TITLE: Ethnonationalism and Political Stability in the U.S.S.R.

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COUNCIL CONTRACT NUMBER: 627-3

DATE: November 1984

The work leading to this report was supported in whole or in part from funds provided by the National Council for Soviet and East European Research.
# Table of Contents

**Executive Summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part I:</th>
<th>Background and Objectives</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part II:</td>
<td>Impact of the Nationality Problem on the Soviet System</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Background</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Problem of Ideological Legitimation</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Future of the Federal System</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Economic Management and Resource Allocation</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cadres Policy</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Language and Cultural Policy</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nationality and the Armed Forces</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National Differences and the Policy Process</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Nationality Question and Soviet Security: Domestic/Foreign Policy Linkages</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part III:</td>
<td>Policy Options and Trends</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part IV:</td>
<td>Implications for U.S. Policy</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The long-term stability of the Soviet system is critically dependent on how successfully the Soviet leadership deals with its "nationality problem." The USSR is not only the largest multinational state in the world today but also one of the most complex, encompassing more than 100 distinct nations and nationalities, 22 of which number over one million people each. It is a state which is potentially exceedingly vulnerable to the possible effects of rising ethnonationalism, one of the most potent forces of political instability in developing and industrial societies alike.

This study examines the sources, manifestations, and impact of rising ethnonationalism in the USSR and its implications for the long-term stability of the Soviet system. It argues that recent Western writings have tended to exaggerate the vulnerabilities and underestimate the resilience of the Soviet system in coping with the "nationality problem," and that in the short and medium term the fundamental challenge which it poses for the Soviet system is not so much the potential threat of destabilization or fragmentation but the ways in which it constrains and complicates the management of a series of key policy dilemmas. The first thesis is presented more fully in a separate article (Gail W. Lapidus, "Ethnonationalism and Political Stability: The Soviet Case," World Politics, July 1984). The second is the subject of this report.

Drawing on a wide variety of Soviet sources, the study identifies and examines eight areas in which the multinational character of the USSR creates significant dilemmas for Soviet institutions and policies: where major debates with policy implications can be traced in Soviet publications; where the conflicting recommendations of the participants reflect divergent diagnoses, assumptions, objectives and institutional interests; and where new policy assessments and orientations appear to be emerging. These include:

a) The problem of ideological legitimation
b) The future of the federal system
c) Economic management and region resource allocation
d) Cadres policy,
e) Language and cultural policy
f) Nationality and the armed forces
g) National differences and the policy process
h) Domestic/foreign policy linkages
A number of conclusions suggested by this research differ from conventional interpretations of Soviet nationality policy and problems, and point to the need for more sustained and comprehensive analysis of current Soviet publications in this area.

Soviet nationality policy

a) Contrary to widespread assumptions, there does not appear to exist a coherent, comprehensive, integrated strategy on the part of the Soviet leadership for managing the nationality problem. Rather, what we label "Soviet nationality policy" has been largely the by-product of other essentially functional concerns—a dimension of policies addressed to resource allocation, or cadre recruitment, or education, or demographic behavior. When in December 1982 Andropov called for the formulation of a "well thought-out, scientifically substantiated nationalities policy," he was both testifying to its absence and seeking to focus attention on the need for a more coordinated and comprehensive approach.

b) An important body of Western writings has tended to treat Soviet nationality policy in dichotomous terms, emphasizing political domination, economic exploitation, and cultural Russification of a largely passive and victimized non-Russian population by a dominant Slavic elite. This approach has given insufficient attention to the considerable variation in Soviet treatment of different national groups (as well as of different issues) and to the complex relations among them. This approach has also tended to ignore or minimize Soviet institutions and policies which have operated to sustain the persistence of national identities, to promote the access of indigenous elites to key positions within their own republics, and to finance compensatory social and economic development in the less developed regions. Indeed, these policies are now being challenged by an increasingly assertive Russian nationalism which argues that the Russian population has been more the victim than the beneficiary of the Soviet multinational state. The key policy dilemmas confronting the Soviet political elite today involve tensions between the increasingly assertive ethnonationalism of the non-Russian nationalities and a resurgent

Russian nationalism over the allocation of wealth, status and power in a variety of domains.

Soviet doctrine on the "national question"

Contrary to the assumption that Soviet doctrine on the "national question" reflects a monolithic, unchanging hostility to all manifestations of national consciousness, and a commitment to the assimilation or Russification of non-Russian nationalities, Soviet doctrine (as well as policy) embodies fundamental tensions, ambiguities, and inconsistencies. These are superficially papered over by an insistence on the "dialectical nature" of the relationship between the "flowering" and the "rapprochement" of nations, but in practice Soviet doctrine provides ideological legitimation for both. These ambiguities contribute to a continuous controversy over the balance to be struck between integrationist and pluralist emphases, a controversy that reflects the existence of powerful ideological and political constraints on the pursuit of rapid assimilation.

Moreover, Soviet doctrine has undergone significant reformulation in recent years, reflecting in part the process of de-Stalinization and in part the impact of serious ethnographic research on nationality questions since the 1960s. This reformulation includes:

--formal recognition of the durability of national identities, which, it is now conceded, will outlive class identities;

--formal recognition that the growth of national consciousness in a modern socialist society is a natural and regular (zakonomerno) trend which should not be confused with the growth of nationalism;

--an explicit repudiation of the view that the long-term goal of Soviet policy is the creation of a new Soviet nation based on the eradication of existing ethnic identities, and an insistence that the Soviet community is a supra-national community which does not abolish or supplant existing national or ethnic groups but represents a different level and form of association; (This reformulation has been obscured by the incorrect translation of the phrase sovetskii narod as "Soviet nation" instead of "Soviet people" in many American writings.)
--a still-controversial but increasingly widespread rejection of Stalin's definition of a nation, which encompassed only such objective characteristics as territory, language, and economy, and which confines the term to the capitalist and socialist eras, and its replacement by a new definition which gives a central place to the subjective criterion of self-consciousness and which extends the concept of nationhood back in time to a pre-capitalist era. This new definition represents a partial return to the views of the Austro-Marxists, particularly Otto Bauer, which were attacked by Stalin, and has important implications for the treatment of Jews, of the relationship of the two Germanys, and of emigre communities.

**Implications for Soviet policy-making**

The durability of national identities in the face of massive socio-economic modernization has challenged the earlier assumption—one with striking parallels in Western modernization theory—that national identities and loyalties were a dependent variable in the modernization process and that socio-economic development in a socialist system would produce an automatic and unilinear alteration of attitudes and behaviors. It has compelled Soviet policy-makers to confront the complexity of situational factors that shape the pace and direction of change, the limited impact of changes in some spheres (e.g., the workplace) on others (i.e., family customs and traditions), and the independent and reciprocal impact of differing national values and behaviors on economic and social outcomes, from migration patterns to intermarriage, to demographic behavior, to bilingualism. The implications of this finding for Soviet policy-making are very chastening indeed. As the distinguished Soviet ethnographer Iu. V. Arutiunian has put it, "If this conclusion is true, it means that there can be no universally valid means of improving ethnic relationships. A given technique may lead to different and sometimes even directly opposite results in different social groups."

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2. Iu. V. Arutiunian, "Konkretno-sotsiologicheskoi issledovanie natsional'nykh otnoshenii," *(Voprosy filosofii, no. 12, 1969).*
The scope and limits of ethnonational assertion

Notwithstanding the very considerable list of ethnonational grievances examined in this study, the political mobilization of ethnicity in the USSR is constrained by significant intrinsic and systemic factors. Some derive from the nature and function of ethnic identity itself; others from the nature of the Soviet system. The existence of multiple and crosscutting cleavages that are not cumulative and mutually reinforcing; the formidable coercive powers of the Soviet system; the substantial appeal to both the normative and material interests of national elites; and the general cohesion, confidence, and astuteness of the central elite are key regime assets in the management of national relations. For all these reasons, rising ethnonationalism is likely to pose increasingly difficult problems of management for the Soviet elite in the near and medium term, but unlikely—in the absence of an unusual conjunction of circumstances—to seriously threaten the stability of the Soviet system.

Implications for American policy

The conclusions presented here have a number of implications for American foreign policy, and in particular for the question of whether and to what extent Soviet vulnerabilities present Western political leaders with a unique opportunity to influence both the domestic and the foreign policy of the USSR, and if so, how best to make use of it. The study argues that:

--Soviet vulnerabilities with respect to its "internal empire" are relatively limited, in sharp contrast to the situation which prevails with respect to its "contiguous empire" in Eastern Europe.

--The United States has only limited ability to affect the Soviet internal scene, and even less of a capacity to directly influence Soviet external behavior via nationality policy, given the limited instruments available for this purpose. Broadcasting and information policy represent the most promising of these instruments, but have not been utilized as effectively as they might.
--There is a serious need to clarify American objectives in any such effort; unresolved contradictions among the assumptions and goals implicit in alternative strategies have made a number of initiatives counterproductive at best and sometimes detrimental to American goals.

--Any serious and sustained effort in this direction requires far greater expertise on and understanding of the complexities of the Soviet nationality scene, in general, and of the histories, cultures, social structures and contemporary mass and elite attitudes of specific nations and nationalities--particularly those of Central Asia--if it is to hold any promise of success.
I.

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

The rise of ethnonationalism in recent years—as widespread as it was unanticipated—has made ethnicity one of the most potent forces in contemporary international politics, as well as a major source of political instability. Neither developing nor highly industrialized systems have proved immune to the pressures of increased ethnic assertiveness. As Joseph Rothschild has put it, "though several newer 'isms' have arisen in the twentieth century, ethnic nationalism, or politicized ethnicity, remains the world's major ideological legitimator and delegitimator of states, regimes, and governments." \(^1\)

As one of the largest and most complex multinational states in the world—comprising some one hundred distinct nations and nationalities, 22 of which number over 1 million people each—the Soviet Union would seem to be singularly vulnerable to the destabilizing effects of rising ethnonationalism. Yet until quite recently the Soviet system appeared to be comparatively immune to the impact of ethnic self-assertion. Official writings repeatedly insisted that the Soviet Union had finally resolved one of the most difficult of all political problems and that by

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contrast with its tsarist predecessor, Soviet socialism had brought equality, prosperity, and harmony to its ethnically diverse population.

This optimistic assessment, however, has succumbed in recent years to a more somber recognition that from the Baltic republics to Soviet Central Asia rising national consciousness and self-assertion—among Russians and non-Russians alike—constitutes a growing political challenge. The "nationality question" has come to occupy an increasingly prominent place on the Soviet political agenda. As Andropov himself acknowledged in December 1982, on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the creation of the USSR:

Soviet successes in solving the nationalities question certainly do no mean that all the problems engendered by the very fact of the life and work of numerous nations and nationalities in the framework of a single state have disappeared. This is hardly possible as long as nations exist, as long as there are national distinctions, and they will exist for a long time, much longer than class distinctions.\(^2\)

If the nationality problem has come to occupy an increasingly important place on the Soviet policy agenda of the 1980s, it has become a central preoccupation, if not a virtual obsession, in Western analyses of the Soviet system. As a consequence of both the development of Soviet studies in the 1960s and 1970s, and of internal developments in the USSR,

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Western scholarship has taken on two new features in recent years. The first is a preoccupation with the destabilizing potential of politicized ethnicity, epitomized in the titles of two recent best-selling books: Helene Carrère d'Encausse's *L'Empire Éclaté*, (literally, the "exploding empire") and Alexandre Bennigsen and Marie Broxup's *The Islamic Threat to the Soviet State*. The second feature is a shift in the focus of interest, and the perception of vulnerability, from the more developed and Westernized regions of the USSR--the Ukraine and the Baltic--to Soviet Central Asia.

The ultimate threat, of course, is that of political fragmentation, and it is to this prospect that much of the recent Western discussion has been devoted. Richard Pipes, among others, has predicted that "sooner or later the Soviet empire, the last multinational empire, will fall apart roughly along the lines of today's republics," and Alexandre Bennigsen has given it only 10 or 20 years.³

The purpose of this study is to reassess the implications of rising ethnonationalism for the stability of the Soviet system on the basis of a close reading of relevant Soviet materials, and by looking at the Soviet case from a broader historical, theoretical

and comparative perspective. It argues that recent Western writings have tended to exaggerate the vulnerabilities—and underestimate the resilience—of the Soviet system in coping with the "nationality problem," and that in the short and medium term the fundamental challenge which ethnonationalism poses for the Soviet system is not so much the potential threat of destabilization or fragmentation but rather the ways in which it constrains and complicates the management of a series of key issues. The first argument is more fully developed in a separate article that forms part of the present research project ("Ethnonationalism and Political Stability: The Soviet Case," World Politics, July 1984), and is summarized only briefly here. The second is the subject of this report.

Drawing on a wide variety of Soviet sources, including regional as well as central publications (Party journals and handbooks, juridical and administrative publications on the federal system; ideological publications on nationality theory and practice; economic and statistical materials on regional resource allocation; demographic and census data; ethnographic studies; materials on language and education) as well as on interviews with a number of Soviet scholars and Party theorists concerned with different aspects of nationality policy, the study identifies and examines nine issue-areas in which the multinational character of the USSR creates significant dilemmas for Soviet institutions and policies, where major debates over the future direction of Soviet
policy can be traced in Soviet publications, and where the conflicting recommendations of the participants reflect divergent diagnoses, values, assumptions, objectives and institutional interests. These findings are summarized in Part II.

Part III of this report summarizes the range of policy options available to the Soviet leadership in addressing these issues, assesses the relative costs and benefits of three alternative strategies, and outlines the thrust of recent policy initiatives. A concluding section (Part IV) addresses the implications of this study for American policy, asking whether and to what extent Soviet vulnerabilities present Western political leaders with a promising opportunity to influence the domestic and foreign policies of the USSR and if so, how best to make use of it.
II.

THE IMPACT OF THE NATIONALITY PROBLEM ON THE SOVIET SYSTEM

The background

A fundamental tension lies at the very heart of Soviet nationality theory and practice. It is, as General Secretary Konstantin Chernenko put it in December 1982, "a problem that sometimes" evokes heated debates, "the problem of the relationship between the two leading trends in the development of nations under socialism: their all sided-development and flowering (rastsvet) on the one hand and their steady rapprochement (sblizhenie) on the other." 4

This tension between "flowering" and "rapprochement," which is embedded in the entire Soviet approach to managing a multinational state, has its origins in the conflict between the two major ideologies of nineteenth century Europe - nationalism and socialism. Nationalism identified the nation as the most basic human community, and the vertical ties that linked its members as the most compelling social identity, while socialism stressed the importance of the horizontal ties of social class

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that cut across national boundaries and viewed national identities as obsolete and destined to be superseded by a new international community. The essence of socialism was its hostility to nationalism; but the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 (and Marxist-Leninist movements in China, Cuba, and elsewhere) succeeded largely because of their ability to harness national movements to the cause of social revolution.

But that very success created a fundamental and insoluble problem for the new Soviet state. The "Leninist compromise" that created the federal Union committed it to granting political-administrative recognition and limited cultural autonomy to a variety of national groups, and to launching a massive program of economic and social modernization which would sustain and promote national development. Although a highly centralized party organization provided a powerful unifying force against the centrifugal pressures that the federal system might otherwise have generated, this arrangement nonetheless provided an organizational context, a political legitimacy, and a cultural impetus for the assertion of group interests, values, and demands.

At the same time, economic power and political control were concentrated in the hands of a predominantly Slavic central elite committed to eradicating ethnic nationalism and to promoting the long-term convergence of diverse nations and nationalities in a supra-national Soviet state—with all its connotations of
Russification. This thrust of Soviet strategy tended to undercut the commitment to diversity and heightened national resentment, consciousness, and self-assertion on the part of non-Russian elites.

Not surprisingly, the dualism embedded in the Soviet approach to managing a multinational state has been the source of a continuing controversy reaching to the very apex of the Soviet leadership. It is reflected as well in the debates that surround virtually every issue to be examined here.

In negotiating an appropriate balance between the "flowering" and the "convergence" of nations in a complex multinational state, in controlling a turbulent Eastern European empire, and in seeking to harness national liberation movements in the Third World to its larger political goals, the Soviet leadership has been obliged to confront recurrent nationalist challenges. In the process it has come to recognize that nationalism is a far more significant, ubiquitous, and tenacious force than had been assumed by the early socialist revolutionaries, or indeed by Lenin himself. Moreover, because the USSR was conceived as both a core and a model for a worldwide socialist system, the internal and international dimensions of the "national question" proved to be inextricably connected. Soviet nationality policy has continually impinged upon, and in turn been influenced by, wider foreign policy concerns.
The Problem of Ideological Legitimation

Nowhere in Soviet political life does rising ethnonationalism raise more crucial problems than in the legitimation of the Soviet system itself. The rise of both Russian and non-Russian nationalism, coinciding with the decline in the vitality and relevance of official ideology, exacerbates a long-standing problem in Soviet political culture: the tension between the internationalist ideology of Marxism-Leninism, which validates key features of the Soviet multinational state, and the unifying force of Soviet patriotism, which derives much of its power and appeal from its association with selected strands of Russian nationalism.

The relationship of nationalism and internationalism in Soviet political culture has long been a subject of controversy among Western scholars (as indeed among their Soviet counterparts). Some have emphasized the fundamental opposition of the two, and portray the Soviet regime as engaged in an implacable struggle against national values and traditions. Others, by contrast have argued that Soviet rule represents a fusion of Bolshevik ideology and Russian nationalism—a form of National Bolshevism, as several would call it—and view the remnants of internationalist ideology as a thin disguise for Russian domination.
Part of the disagreement stems from the variety of meanings associated with the term "Russian nationalism," which encompasses a broad spectrum of orientations toward the Soviet regime. But both these positions profoundly misunderstand the core dilemmas of the Soviet system today. It is precisely the fusion of Marxism-Leninism—with its powerful sense of historical mission and its universalistic perspective— with selective elements of traditional Russian political and cultural nationalism, reinforced by the global aspirations and satisfactions of superpower status, that forms the core of Soviet civic culture and endows it with both dynamism and mass appeal. There is an inherent and inescapable but genuine tension between the proclaimed "internationalism" of Soviet civic culture, on the one hand, and its implicit promotion of Russian political and cultural domination, on the other. This tension is both an asset and a liability for the system (and has important implications for Soviet foreign policy as well).

It has made possible an exceedingly astute, if delicately balanced, political strategy capable of eliciting the support of both Russian and non-Russian national elites because it is capable of legitimizing the claims of both. At the same time, it risks provoking their dissatisfaction and alienation. Its Russocentric thrust creates anxiety and antagonism among non-Russian elites, while its internationalism legitimizes the
claims of non-Russian elites and inhibits the unconstrained expression of Russian national values and interests.

The Soviet leadership must therefore tread a delicate line between acknowledging the legitimacy of growing national consciousness among Russians and non-Russians alike, while curbing undesirable manifestations of national egoism, chauvinism, and conflict. And it must do so in the exceptionally difficult circumstances of political uncertainty and competition that accompanies a major political succession, one involving not merely a replacement of key figures but broader generational change at the apex of the Soviet leadership.

The Future of the Federal System

The nationality problem creates particular difficulties for the governance of the Soviet state because of its interaction with the structure of the Soviet federal system. These difficulties can be traced in a protracted and continuing debate over the nature and future of Soviet federalism, and the balance to be struck between a unitary and centralized as opposed to a federal or pluralist conception of the Soviet Union.

This classic center-periphery conflict, which pits the interests of republic elites against those of the center, has its
origins, as we have seen, in the "Leninist compromise" which transformed the RSFSR into the USSR. Forced to grapple with the tsarist legacy and to combine political centralization with some form of administrative and cultural autonomy, Lenin opted for a federal system that granted limited political-administrative recognition to major existing national groups, fostered the creation of new nationalities, and committed the Soviet leadership to their economic and cultural development. At the same time, the centralization of economic power and political control in a unitary Party organization dominated by a largely Slavic elite, and pursuing a cultural policy which from the mid-1930s on contained a strong component of Russification, pulled in the direction of a more unitary system.

Despite the fact that the republics are formally endowed with many attributes of sovereignty, it is ultimately the center that defines the scope and limits of their jurisdiction; large areas of economic life are excluded from their direct control. Nonetheless, both the nature of the functions performed by the republics and, indeed, the very sanctity of the original federal arrangement have been the subject of continuing controversy. Under Stalin, several republics and autonomous areas were arbitrarily abolished; in some cases—as in the Crimean Tatar, Kalmyk and Chechen-Ingush republics—their populations were forcibly removed. Although these abuses were exposed and denounced by Khrushchev, they were not fully rectified; and it
was during Khrushchev's rule that the Karelo-Finnish Republic lost its status as a union republic. During the Brezhnev era, a prolonged controversy over the status and powers of the union republics again erupted, and indeed delayed the adoption of the 1977 Constitution. Although the debate appeared to revolve around the question whether Lenin viewed the creation of the federal structure as a temporary and tactical expedient or an expression of a durable political principle, more sensitive policy problems lurked beneath the surface. Moreover, while the new Constitution preserved the existing structure—although with some diminution of the republics' autonomy—Brezhnev's report about the discussion did not challenge the principle of a unitary system but indicated only that major changes were inexpedient at the time.  

5. For a discussion of the earlier controversies, see Grey Hodnett, "The Debate Over Soviet Federalism," Soviet Studies 18 (April 1967), pp. 458-481. Brezhnev's report of October 4, 1977, to the Supreme Soviet on the discussions of the draft constitution states that a number of proposals were advanced to introduce a reference to the existence of a single Soviet nation, to liquidate or sharply curtail the sovereignty of union and autonomous republics, and to establish a unicameral Supreme Soviet by abolishing the Soviet of Nationalities, but that such proposals were resisted as premature: (Izvestia, October 5, 1977). See also A. Shtromas, "The Legal Position of Soviet Nationalities and their Territorial Units According to the 1977 Constitution of the USSR," Russian Review, No. 3 (July 1980), pp. 265-72.
The debate was not ended by the adoption of the new constitution, but clearly continues to this day. Moreover, it has been given new impetus by controversies over current economic, political and demographic trends.

Advocates of reducing the role of the republics further, or of eliminating the federal republic altogether, urge their case on grounds of economic rationality (holding that existing boundaries are an obstacle to optimal economic planning); as a matter of political control (arguing that retention of the federal structure impedes political integration); and as a response to demographic trends (which have reduced the titular nationality to a minority in several union and autonomous republics). Defenders of existing federal arrangements cite Lenin on their behalf and assert that the federal system has by no means exhausted its utility and that its retention is a precondition for further rapprochement among nationalities.

6. For an informative Soviet treatment of current debates over the nature and future of the federal arrangement, see K.K. Karakeev, I. Ia. Kopylov, and R.A. Salikov, Problemy upravleniia stroitelyom sovetskogo mnogonatsional'noego gosudarstva, (Moscow: Nauka, 1982), pp. 260-298. For an example of advocacy of expanding the powers of the republics, see A. Agzamkhodzhaev, "Demokraticheskii tsentralizm i sovetskaia federatsiia," [Democratic centralism and the Soviet federation] Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i pravo no. 7, July 1983, pp. 24-31. Agzamkhodzhaev is Dean of the Law Faculty of Tashkent State University and a corresponding member of the Uzbek Academy of Sciences. I have thus far found no published advocacy of altering the federal system since the late 1960s either in official or samizdat writings.
Their insistence on the need for an exceptionally careful and sensitive approach is coupled with the scarcely-veiled warning that ill-considered measures would inflame national prejudices.

Thus, seemingly esoteric discussions of the durability of the federal republics, and of the conditions under which they might become superfluous in the future, represent a crypto-dialogue with considerable economic and political stakes. They also reflect an ongoing struggle by local elites in a highly centralized political and economic system to enhance the power and resources available to them, to expand the powers and autonomy of republic governments, to gain greater access by republics to central decision-making organs, and particularly to Gosplan (the State Committee for Planning), and to gain greater influence over those decisions. By adding an affective dimension to center-periphery conflicts, the characteristics of the Soviet federal system, with its reinforcement of national boundaries by political-administrative ones, complicates Soviet efforts to combine a high degree of centralization of power with responsiveness to local interests and demands.

Economic Management and Resource Allocation

The multinational and federal character of the Soviet system also complicates the handling of current economic problems. It is first of all a serious obstacle to centralized planning and management, and especially to the treatment of the USSR as a
single economic entity. The republics cut across natural economic regions; they enhance the leverage, however limited, of local national elites in promoting local interests; and they add an affective dimension to the interregional competition for resources and power.

At the same time, the symbiosis between regional and ethnonational interests is a deterrent to the decentralizing economic reforms that would give the Soviet system a badly-needed flexibility in deploying resources. As the brief Soviet experiment with economic decentralization under Khrushchev, and the experience of Yugoslavia in the 1970s suggest, the endemic problems of localism (mestnichestvo) and departmentalism, which continuously subvert central economic priorities and distort implementation, would only be compounded by reforms that devolved significantly greater power from the center to the periphery. These experiences reinforce the conviction of the current central economic and political elite that any dispersion of economic decision making, however essential to elicit initiative and make effective use of hidden reserves at the local level, would also subvert central priorities. Indeed, the Hungarian economic model has limited applicability to the Soviet scene precisely because of the absence in Hungary of comparable ethnoregional cleavages.

Multinationality not only complicates problems of economic organization and management; it also intensifies conflicts over
resource allocation. The pace and pattern of economic development have constituted a subject of real controversy, pitting the interests of different regions of the USSR against each other. Notwithstanding a formal commitment to reducing regional and ethnic inequalities, other priorities and pressures have tended to dominate Soviet investment policy. Moreover, since the early 1970s the trend toward regional equalization has largely come to an end, with central elites insisting it has largely been achieved and regional elites, especially from Central Asia, pointing to continuing major disparities.

Within the framework of a unified national economy based on regional specialization and a "fraternal division of labor," local elites have called for a more diversified and balanced pattern of economic growth within their republics, greater authority over economic and social development within their boundaries, and greater reliance on indigenous labor rather than on Slavic immigrants.

Moreover, declining rates of economic growth are exacerbating competition for investment among different regions with different resource endowments. The emphasis on Siberian development, flowing from its rich endowment of national resources and its geo-strategic significance, is challenged by the advocates of a "European strategy" who call for increased investments in Western regions of the country because their skilled labor forces, excellent transportation networks, and
nearby markets generate higher productivity. Siberian development is also challenged by those who seek increased investment in Central Asia, both to utilize a growing labor surplus and to promote greater equalization of the level of development among republics.

Regional demographic trends linked to national traditions compound these economic difficulties. Rapid population growth in Central Asia, coinciding with stable or declining birthrates in the more developed European regions of the country, increases the pressure for a reallocation of resources to the southern regions to maintain living standards and social infrastructure at existing levels, to provide expanded irrigation to sustain its agriculture, and to provide additional employment for new cohorts.

However, ethnic traditions also undercut the operation of conventional economic levers which might otherwise produce a more optimal allocation of labor resources among regions. In Central Asia in particular, social and cultural values are a major constraint on labor mobility, limiting the flow of surplus labor to regions of labor scarcity. Moreover, it would be extremely costly to provide the extraterritorial educational and cultural facilities—such as schools and newspapers in the native language—which might encourage groups to move from their national homelands to regions of labor scarcity. Thus, were the Soviet leadership to opt for a strategy requiring major new
investments in Central Asia, on the one hand, or were it to make a serious effort to shift some of its surplus labor to the east and north, on the other, it would be obliged to allocate substantial resources to the effort.

Nonetheless, while this competition over resource allocation generates considerable political and economic tension, it does not directly threaten the cohesion and stability of the system. Indeed, the very multiplicity of competing interests may enhance it by setting the interests of republics and regions against each other in ways that prevent unified resistance to the center.

Cadres Policy

Cadres policy poses still further dilemmas for the management of the Soviet system, involving sensitive issues of access to positions of political power. The nomenklatura has preserved the dominance of Slavic elites in the key positions of the political, military, and security apparatus not only in the central organs, but in the non-Russian republics as well. For example, while the first secretary of a republic's Communist Party is now customarily a member of the titular nationality, the second secretary, who controls cadre assignments, is usually a Russian or other Slav. Although the resentment generated by this
situation seldom reaches public expression, there is abundant evidence that indigenous elites are quietly promoting increased representation of local cadres in the political apparatus—and are reaping frequent criticism for substituting "local origins" for merit in appointments and promotions. As Politburo Candidate Boris Ponomarev pointedly reminded republic officials at the Riga Conference in June 1982, the authorities in every republic "serve the interests of all its laboring peoples regardless of whether they belong to the titular nationality." 7

This issue is all the more delicate because of earlier Soviet encouragement of "affirmative action" in access to higher education and desirable jobs outside the political apparatus. Throughout much of the history of Soviet rule, considerable efforts have been made to foster the emergence of indigenous elites in the non-Russian republics whose loyalty and cooperation would add legitimacy to Soviet rule. Preferential access to higher education and professional positions, particularly in the cultural arena, have helped to create a new native intelligentsia that has a stake in the achievements of Soviet power. At the same time, industrial development and broader modernization

brought with it a major influx of Russian and other Slavic settlers into urban centers in the non-Russian republics. They provided needed technical and administrative skills and, in return, enjoyed career opportunities and living conditions far above those they might have attained in the provincial capitals of the Russian Republic.

During the long period of economic and educational expansion, when opportunities for rapid upward mobility were widespread, these trends generated little friction between the local populations and the Slavic settler communities which led relatively separate lives. In recent years, however, shrinking opportunities have intensified the competition for scarce positions and have provoked controversy over whether the preferential treatment of local nationalities is justifiable under present conditions. In a veiled protest against the squeezing out of Russians from republic-level organs, one of several recent articles in Nauchnyi kommunizm (in good Leninist form, using members of national minorities to attack local chauvinism) declared:

Under conditions of mature socialism, when actual equality of nations and nationalities has been achieved in all spheres of life, when the population of the republics has become multinational, and the Russian language as a medium of international intercourse has become widespread, there is no longer any need in the selection of cadres to give preference to representatives of the indigenous nation to the detriment of other nationalities living in a given republic. Today an unconditional carrying out of the policy of "indigenization" of the party and state
apparatus would mean a limitation of the interests of the non-indigenous nationalities, the forgetting of the fact that all inhabitants of this or that republic, regardless of nationality, are bearers of the statehood of a given national republic and make a contribution to the development of its economy, science, and culture. Consequently neither absolutization or exaggeration of national identification, nor ignoring it or national nihilism is permissible in cadre policy.

The central leadership has sought to steer a delicate balance between the advocates and the critics of further "indigenization," but the emphasis is increasingly in favor of the latter. Brezhnev tactfully stated, in his speech to the 26th Party Congress:

The population of the Soviet republics is multinational. All nations, of course, have the right to be adequately represented in their Party and state organs. Needless to say, the competence and moral and ideological makeup of every candidate must be carefully scrutinized.

Andropov went a step further in expressing his concern in his 60th-anniversary speech:

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8. G.T. Tavadov, "O razvitii natsional'nykh otnoshenii v SSSR," Nauchnyi kommunizm, no. 5, (1981), pp. 11-21. In a similar vein, I.P. Tsamerian argues: "In the past, when actual equality among peoples had not yet been established, when there still existed significant survivals of the former backwardness of the indigenous nationalities in this or that republic, it was necessary to conduct a policy of indigenization of the apparatus....But under present conditions, ... when there are no longer any backward national districts, the need for such advantages no longer exists. "Vklad XXVI s'ezda KPSS v marksistsko-leninskuiu teoriiu natsional'nykh otnoshenii" Nauchnyi kommunizm, 4 (July-August 1981), pp. 63-64.
We are not talking about any formal norms of representation, of course. An arithmetic approach to the solution of such problems is inappropriate. But we must consistently seek to ensure that all nationalities present in a given republic be properly represented at various levels of Party and soviet agencies. Consideration of business, moral and political qualities, courtesy, thoughtfulness, and great tact in selecting and placing cadres are especially necessary in conditions of the multinational composition of the union and autonomous republics.

This set of issues creates a complex mosaic from republic to republic, pitting the demands of the titular nationality of a given republic against the interests not only of the Russian settler communities but often of other minority nationalities as well. It is therefore no accident that criticisms of the preferential treatment of local elites link the interests of local Russians and non-Russian minorities together as victims of these exclusionary practices.

Language and Cultural Policy

The status and recognition accorded various nationalities, whether in the treatment of their languages, history, cultural monuments, religion or customs and traditions, is yet a further source of policy problems for the current Soviet leadership.

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Within the overall framework of Soviet policy there are substantial variations in treatment of different issues across different republics and nationalities, shaped by a number of domestic and foreign policy considerations.  

Language policy has become especially sensitive in recent years. While basic instruction in the non-Russian republics is guaranteed in the local languages, Russian is the official language and its study as a second language is compulsory in native schools. (The extent of use of local languages at higher levels of instruction, and in various other domains, varies considerably among republics.) Moreover, upward mobility—especially in scientific and political arenas—depends on local elites' mastery of the Russian language and cultural norms, while Russians experience little pressure to master the languages of the republics in which they live and work. In this sense, Soviet bilingualism is asymmetrical, and a source of resentment. Consequently, shifts in language policy, which may have been intended to promote national integration, but which can be 

11. Armenia, for example, enjoys considerable opportunities for religious and cultural expression because of its relative ethnic homogeneity, the historical role of Russia as a protector of the Armenian people, and the fact that Soviet Armenia represents the homeland of an extensive diaspora. Lithuania represents a sharply contrasting case: continuing resentment at forcible incorporation into the USSR in the post-war period, a continuing orientation toward the West, and the influence of the Roman Catholic church among the local population intensify the suspicion of central elites that Lithuanian national consciousness has a strong anti-Russian and indeed anti-Soviet thrust.
interpreted as efforts at further Russification, have generated severe resistance and even massive demonstrations.

Moreover, despite the obvious limits placed on this process, Russian and non-Russian elites alike are engaged in exploring as well as glorifying "roots." The resurrection of folk heroes, both ancient and modern, including those previously under opprobrium; the purification of national languages and the exclusion of foreign borrowings; the evocation of group achievements; the concern with preserving the group's environment, both cultural and natural; and the defense of local traditions--from religious practices to family behavior--all involve the assertion of developing cultural identities and an effort to convert cultural traditions into a political resource.

Nationality and the Armed Forces

Soviet management of the ethnic dimension of military policy reveals a high sensitivity to its impact on military performance, and current strategy has both an integrationist and a preemptive aspect. Relying as they do on universal male conscription, the Soviet armed forces are assigned a major role in integrating diverse nationalities, socializing them into common norms of behavior, and imbuing them with a proper patriotic
consciousness. How successfully they do so by comparison with other multinational armies remains controversial.

Official Soviet claims of success are given indirect support by the testimony of a number of dissidents: the prominent Ukrainian nationalist Ivan Dzyuba, for example has described Soviet military service as a "denationalizing" experience that tears young people from their national roots. At the same time, there is ample evidence of ethnic friction and tensions within the armed forces and explicit calls in Soviet military publications for more decisive efforts to curb discriminatory attitudes and practices. The need for more widespread and effective "internationalist" and "patriotic" education and more emphasis on the achievements of Soviet nationality policy, has been virtually an obsession in recent Soviet writings.

Further complicating the tasks of the Soviet military is an inadequate knowledge of the Russian language--the language of command and control--by non-Russian conscripts, particularly from Central Asia, and their poorer educational and technical qualifications. As in the case of economic management, these difficulties are compounded by the rapidly increasing proportion of young Central Asians in the conscript pool. Between 1959 and 1970 the Muslim population increased some 45 percent, compared with 13 percent for the Great Russians. By the end of the century the share of the Muslim population in the all-Union total will not only exceed 20 percent but will also constitute close to
one-third of the draft-age cohort. Even if knowledge of Russian as a second language were rising as rapidly as Soviet census data indicate, (and Soviet scholars themselves are quick to point out the limitations of that data!) all the evidence suggests that the Soviet leadership is seriously concerned about the adequacy of that knowledge. This concern is clearly reflected in Politburo reports, in the stepped-up campaign to expand and intensify Russian language instruction in Central Asia, and in statements and resolutions that directly link this effort to military as well as to broader economic and social objectives.

Shortcomings in educational and linguistic preparation are also largely responsible for the de facto patterns of ethnic stratification within the Soviet military. Even if there is no discriminatory intent, uniform policies affecting recruitment and assignment will have a differential impact, given variations in education and skills among conscripts. Consequently, Central Asian conscripts tend to be disproportionately concentrated in noncombat units, such as construction battalions, and largely absent from branches that place a premium on sophisticated technical skills. Moreover, because the officer corps remains largely the preserve of Slavic elites, the prevalence of units in which non-Slavic troops are commanded by Slavic officers is a built-in source of tension. An effort appears to be under way to step up the recruitment and training of officers of non-Russian nationalities as well as to combat attitudes prejudicial to their
promotion. As a recent article in a Soviet military journal asserted, "the party constantly points to the necessity to be concerned that all nationalities of the country are adequately represented in military training institutions and in the Soviet officer corps." 12

National Differences and the Policy Process

The unexpected durability of national identities not only creates obstacles to the realization of important goals but also vastly complicates the entire Soviet policy-making process. Soviet nationality policy was premised on the expectation that economic development in a socialist society would produce fundamental behavioral and attitudinal changes. These changes would in turn facilitate the erosion of national differences and the gradual rapprochement and ultimate merger of distinct national entities. Much as in Western social-science literature, modernity was treated as a syndrome in which changes in virtually all spheres—from the workplace to family to life-style to religious beliefs—were functionally interrelated and would change together.

The mounting evidence of recent research by Soviet ethnographers has challenged many of these assumptions. It has become increasingly clear that not only do Soviet policies reshape national identities, but that nationality itself has an independent and reciprocal impact on economic and social behavior and on attitudes. The recognition of this fact has far-reaching ramifications for Soviet policy making that are just beginning to receive attention.

Unquestionably, Soviet development has brought about growing similarities in the life-styles, behaviors, and attitudes of the population. Moreover, these similarities are greater among younger cohorts than among their elders. Whether one looks at educational levels, occupational patterns, or the knowledge of Russian as a second language, earlier divergences among a variety of national groups have been substantially narrowed.

At the same time, however, a number of realms of behavior have proven highly resistant to change. The durability of national languages has been little affected by the spread of Russian as a second language. Endogamy remains the norm despite the increased intermixing of national groups in educational institutions and in the workplace (75 to 94 percent of the population of major nationalities live in ethnically homogeneous families, when mixed marriages do occur they tend to be concentrated within the core cultural group). Religious observances, especially where they are closely entwined with
national traditions, retain considerable vitality. In Central Asia, for example, nearly all families observe such rites as burial and circumcision, which have communal significance; many still observe religious rituals; and smaller numbers continue to adhere to social customs of religious origin.

Equally important, variations in attitudes and behaviors among different nationalities remain striking. Economic and political behavior appear to change more rapidly than social and cultural behavior; family and byt are especially tenacious. As Soviet investigations have repeatedly confirmed, where religious and national customs are closely entwined, new norms encounter greater resistance. Moreover, situational factors—such as urban or rural milieu, social class, and ethnic environment (Russian, mixed, or native)—help shape the direction and pace of change. Language itself appears to be an important determinant of attitudes and behavior, especially with respect to intermarriage and migration. Finally, Soviet research has demonstrated that attitudes in one sphere do not necessarily carry over into another; there may be no single syndrome of "ethnic modernity."

The implications of these findings for Soviet policy-making are both far-reaching and chastening, given the official commitment to directed social change. As the distinguished Soviet ethnographer, Yuri V. Arutiunian, has suggested: "If this conclusion is true, it means that there can be no universally valid means of improving ethnic relationships. A given technique
may lead to different and sometimes even directly opposite results in different social groups.\textsuperscript{13}

The Nationality Question and Soviet Security: Domestic/Foreign Policy Linkages

The impact of the nationality question on Soviet security is a sufficiently important issue to be singled out for separate treatment. Throughout its history the Soviet regime has been exceedingly sensitive to the double-edged nature of the linkages between domestic security concerns and foreign policy objectives. On the one hand, Soviet nationalities (and foreign minorities) have been important assets in expanding Soviet influence and power beyond its borders. On the other hand, the presence of nationalities and minorities is a source of vulnerability: at a minimum, a constraint on domestic policy; at a maximum, a channel for outside penetration. Not surprisingly, Soviet policy has attempted to exploit these assets while insulating the Soviet system from foreign contagion.

In the recent past, (leaving aside the cases of nonterritorial nationalities, notably the ethnic Germans,

Koreans, and the Jews) four important national groups have been particularly affected by developments outside Soviet borders: the Ukraine during the Czechoslovak crisis of 1968; the Baltic states during the Polish events of 1980-82; Central Asian border nationalities during the conflicts between the Soviet Union and China; and the central Asian Muslim populations in the wake of the revival of Muslim fundamentalism in Iran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. All these cases demonstrate the considerable, but not unlimited, ability of the Soviet system to insulate internal developments from external influences.

The Sino-Soviet case poses the fewest problems for Soviet policy. China's strongly assimilationist treatment of national minorities historically held little appeal for the ethnic group on the Soviet side of the border. Notwithstanding Chinese efforts to portray the Soviets as "heirs of the tsars" in their imperial proclivities, the Mongols, Uighurs, and Kazakhs on the Chinese side of the border have been more vulnerable to appeals from the Soviet Union than vice versa. The recent shift in Chinese policy in the direction of more tolerant treatment of national minorities may reduce Chinese vulnerabilities in this area, but in the short run it is unlikely to dramatically alter Soviet assets in this competition.

The linkages between Soviet nationality questions and foreign policy concerns were considerably stronger in the case of the "Prague Spring" of 1968. For at least some members of the
Soviet leadership, most notably Petro Shelest', then a Politburo member and first secretary of the Ukrainian Communist party, the fear that liberalizing trends in Czechoslovakia would exacerbate liberal and national dissidence within the Ukraine, which shared a common border with Czechoslovakia, was an important motive in their advocacy of Soviet intervention. What made this linkage particularly important was the combination of parallel ideological and political cleavages in both Czechoslovakia and the Ukraine, (which made the Czech reforms a relevant model), and the factional conflicts within the leadership in both Kiev and Moscow over the handling of such challenges at home and abroad. It remains unclear to what extent Shelest' was responding to genuine contagion and to what extent events offered him a welcome opportunity to crack down. Whatever the appeal of the Czech reform program, Soviet intervention also triggered a tightening of domestic control, effectively ending any further reverberations in the Ukraine.

The impact of Polish developments since 1980 on the Baltic republics has some parallels to the case of Czechoslovakia and the Ukraine; both involved a national as well as a sociopolitical dimension in the affected region not found elsewhere in the USSR. Close historical and cultural affinities as well as common grievances against Moscow, reinforced in Lithuania by religious ties (but tempered by mutual animosities), heightened sensitivity to Polish events. Repercussions were most evident in Estonia,
where they reportedly triggered work stoppages, youth rebellions, and intelligentsia protests. But even here, where a strong sense of national identity provided a potential bridge between workers and intelligentsia, and where a deteriorating economic situation fueled popular discontent, the failure to develop such a coalition is a reminder of the obstacles to emulating the Polish experience within the USSR and of the enormous gulf that separates East European socio-political trends from those of the Soviet Union. Nonetheless, it is clear even from published sources that the Soviet leadership has been exceptionally nervous about the possible spillover of unrest from Poland and its exploitation by "bourgeois" propagandists, and has sought to respond to grievances by a sophisticated mix of repression and redress.

The fourth example of domestic/foreign linkages, involving the Soviet southern tier, remains an open case. The potential impact of a revival of Islamic fundamentalism in the Middle East on the Soviet nationalities of Central Asia has virtually eclipsed the West's preoccupation with the Baltic states and the Ukraine as the potentially weakest links in the Soviet internal empire. A number of commentators have argued that the single most profound cleavage within the Soviet system is the division between its Muslim populations (using the term to connote a broad cultural identity, rather than religious beliefs) and the rest of the population. Linked by history and culture to the East,
endowed by Soviet rule with new resources, skills, and claims, represented by increasingly assertive local elites who, in their view, pay lip service to Soviet values while retaining a strong identification with local culture, and increasingly aware of developments in the Muslim world outside Soviet borders, these populations, it is argued pose the single most serious threat to the future stability of the Soviet system. Indeed, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, in this view, was propelled by Soviet anxiety over the danger of contagion—an anxiety which was partly justified when the unreliability of Central Asian troops allegedly forced their early withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Without denying the evidence of genuine Soviet concern about the potential use of Islam to the detriment of Soviet interests, it is important not to exaggerate the concern of the Soviet leadership about the loyalty of its Central Asian population nor to underestimate the degree to which it perceives that political instability in the Middle East provides opportunities for, as well as dangers to, Soviet strategic interests. The invasion of Afghanistan surely increased, rather than diminished, the exposure of the Soviet Union's southern region to possible contagion from abroad, as does the substantial reliance on Central Asian cadres in building a new administrative and cultural infrastructure in the occupied regions of Afghanistan, and must have reflected a certain confidence that exposure to Afghanistan would hold no irreversible attractions for Soviet
Central Asians. The military difficulties of the initial months of the invasion were largely due to the inadequate combat readiness of the reserve units that bore the brunt of the invasion, rather than evidence of disaffection among conscripts and the subsequent replacement of these units a matter of routine rotation practice. Finally, the ability of the Soviet armed forces to assert control in Afghanistan at comparatively low cost, and with exceedingly limited domestic repercussions, belied early prophecies of severe difficulties. In short, the "Iranian scenario" should not too readily be transposed to the radically different socio-political context of Soviet Central Asia. A responsible assessment of long-term trends in this region requires a much deeper analysis of current economic, political and social developments, a more sophisticated historical and comparative perspective, and a better understanding of the impact of diverse socio-political contexts on Islamic movements, than has characterized discussions of Soviet Central Asia's future to date.

These four cases of domestic/foreign linkages suggest that, by contrast with earlier stages of Soviet development when the presence of certain national minorities constituted a distinct foreign policy asset that could be exercised on behalf of expanded Soviet influence over neighboring states, in the current period the multinational character of the Soviet Union imposes increasingly substantial costs. The greater openness of the
Soviet system to developments outside its borders than prevailed during the Stalín years has increased Soviet vulnerability to external influences even as it has brought important benefits. The growing salience of foreign policy on the Soviet political agenda, combined with the presence of important domestic/foreign linkages resulting from the concentration of non-Russian populations on the border regions of the USSR, has created an indissoluble link between the domestic and international dimensions of Soviet nationality policy.

Thus, even if the Soviet system retains its considerable capacity to insulate domestic developments from external influences, and even if the emergence of genuine ethnonational movements with separatist goals remains a highly unlikely prospect—whether in Central Asia or in other regions of the USSR—the nationality question will raise increasingly difficult problems of management for the Soviet leadership in the years ahead. It will constrain and complicate the resolution of many key problems that the Soviet system faces in the 1980s and will compel the Soviet leadership to make difficult and unwelcome choices among a limited range of policy options.
Policy Options and Trends

The view that the USSR is already experiencing an "ethnic crisis," or that scope and intensity of rising ethnonationalism is likely to become unmanageable in the very near future, has been widely expressed in Western publications. Such expectations are exaggerated. The Soviet system possesses important assets as well as liabilities in the management of ethnic tensions, and it is by no means inevitable that rising national consciousness will culminate in secessionist movements. A sophisticated combination of effective coercion, co-optation of local elites, and partial accommodation of national cultures has enabled the Soviet system to displace or exploit national aspirations in ways that have maintained the overall stability of the system. The more difficult but more fundamental question is whether the successful management of the nationality question in the years ahead will require increasingly costly changes in key Soviet institutional arrangements and policy orientations, and to what extent these might adversely affect other core priorities.

The Soviet Union can address its national relations in one of three ways. The first would be a coercive, centralizing and Russifying strategy designed to solidify the regime's support by the core Russian population and elites even at the cost of greater alienation of the non-Russian populations. This strategy's ideological expression would be a greater tilt toward
Russian nationalism and increased emphasis on the rapprochement rather than the flowering of national cultures. The central organs would be strengthened at the expense of the republics, and would reassert the dominance of Slavic elites, reverse the trend toward "indigenization" of local Party and administrative organs, and reject "affirmative action" programs as no longer needed at the present stage of Soviet development. Stepped up economic integration and a diminution of the republics' control over economic and social policy within their borders would be accompanied by investment policies designed to shift surplus labor from Central Asia to regions of labor shortage, possibly involving compulsory assignment of secondary-school graduates to work outside their native republics. Cultural and linguistic Russification would be intensified, and the development of local schools and the use of local languages would be sharply curtailed.

A second and opposite strategy would seek to accommodate the interests and aspirations of the non-Russian populations within the framework of a more genuinely federal system. It would promote greater autonomy, pluralism, and decentralization, in the expectation that a consociational system based on greater equality and reciprocity among national groups would be more stable than one based on hierarchy and Russification. It would build as well upon the internationalist strains of Soviet ideology, giving greater emphasis to the development of national
cultures. Political and economic integration would still be promoted but as a functional requisite of a modern industrial society; it would be dissociated as far as possible from Russocentrism. The status and powers of the republics would be enhanced, the representation of non-Russians in the central political and economic organs would be increased,--and to create a more genuinely federal system--the Russian republic would be endowed (as are all the non-Russian republics) with party organs of its own. A more balanced pattern of economic development within republics might well be promoted, even at the partial expense of a "fraternal division of labor," as well as cultural and linguistic pluralism, including the requirement that Russians themselves be obliged to learn as a second language one of the national languages of the USSR. Needless to say, the perceived costs of such a strategy would be exceedingly high, and its prospects minimal; not only would it challenge fundamental Soviet institutional arrangements, but it would also simultaneously risk alienating the Russian majority and stimulating, rather than satisfying, the appetites and aspirations of the non-Russian nations and nationalities.

A third possible strategy--and indeed one that is most closely approximated by recent Soviet policies--is a bifurcated one, based on a more aggressive approach to core economic and political priorities and their "decoupling" from social and cultural issues which are defined as secondary. It would involve
a sharpened focus on political and economic integration, combined with a greater recognition of, and tolerance for, the durability of national identities and a less confrontational approach to national cultural concerns.

The contours of such a strategy are outlined in a number of speeches and articles by key party leaders in the past few years, as well as by the recommendations of several recent major conferences devoted to national relations. At the top of the list of core priorities is the pursuit of accelerated economic integration and improved efficiency. The effective use of scarce resources requires, in this view, greater freedom of action for central planning agencies and the increased subordination of regional and republic interests to national needs. The optimal allocation of both capital and labor is likely to lead to greater regional differentiation rather than equality, and to benefit those more developed regions where the returns to investment are greatest, or those, like Siberia, which are rich in energy and other resources.

Enhanced political and ideological integration represents a second core priority in this emerging strategy. The term sblizhenie is increasingly focused on political and ideological rapprochement rather than on cultural assimilation or Russification. The new emphasis on the "Soviet people" as a new social community is intended both to emphasize cohesion and integration and to distinguish Soviet citizenship from
traditional national affiliations. This terminology gives more explicit recognition and legitimation to the dual identity embodied in simultaneous membership in a national group and in the Soviet supranational community.

At the same time, to the extent that this integration is promoted by the retention of an adequate Russian presence in local party and state institutions, it is associated with muted but unmistakable resistance to the gradual squeezing out of Russian cadres. The repeated emphasis in recent Soviet speeches on the multinational character of the republics, and on the right of all nationalities to be adequately represented in republic organs, is clearly directed against what is perceived as excessive pressures for indigenization by local national elites.

Accelerated Russian-language training is another key component of the emerging strategy. Instruction is now to begin at pre-school levels, and to be expanded both within and outside educational institutions, in an effort to spread bilingualism throughout the younger generation of non-Russians. Military concerns clearly occupy an important place in this effort as the demographic explosion in Central Asia alters the ethnic composition of the conscript pool. But it is also linked to an effort to promote a redistribution of manpower from labor-surplus to labor-scarce regions of the country, which in part depends on transforming the attitudes as well as the skills of the younger generation, especially in Central Asia, so it will feel more
comfortable in mixed ethnic environments.

This more aggressive approach to core economic and political priorities is coupled with an apparent effort to relieve some of the anxieties and tensions in Soviet national relations by less confrontational approaches to some aspects of national identity and culture. The most dramatic element of this new approach is the treatment of the persistence and even growth of national consciousness as a natural and lawful process, (clearly to be distinguished from nationalism). National identities are now recognized to be more stable and enduring phenomena than had previously been acknowledged, and have even been described in authoritative publications as "in principle ... indestructible."\textsuperscript{14} The revival of the term sliianie (merger) under Andropov occurred in a context that postponed its advent to a very distant communist future, and which stripped it of any connotation of biological fusion.

Not only does this new formulation provide official legitimation for concerns of national elites that might otherwise be deemed provocative; it can also be used in support of initiatives that seek to accommodate national diversity. Moreover, increased attention is being paid to reducing the

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\textsuperscript{14} For example, by a key Party theoretician and editor of Kommunist, the Party's ideological journal, R.I. Kosolapov, "Klassovye i natsional'nye otnosheniiia na etape razvitogo sotsializma," Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniia no. 4, (1982), p. 15.

- 43 -
specific conditions and behaviors which exacerbate national tensions both in research and in policy. Within the military, for example, increased emphasis on Russian language study has been accompanied by measures that allow the use of non-Russian languages in non-command situations, and which allow conscripts (and indeed all Soviet citizens) to subscribe to newspapers and journals in their native languages. Soviet officers as well as party and state officials have been urged to display greater sensitivity to national differences and customs in order to enhance effectiveness, and have been reminded that "negative phenomena" in national relations cannot be treated simply as vestiges of the past "but are sometimes nourished by our own mistakes."15

Andropov's call for the development of a "well thought-out, scientifically based nationalities policy," coupled with growing interest and support for policy-relevant social science research on ethnic relations in recent years, suggests that at least part of the Soviet leadership is persuaded that ethno-sociological research and not merely ideological dogma should play a major role in the further development of the theory and practice of nationality policy. In the last analysis, top party leaders retain the ultimate power to define the bounds of the

permissible, but they appear to be extending the limits of indigenous cultural expression in what may well constitute more sophisticated central management of the Soviet multinational state.
IV.

Implications for U.S. Policy

This analysis of the impact of the nationality problem on the Soviet system raises a fundamental question for American policy: whether and to what extent Soviet vulnerabilities present Western political leaders with a unique opportunity to influence both the domestic and the foreign policy of the USSR, and if so, how best to make use of it.

The question is by no means a novel one. Support for the liberation of the "captive nations" of the USSR constituted an important strand of postwar American strategies for containing Soviet power, and controversies over the scope, instrumentalities, and objectives of such efforts engaged the attention of leading figures within and outside the government.

From the very beginning, two distinct policy orientations contested for influence. While ethnic constituencies sought to focus attention on the plight of the non-Russian "captive nations," and to win support for a pattern of covert and overt activities on their behalf, a somewhat different but influential strand of thought, centered within the State Department and shared in particular by prominent diplomats such as George Kennan, Charles Bohlen, and Llewellyn Thompson, held that such an emphasis was either irrelevant or counterproductive. As a matter of principle, they argued, the United States should identify
itself with the right of self-determination but not with any particular outcome; as a matter of politics, it should not assume that nationalist or separatist emigre organizations necessarily reflected the dominant views of their compatriots within the Soviet Union; and as a matter of tactics, the United States should not associate itself with policies that would only antagonize or alienate the majority of the Soviet population by reviving fears of "dismemberment" identified with the German occupation. The United States, Kennan argues, had only a limited ability to accelerate changes within the communist world. Ultimately, the most corrosive influence of all would be the success of Western democracy itself.

The changes in the Soviet Union which followed the death of

16. In characteristically nuanced fashion, George Kennan argued that "there is no more difficult and treacherous" issue than the Soviet nationality question. "In the relationships between the Great-Russian people and nearby peoples outside the confines of the old tsarist empire, as well as non-Russian national groups that were included within that empire, there is no conceivable pattern of borders or institutional arrangements which, measured against the concepts prevailing today, would not arouse violent resentments and involve genuine injustices in many quarters. If people in that part of the world are going to go on thinking of national borders and minority problems in the way that they have thought of them in the past and continue to think of them today, Americans would do well to avoid incurring any responsibility for views or positions on these subjects; for any specific solutions they may advocate will some day become a source of great bitterness against them, and they will find themselves drawn into controversies that have little or nothing to do with the issues of human freedom." (George F. Kennan, "American and the Russian Future," Foreign Affairs, April 1951, reprinted in Kennan, American Diplomacy, 1900-1950, (University of Chicago Press, 1951), p. 140.
Stalin, the gradual waning of the Cold War, and the pursuit of Soviet-American detente pushed into the background the effort to exploit the nationality question as an instrument of American policy. Government-sponsored efforts to organize the emigres as potential counter-governments largely came to an end. To the extent that American policy focused on the management of Soviet-American competition and sought to influence the Soviet leadership's behavior in the international arena in the direction of greater reciprocity and restraint, it involved at least a tacit acceptance of the legitimacy of its rule.

In the case of Eastern Europe as well as the USSR itself, policy shifted away from attacks on the Soviet suppression of national independence to efforts to draw the Soviet leadership into commitments to respect and expand civil and human rights. A particularly visible expression of this shift was the renaming of Radio Liberation to Radio Liberty and a change from its confrontational posture to one which supported the peaceful liberalization of the Soviet system.\(^{17}\) Such an approach required a willingness to forego the possible political benefits of exploiting Soviet vulnerabilities in favor of promoting more cooperative Soviet behavior and perhaps genuine improvements in the conditions of life within the USSR and Eastern Europe.\(^{18}\)


\(^{18}\) It is not without interests that these developments also coincided with a trend in the social science literature on nation-building noted in an earlier paper in this series to minimize the potential force of ethno-nationalism in modern societies and to emphasize the corrosive effect of modernization on traditional values and solidarities.
The demise of detente and the revival of more confrontational military and economic strategies toward the Soviet Union in the late 1970's revived pressures for a more active campaign of political and ideological warfare. To threaten to exploit what the Soviets themselves must surely perceive as a key vulnerability--the nationality problem--seemed, in this view, both a less costly and a more effective deterrent of Soviet expansionism than previous American strategies.

While they may not have been integrated into a single comprehensive policy paper, a whole gamut of proposals has been put forward in recent years by which the United States would in effect make itself the champion of the non-Russian nationalities against the Russians, exacerbating existing cleavages or manipulating them in ways that would, at a minimum, deter undesirable Soviet behavior and, at a maximum, would bring about changes in the Soviet system itself.

These proposals have focused on five particular instruments available to the United States in seeking to affect Soviet behavior. The US could seek to promote its objectives

--through declaratory policies favoring self-determination of populations within the Soviet Union;

--through broadening its support for human rights to make national rights of Soviet citizens a central concern, and pressing the issue of Soviet discrimination at international meetings, conferences and organizations;
--through expanding its information programs, and particularly its radio broadcasts in the non-Russian languages of the USSR, to provide a surrogate free press capable not only of rectifying omissions and distortions in the Soviet treatment of the histories, cultures, and contemporary life of these peoples, but of contributing thereby to support for alternative values and systems of meaning;

--through public announcement of, and preparations for, and ethnically-differentiated military strategy that would concentrate strategic targeting on the Russian areas of the USSR; 19

--and through covert activities, perhaps in collaboration with the regimes in neighboring states.

The attractiveness of such options derives from the perception that, by contrast with the Soviet dissident movement, which was largely confined to intellectual strata in a small number of urban centers, national movements have a potentially broad popular base. Moreover, because of the concentration of non-Russian minorities in the sensitive borderlands adjoining Eastern Europe, the Middle East and China, their activities would impinge more directly on central Soviet security concerns.

Notwithstanding the considerable attention given these issues in recent years, what is striking is the fragmentation of United States policies and practices to date and the absence of any coherent overall approach.\(^20\) The formal position of the U.S. Government, which supports the principle of self-determination of all peoples without prejudging the future shape of the present Soviet Union (except for the Baltic States, whose independence the United States continues to recognize), is contradicted by the statements of key Administration figures who argue that a breakup of the Soviet Union is a precondition for a stable relationship between the Soviet Union and the rest of the world.\(^21\)

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20. In the case of Radio Liberty, the problem is not the absence of policy guidelines, but the fact that (a) these remain too general to be readily applied in particular circumstances, and (b) there is no adequate mechanism to enforce the implementation of any policy guidelines.

21. In the past few years such views have been publicly espoused by the National Security Advisor (Zbigniew Brzezinski), the Chief of Army Intelligence (William E. Odom), and a Special Advisor on Soviet Affairs to the National Security Advisor (Richard E. Pipes). Congressional resolutions calling for the liberation of "captive nations," typically including the Ukraine, Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Turkestan, and other Soviet republics, similarly contradict formal recognition of the territorial integrity of the Soviet state.
An additional element of incoherence is provided by the conflicting orientations and recommendations of competing political and ethnic lobbies, augmented in recent years by the third wave of emigration from the Soviet Union. The previous emphasis in American policy on the grievances of the non-Russian nationalities is now aggressively challenged by Russian nationalists like Solzhenitsyn and their American supporters who argue that the unique suffering of the Russian population entitles it to treatment as the victim rather than as the beneficiary of Soviet rule, and who seek to shift the emphasis of American policy from support of non-Russian "captive nations" to support for Russian "national revival." Radio broadcasting into the USSR has been a particular target of such efforts, and in the absence of experienced American management attuned to the complexities of emigre politics and in a position to closely supervise the content of broadcasts, violations of policy guidelines have proven difficult to police.22

While detailed recommendations for American policy are clearly beyond the scope of this paper, four broad guidelines are suggested by this study. The first is the importance of caution. While the nationality issue is an increasingly sensitive one within the Soviet system, it is important to distinguish problems from exploitable vulnerabilities. The U.S. has a 

long history of identifying a succession of problems in the Soviet system as crises, and the Soviets have an equally long history of managing them. Moreover, while Soviet vulnerabilities in Eastern Europe are very real, whatever opportunities they generate cannot be readily applied to the very different internal Soviet scene. The nationalism which challenges Soviet rule in Poland has no counterpart in the USSR; on the contrary, patriotism and a strong component of chauvinism reinforce Soviet rule there.

Secondly, the need for a clarification of American objectives is exceedingly great. The use of the nationality question in a campaign of political warfare against the USSR requires a very different approach from one designed to exercise leverage over Soviet actions or one designed to improve the conditions of national groups inside the Soviet Union. The choice of strategies is also inseparable from their object: an effort to influence established national elites demands different instruments from one directed at dissidents; radio broadcasts directed at a Russian audience are likely to backfire if they glorify the Vlasov army.

A clarification of American objectives requires first and foremost a more adequate assessment of the internal tensions and cleavages to be exploited by American policy, and of the costs and benefits of alternative strategies. At least four sets of options present themselves, resting on different assumptions
about national relations within the USSR and seeking to promote
different objectives. A first approach, premised on the
expectation that a heightening of any and all internal tensions
and cleavages would serve to weaken central control and produce
more pliant Soviet behavior in the international arena, would
seek to exacerbate national grievances and antagonisms within the
USSR wherever possible. Even if we were to assume that the US
has the capability significantly to affect these grievances, the
premise itself is unsupported by historical experience.

A second option, based on the judgment that American
interests would best be served by exploiting the cleavage that
divides the regime from its population, would focus less on
antagonisms among national groups and appeal rather to the common
grievances of all populations against the center.

A third option would treat the Soviet regime as an
expression of the interests of its Russian social and political
base, and direct its appeal to the non-Russian minorities as well
as Russian dissenters. Whether the primary thrust should be
directed at the Baltic states, the Ukraine, or at Central Asia
would depend on differing assessments of the potential for
alienation in different regions, but it should be clear that such
a strategy would evoke profound hostility within the
Russian majority and solidify its own support for the regime.23

23. For a discussion of the spectrum of views of Russian
nationalists about the national question, see Yaroslav Bilinsky,
"Russian Nationalism and the Soviet Empire" (paper presented at
13th National Convention of AAASS, 1981), and John Dunlop The
Many Faces of Russian Nationalism (Princeton University Press,
1984).
A fourth and final option, which assumes a fundamental cleavage between the Soviet regime and the Russian population (and even views it as allied with the non-Russians), would seek to avoid antagonizing Russian national and imperial aspirations by refusing support to non-Russian minorities, leaving the nationality question to be resolved by a future Russian national state. These four options obviously represent ideal types; in practice, policies embody an amalgam of approaches rather than a consistent single pattern. The purpose of sketching them here is to provide a framework for clarifying conflicting assumptions and objectives, and a reminder that each of these approaches entails significant costs.

Even were American objectives to be clarified and a more coherent strategy developed, effective programs in this area would also demand an expertise that is virtually absent in either government or academia. Extensive knowledge of, as well as a genuine feel for, the cultures and languages and contemporary problems of the area are an indispensable condition for sound policy-making and effective implementation. To take just one example, an adequate research base is badly needed to assure the accuracy and quality of radio broadcasts, especially when they are addressed to regions like Central Asia, about which information is relatively sparse and from which there are few native informants in this country. It might also be added that a demonstration of respect and concern for a given culture is an important ingredient of a successful policy, and that the highest
form of respect is knowledge and understanding. At present the
instruments for such an effort are largely lacking.

Finally, we should be wary of assuming that national movements--
Russian or non-Russian--will be favorably disposed toward, or
share, liberal and democratic values. As the history of Soviet
dissident movements, as well as of the emigration, amply demon-
strates, they may well espouse authoritarian, chauvinistic, or
even xenophobic policies, or manifest hostility toward Western
civilization in general. The encouragement of anti-Soviet atti-
tudes is not tantamount to the promotion of pro-Western ones.

The past record of American involvement in such efforts has
all too often been marked by excessive expectations, inadequate
knowledge of area and people, and limited experience in managing
the intricacies of foreign intrigues with the necessary sophisti-
cation. The impulse to exploit Soviet vulnerabilities in this
complex and delicate area needs to be balanced by a cool assess-
ment of American capabilities and of potential risks as well as
benefits.