possibilities and risks of trying to maintain high economic growth apparently reflect disagreement over last year's economic performance. In his speech to the recent party plenum, Zhao declared that because of reform, particularly the adoption of the contract responsibility system, "a new situation began to emerge" last year, demonstrating that it is possible for "speed and good results" to be achieved at the same time. In contrast, Li cast his praise for last year's economic performance in very cautious terms. "A number of unstable factors that have long existed" in the economy, he said, last year "developed in the direction of being eased." Stressing the need for such trends to continue, he said that if they do, then "it is possible step by step" to combine speed and economic results.

Prices

Consistent with the 13th party congress's decision to deemphasize for the time being reform of the price structure in favor of enterprise management reform, Li stated that current policy should combine "deregulation, adjustment, and control" in order to "gradually" straighten out the price structure. At the same time, Li called for "strengthening the guidance and administration of the market."

As for agricultural prices, Li seemed willing to recognize the need for immediate price adjustments, if not price decontrol. Admitting policy errors because the "law of value"—meaning the use of economic incentives—had not been used in a "timely and correct way," Li said it was necessary to "reform the price system" and to "gradually smooth price relationships" in agriculture. However, Li went on to speak of the need to "appropriately raise" the prices of agricultural products, sideline products, and primary industrial products, suggesting that in the short term, at least, the government favors a controlled adjustment of prices. This would probably entail an increase in procurement price for grain and possibly the selective decontrol of less vital agricultural products, rather than a more dramatic move toward full market pricing. Li sought to offset the impact of "unavoidable" increases in the prices of agricultural goods with assurances of "proper subsidies" to urban workers.

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Li's comments on agricultural policy essentially reiterated his comments at the 17 February Spring Festival gathering, when he seemed to depart from an earlier position stressing extreme caution on the price issue. On that occasion he spoke in favor for the first time of greater adherence to the law of value, adding that a rise in the price of major foodstuffs would be "conductive to further reforming the irrational pricing system."

Both Li and Zhao's recent comments suggest that a leadership consensus is forming on how to deal with China's agricultural problems. Addressing the plenum on 15 March, Zhao blamed the current imbalance in supply and demand as well as the state's loss of control over prices on the failure to use pricing policies correctly. He indicated that "prices should send the message that can most effectively guide agricultural production" and that "irrational prices that obstruct the development of production should be consciously readjusted step by step."

Coastal Development Li's report, invoking Deng's admonition that "we must have a sense of urgency and must, in no case, fumble the opportunity," endorsed the strategy of opening up the coastal economy announced by Zhao in January. Previously, Li had appeared tepid in his support for this proposal, and in his endorsement of the plan in his work report he stopped short of the enthusiastic support expressed by Zhao at the plenum. Zhao had told the party that what "worries" Deng is that "we act hesitantly and become too cautious" and added his own admonition of the need for "Marxist insight and courage" in pursuing the policy of opening and development (*Renmin Ribao*, 21 March).

In endorsing the coastal development plan, the government work report appears to give greater weight to the concerns of the interior provinces than did the original proposal, as reported by Xinhua on 22 January. According to that report, Zhao proposed a strategy of "placing both ends outside"—meaning that the coastal areas should buy raw and semifinished materials on the international market and then export the processed goods—which could pose a threat to the economic links between the coastal areas and the interior. But Zhao defended this proposal, warning that "if we continue to follow the old way of depending on the domestic market for the supply of raw and semifinished materials," there will be sharp competition between the coastal and interior areas over scarce resources, and "this way will lead nowhere."

In his plenum report, Zhao appeared to back off, expressing greater sensitivity to the demands of the interior. Thus, Zhao called the coastal development plan "not merely a regional, but a national strategy," saying that the implementation of the coastal development plan "does not mean the inland areas can do nothing to develop their own export-oriented economies." Finally, Zhao seemed to hedge on the plan to buy raw materials from the outside, saying that plan was not "absolutely required" and in any case would "take some time to do."

In his report to the NPC, Li went further yet, portraying the coastal development plan as a strategy that "will give impetus to the development of the entire national economy." Going beyond Zhao's plenum concerns, Li emphasized the development of lateral relations and cooperation, including the transfer to the interior of technologies, management expertise, and trained personnel. These relationships, he said, would "give greater play to the role of the coastal areas as windows for opening to the outside world."

This growing emphasis on ties with the interior appears consistent with concerns Li expressed during his early January trip to the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone. At that time, according to PRC-owned Hong Kong daily *Wen Wei Po* on 5 January, Li "asked questions concerning the use of raw materials obtained in our own country" and "expressed appreciation" for the achievements of enterprises in importing goods and "establishing proper links at home."

Central Government Reform

Citing structural reform of central government organs as one of the major tasks of the government for the next five years, Li announced that a plan for such reform had been submitted to the NPC for deliberation. As outlined to the NPC by State Councilor Song Ping, head of the party's Organization Department, the plan entails significant structural changes in the State Council itself—including a major reorganization and consolidation of central ministries, a transformation in the function of central organs to better accommodate the transition from direct to indirect government administration of the economy required by the Dengist economic reforms, and the gradual implementation of a civil service law to regulate state personnel administration (Xinhua 28 March). A State Council plan for central restructuring was mandated in Zhao's work report to the 13th party congress last fall as a major element in the party's current efforts to carry out overall reform of the country's political structure.

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In emphasizing the need to change the formal functions of key state organs, the current reform proposal goes well beyond the major effort at streamlining the central government carried out under Zhao's direction in 1982—an effort that PRC media have acknowledged did not succeed. Evidently reflecting top leadership concern over this previously unsuccessful reform, both Zhao and Li have taken pains to emphasize the different focus of the current proposal. Implicitly inviting comparison with the earlier government reform effort, Zhao told the 13th congress that the new reform must “avoid slipping back into the old rut of restreamlining and reexpanding.” Similarly, Li's report to the NPC stated that economic structural reform had “exposed” the “inadaptability” of government organs to reform. New experience in managing the economy had made it possible to change the functions of government, he said. “We should not undertake a simple deactivation, merger, or personnel reduction,” but take measures to ensure that central organs will “meet the needs of the economic structure” and “the development of a socialist commodity economy.” Government departments “will no longer perform the functions of managing enterprises directly,” he concluded.

Echoing these sentiments in his explanation of the reform plan, Song Ping referred explicitly to the reforms of 1982, stating that “we will not simply abolish some offices, merge others, and cut back staff” but will “introduce changes to their functions.” The State Council had drawn lessons from previous government restructuring efforts, he continued, and would avoid the “swelling” of government departments in the future through the new Ministry of Personnel. The new ministry would control the size and restructuring of departments “through law and budget.”

According to Song, the proposal submitted to the NPC calls for a net reduction of central ministries and commissions, with the establishment of 10 new ones and the abolition of 14 old ones within the next three months, and a 20-percent reduction (10,000 officials) in the State Council staff. Prominent changes in this regard include the establishment of a “new” State Planning Commission following the abolition of the current State Planning Commission and State Economic Commission and the combining of several previous ministries into a new Ministry of Energy. The new State Planning Commission is charged with “national social and economic development” as a “top-level macroeconomic management department.” In addition, the Xinhua news agency is to be transformed from “an administrative organ” of the State Council to a presumably more independent and specialized “state institution” directly under the State Council. Within ministries and commissions, Song

said, there will be only two levels of administration, while overlapping functions will be reduced in order to "lay the groundwork for further restructuring" in the future.

Plans for streamlining other ministries and commissions are to be completed by the end of June, and to be implemented during the third quarter of the year so that the State Council can conduct an overall evaluation of the reform during the last three months of the year. Offering a rough timetable for the reform, Li said in his work report that "it is expected" that provincial level organs (including large municipalities) would begin the restructuring process next year, with certain cities receiving State Council approval to carry out pilot reforms sooner (Song Ping said that trial reforms in 16 experimental cities, under way since 1986, would continue). County and township governments will begin "even later," according to Li.

Li and Song provided few examples of exactly how the "functions" of central government departments would change. Evidently such changes will be reflected primarily at the subministerial level. Thus, while Song's description of the formal responsibilities of the new ministries did not appear to break new ground, his explanation of new organs to be established under the ministries did point to a substantial departure from previous organizational patterns. Corporations will be set up to take the place of the Ministries of Railways, Petroleum, Coal, and Nuclear Industries, he said, and "they will not perform government functions." Providing no detail, Song stated only that they will be "economic entities operating independently and assuming full responsibility for profits and losses." Beyond this, Song simply said that bureaus, temporary departments, and other "working bodies" directly under the State Council would be "greatly simplified and readjusted." A "detailed plan" would be carried out after approval by the "new State Council," which he said "would be organized soon."

In line with these functional changes, Li hinted that the administrative hierarchies of central-level ministries would no longer reach directly to the grassroots, thus substantially reducing their capacity to intervene in economic decisionmaking. Thus, he admonished departments under the State Council to support the reform of local government, but to "not insist that they set up organs corresponding to central government organs." Such a reform, if carried out, would also strengthen the hand of local institutions in forging horizontal economic relations that cut across regional jurisdictions.

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Apparently a draft civil service law was not included in the reform proposal submitted to the NPC, although it remains a key component of the government reform plan. Thus, Li stressed the need to "accelerate the establishment and gradual enforcement" of a civil service law, which has not been passed yet, and to "map out regulations" and set up an academy to train civil servants "as soon as possible." Curiously, he also said that "from now on" all levels should hold examinations when recruiting government employees and "select people who are outstanding according to the regulations." In addition, he instructed cadres at all levels to "adapt their thinking to reform," "assume a positive attitude" toward civil service administration, and work out good plans and "implement them painstakingly." (U/FOUO)

Li Provides Broad Survey of International Scene

Li Peng's report to the NPC offered the most comprehensive survey of Beijing's foreign policy in this forum in several years, but was still less detailed than the *tour d'horizon* offered by Zhao in 1984.² Adopting the moderate tone that has become a hallmark of such authoritative Chinese pronouncements in recent years, Li elaborated on Beijing's "independent" line in foreign policy, concluding that it has contributed to a "better" international environment for China's reform and modernization program.

Arms Control

Li's report registered Beijing's concern over the implications for its own nuclear forces of the U.S.-Soviet INF accord³ and the possibility that Washington and Moscow may make progress toward a drastic reduction of strategic nuclear weapons. Li reiterated Beijing's current view that convocation of an international conference of all nuclear states to negotiate a global reduction of nuclear weapons can occur only when the two superpowers have taken "the lead" in halting the testing, manufacturing, and development of nuclear weapons and have reduced "substantially" their existing stockpiles. Highlighting the theme that nuclear arms control is primarily a superpower affair, Li noted pointedly that "even if" the United States and the Soviet Union agree to reduce by half their strategic nuclear weapons, their remaining stockpiles would "still constitute more than 90 percent" of the world's total.

² Government work reports to the NPC are normally dominated by domestic concerns. Separate sections on foreign affairs were included in the NPC reports of 1979, 1983, 1984, and 1986; reports in other years contained only brief mentions of international issues.

³ See the *Trends* of 23 December 1987, pages 11-14.

China's current conditions for participation in the arms control process are the stiffest since its original pledge in mid-1982 to join in an international disarmament conference only after the superpowers had actually reduced their nuclear stockpiles by 50 percent. Beijing backed away from this position in 1983, stating that such a conference could be convened once the two superpowers had "agreed" in principle on "reducing by half" their nuclear arsenals (Xinhua, 27 September 1983). Since 1984, however, Beijing—evidently fearing constraints on its own nuclear forces that could result from participation in such a forum—gradually hardened its line. The Chinese replaced references to 50-percent reductions with the more vague requirement for "substantial" or "drastic" reductions (Xinhua, 31 May and 26 September 1984) and, beginning in 1986, called for the effective completion of such reductions prior to an international conference (Xinhua, 21 March 1986).

Sino-U.S. Relations In keeping with Beijing's authoritative assessments of its relations with Washington in recent months, including the period since Foreign Minister Wu Xueqian's visit,⁴ Li touched on potential difficulties even as he characterized the overall relationship as being "generally stable (*dati pingwen*).⁴ Making a clear distinction between the Administration and the Congress, Li voiced tacit satisfaction with the former and indirect but sharp criticism of the latter.

Alluding to congressional statements and actions on Taiwan, Tibet, and human rights that have been the focus of recent Chinese irritation, Li said that "there are some people who always seek various excuses to interfere in China's internal affairs." "Especially with regard to Taiwan," he said, these people do not adhere to the policy "openly declared" by the U.S. Government of recognizing only one China. "Sino-American relations," Li warned, "can only develop steadily on the basis of strict adherence to the three Sino-U.S. communiques." He urged "American politicians"—a reference to members of Congress—to view Sino-U.S. relations as important to the interests of both countries.

Li's criticism was pointed but restrained. By contrast, the government work report to the May 1984 NPC session, which took place only two weeks after President Reagan's visit to China at a time of improving bilateral ties, contained both harsher criticism and a clear admonition directed at the Administration. That report referred to the Taiwan issue as an "obstacle" and cited U.S. arms sales to Taipei as hindering further progress in Sino-U.S. relations. While expressing appreciation for the President's renewed pledge to

⁴ See the *Trends* of 16 March, pages 22-26.

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Chinese leaders to abide by the three Sino-U.S. communiques, the report observed that Beijing "expects the U.S. Government ... to honor its commitment" on this issue, and urged Washington to "truly" pursue a policy of "one China" and to take "noticeable practical measures" to reduce arms sales to Taiwan (Xinhua, 15 May 1984).

Sino-Soviet Relations Li's remarks on the Soviet Union reflected the balanced appraisal of bilateral relations that has been the staple of authoritative statements over the past three years. On the positive side, Li noted a broadening of economic cooperation and ongoing consultations on normalization of relations and the border issue. He also held out hope for further progress in bilateral relations, but reiterated Beijing's now-standard conditional offer of a summit, as was originally proposed by Deng in September 1986, provided that Moscow first "stop supporting" Hanoi's "aggression" against Cambodia and "urge Vietnam to withdraw" its troops. Li noted without elaboration that "the three well-known obstacles"—Soviet support for Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia, Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, and Soviet military deployments along China's northern border—contradict the principles of peaceful coexistence that should govern Sino-Soviet relations.

The degree of improvement in Sino-Soviet relations over recent years is suggested by the harsher portrayals offered in the NPC work reports of 1983, 1984, and 1986, when foreign policy issues were discussed in comparable detail. In both the 1983 and 1984 reports, the three obstacles were characterized as posing a "grave threat to China's security," and in 1986 the report noted that the Afghan and Cambodia conflicts had a "direct" impact on China's security and urged Moscow to make a "genuine improvement" in Sino-Soviet relations through "concrete actions" to remove these obstacles.

Despite the improved atmosphere in Sino-Soviet relations, Li's report criticized Moscow and Hanoi, deploring the threat to world peace caused by the "military invasion of weak and small nations by some foreign countries." Li also failed to give Moscow much credit for reducing tensions in Afghanistan. Acknowledging that "some progress" had been made recently toward resolution of the conflict, Li attributed this progress primarily to international pressure on Moscow, noting pointedly that "the international community has long and strongly demanded an end to the Soviet Union's military occupation of Afghanistan." Apparently reflecting the current

difficulties in the Geneva talks, Li's remarks conveyed little of the sense of optimism concerning the prospects for a negotiated solution that was evident in Chinese media commentary during January.⁵

Indochina

Also censuring Hanoi for the "military invasion of weak and small nations," Li blamed the continuing conflict in Cambodia on "Vietnamese aggression" and questioned Hanoi's "sincerity" in desiring a political settlement. He broke no new ground in outlining China's stand on a solution to the conflict, stating that Beijing still holds that the "key" to a settlement lies in the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Cambodia so that the Cambodians can settle their "internal affairs" through negotiations. He again urged Hanoi to hold talks with Prince Sihanouk and the other leaders of the Cambodian resistance coalition.

At the same time, Li curiously failed to discuss the overall state of Sino-Vietnamese relations. Both the 1983 and 1984 work reports—the only occasions since 1979 that such documents have contained detailed discussions of Vietnam and Cambodia—expressed regret at the "deterioration" of Sino-Vietnamese relations and linked their improvement to a Vietnamese pullout from Cambodia.

Li did single out one negative aspect of Beijing's current relations with Hanoi. Reacting to the 14 March armed clash between Vietnamese and Chinese forces in the Spratlys, he "resolutely condemned" Vietnam for its "illegal occupation" of Chinese territory there. According to the pro-PRC Hong Kong paper *Wen Wei Po* on 25 March, this condemnation was "added" to the original draft of the work report.

East Europe

Following what has become the standard line since Premier Zhao Ziyang's June 1987 tour of East Europe, Li pointed to the "normalized" party and state relations between China and the countries of this region as evidence of "major progress."⁶ Beijing was more reserved in its assessment of relations in 1984—the previous time China's ties to East Europe were discussed at this forum, and prior to the expansion of ties.

⁵ See the *Trends* of 13 January, pages 11-12.

⁶ See FBIS *Analysis Report* FB 87-10016 of 27 August 1987, "Zhao Ziyang's Tour of East Europe: Capping the Normalization of Party and State Ties."

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Li's treatment of Sino-East European relations also suggested a contrast between common elements in the two sides' domestic experiences and divergence in their outlook on international affairs. Li noted that China and East Europe would exchange "experience in socialist construction and reform." However, unlike his depiction of China and the countries of West Europe as sharing "identical or similar views" on major international issues, he offered no characterization of the degree of such a coincidence with East Europe.

Japan

Continuing Beijing's effort since Prime Minister Takeshita's accession to office last November to ameliorate the atmosphere of Sino-Japanese relations, Li accented the positive aspects in the relationship and played down the negative side. He thus noted the "close" economic and trade ties, as well as the frequent exchange of personnel between the two countries. Though he avoided explicit mention of any bilateral problems, he did allude to "recent incidents"—an apparent reference to such issues as the ownership of a disputed dormitory and the restriction on Japanese technology exports to China since the Toshiba affair. However, he went on to stress that both sides share an interest in preventing damage to their relationship, expressing the conviction that current problems can be solved and good-neighborly relations expanded.

India

Li depicted bilateral ties with India as undergoing "gradual improvement" and expressed hope that their border dispute would be settled in a spirit of "understanding and accommodation." Adopting a nonconfrontational approach, Li made no reference to the spring 1987 border tensions and did not repeat criticisms of India's decision to make a state of the disputed territory of Arunachal.⁷

Taiwan

Pointing to the settlement of the Hong Kong and Macao questions, Li stressed that the task of Taiwan's reunification has become "very prominent." He welcomed Taiwan's loosening of restrictions on travel to the mainland last fall and their "further" relaxation more recently. He also voiced satisfaction with the "expanded" scope of cultural, academic, economic, and other "nongovernmental" exchanges between the two sides in the past year. Urging still greater progress toward resolution of the reunification issue, Li repeated Beijing's longstanding call on the KMT authorities to accept the "three links" across the Taiwan Strait—trade, mail, and transportation services. He also invited Taiwan entrepreneurs to engage in business activities on the mainland. Li reiterated Beijing's

⁷ See the *Trends* of 24 February 1988, pages 41-42, and 13 May 1987, page 15.

readiness to consult with the Taiwan authorities and individuals of "various" political views on the concept of reunification, but he made it clear that Beijing would "support" proposals that favor reunification, "reject" those that do not, and "firmly oppose any action" in Taiwan or elsewhere that aims "to split" China—a reference to Taiwan independence activities. (U/FOUO)

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Czechoslovakia

Prague Reveals Alarm Over Religious Protest in Slovakia

In an apparent effort to discourage escalating protests by religious and human rights activists, Prague suppressed a public demonstration in Bratislava and launched a strident media attack on its organizers. At the same time, continuing negotiations with the Vatican and the subsequent release of those arrested in the Bratislava protest suggest uncertainty within the leadership about the best way of handling an increasingly vocal opposition.

Prague reacted harshly to the latest protest—a 25 March rally in the Slovak capital of Bratislava—that is apparently among the boldest in Czechoslovakia in recent years. In contrast to other recent demonstrations, which have been spontaneous and focused on narrow religious issues, the organizers of the rally addressed broad human rights concerns and, citing constitutional guarantees, applied for permission to demonstrate. When it was denied, the marchers defied the government ban despite the presence of riot police.

Prague's handling of the protest was clearly aimed both at minimizing the significance of the demonstration and at forestalling further protests. In pursuit of these two goals, Prague has portrayed the participants as fringe elements and blamed the incident on foreign provocateurs, typically warning that such activities might force the curtailment of domestic reforms and derail ongoing negotiations with the Vatican intended to break a 15-year impasse over the appointment of bishops to the Czechoslovak church¹:

- Czechoslovak media acknowledged that some 2,000 people were present, but claimed that only 500 were "active" while the others were mere onlookers (Bratislava *Pravda*, 28 March).
- Government spokesman Miroslav Pavel claimed at a 29 March press conference that "foreign political circles" played a "significant" role in organizing the demonstration, warned that any "clash with state power" by

¹ See the *Trends* of 24 February, pages 37-40.

"irresponsible groups" will "not assist the policy of democratization," and suggested that the rally was intended to "harm" talks between the state and the Vatican. Minimizing the importance of the demonstration, he pointed to the low turnout compared to that "announced in advance by the organizers," denied that anyone had been arrested or detained, and asserted that "no injuries or material damage were reported" (Prague radio, 29 March).

- Prague television on the night of the rally accused unnamed "individuals" from the "secret churches" and "people connected with reactionary emigre organizations" of organizing the demonstration with the help of Western media, "particularly the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe." It charged the protest leaders with "exploiting" religious beliefs in order to "disrupt" church-state relations and government negotiations with the Vatican. In an attempt to suggest that the organizers of the rally represent a small minority of Slovak Catholics, the commentator claimed that official church representatives had "condemned" the rally and "the overwhelming majority of believers" had agreed.

- A 23 March article in *Vecernik* had denounced the planned protest as an attack on socialism masterminded by foreign agitators to "create the impression of persecution" and "disrupt relations between state and church." It emphasized that the rally had neither church nor government approval, saying it "does not and cannot have ecclesiastical or Christian legitimacy" and is devoid of "any legitimacy under civil law."

The authorities have balanced this harsh rhetoric with some more moderate measures, suggesting uncertainty about how to respond to the increasing public pressure in a way that will minimize future protests without giving in to the opposition's demands. In his 29 March press conference, Pavel pointed out that those arrested in the demonstrations had been released. Moreover, despite hints that antigovernment protests could interfere with church-state negotiations, he indicated that the talks with the Vatican will resume on 11 April (*Rude Pravo*, 30 March). A 2 April CTK report was optimistic about the possible results of the negotiations, noting that they have reached a "hopeful stage."

**Sensitivity to
Western Opinion**

In an apparent attempt to allay Western criticism of Prague's handling of the incident, an English-language CTK report of the 29 March government press conference was more conciliatory and gave more details of the demonstration than reports in domestic media. The CTK item indicated that

the police had detained 125 participants, including "several foreign correspondents," but had released all of them, including an organizer of the demonstration. Implicitly criticizing the Bratislava police for their handling of the incident, CTK cited the government spokesman as saying that the Ministry of Interior had not issued an order for the detention of the foreign reporters, but noted that anyone mixing with participants in an unauthorized demonstration was taking "certain risks" (CTK, 29 March).

Background

Obviously encouraged by the climate of *glasnost* and reform in the USSR, Czechoslovak Catholics have become increasingly vocal in their attempts to pressure the government to expand religious freedom and to reach accommodation with the Vatican. Earlier protests include a petition calling for an end to state interference in church affairs that has garnered an estimated 400,000 Czech and Slovak signatures and a 6 March spontaneous gathering of 10,000 in front of Cardinal Tomasek's residence—both of which have been widely reported in Western media. (U/FOUO)

Korea

North Takes Allies To Task for Olympics Attendance

Pyongyang recently gave vent to its dissatisfaction with its allies that have decided to participate in the Olympics in Seoul—thus breaking the silence it had maintained on this issue since early this year—and issued what can be read as a veiled warning against attending. Thus far this tougher line has not been attributed directly to the North, being confined to replays of remarks by third parties and to broadcasts on the clandestine Voice of National Salvation (VNS). This approach permits the North to maintain official distance from the disapproving statements.

On 26 March Pyongyang reported a statement issued by pro-DPRK overseas Koreans that called on the various Olympic national committees to take a "decisive attitude" toward the Seoul games and not allow them to be used for "insidious political purposes." Although the statement did not go on to recommend any particular course of action, its message was underscored the next day when VNS broadcast a letter from the South Korean National Democratic Front (SKNDF)—which the North claims is a clandestine group operating in South Korea—that was purportedly sent to Vietnam's Olympic Committee on 28 January urging the Vietnamese to reverse their decision to attend the games. Putting the case in highly emotional terms, the letter charged that to "grasp the blood-stained hands" of the South Korean leaders would "insult" Vietnamese who fought against ROK troops sent to support U.S. forces in Vietnam in the 1960's and would "betray" unspecified "friends" who assisted North Vietnam during the war. Arguing that "revolutionary principle and duty cannot be bartered for medals," it warned that Hanoi's decision to attend the games had "angered" South Koreans and impaired the SRV's prestige.

The letter ended on a threatening note, claiming that it will be "difficult to guarantee foreigners' safety" because of "political confusion" in the South and expressing hope that the Vietnamese will not "regret" going to Seoul. Over the past few years Pyongyang has claimed that foreigners going to the

Olympics might not be safe in Seoul. Such warnings, which called attention to a number of alleged risks—air pollution and other health hazards—had a less ominous ring than the current one.

ROK jamming of VNS makes monitoring difficult, often impossible, so it is not known whether the letter to the Vietnamese is the only one that has been broadcast. In any case, the protest to the Vietnamese is far stronger than any criticism aired by the North in 1986, when it sought to discourage participation in the Asian Games in Seoul. Pyongyang had also employed the SKNDF at that time to register its displeasure with countries attending the Asian Games, though no specific countries were singled out. In arguing against participation in the Asian Games, Pyongyang had carried commentary indirectly criticizing the Chinese for justifying their decision to attend the games on the grounds that it was purely a question of sports with no political implications. (U/FOUO)