

(3) Khrushchev ushered in an ideological revolution of unprecedented proportions. The key elements of the Stalinist worldview were discarded, and a new perspective was embraced which was far more hopeful and self-confident. For the first time, the doctrinal foundations for a policy of long-term East-West co-operation were created. However, Khrushchev's intense optimism also had its negative side. His belief that history was on the side of communism led to a restless probing of the West's weak spots. The ensuing crises prevented a durable improvement in Moscow's relations with the outside world.

(4) Brezhnev promoted the detente of the early 1970s, the most significant thawing of East-West relations to date. Yet this detente was ultimately doomed to collapse because of his failure to build upon the ideological innovations introduced by Khrushchev and his conviction, which was rooted in an unquestioned adherence to traditional perspectives, that the Soviet Union should endeavour to tip the "correlation of forces" in its favor through an extensive military buildup.

(5) Although the Gorbachev era is just beginning and its final contours have not yet solidified, there is a sound basis for cautious optimism about the nature and direction of his "new thinking." Gorbachev's initial reformulations of Soviet ideology have been limited and circumspect, but they suggest that traditional Soviet assumptions about international security, the nature of war, and the opportunities for international co-operation may all be undergoing a searching re-examination within the Kremlin. Already, this process has had a tangible impact on the day-to-day conduct of Soviet foreign policy (e.g., by promoting the successful conclusion of a treaty eliminating intermediate-range nuclear missiles, by facilitating Soviet acceptance of intrusive on-site verification of arms control, and by encouraging the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan). If present trends continue, Gorbachev may yet preside over a doctrinal revolution even more far-reaching than Khrushchev's, one that could set the stage for a truly historic transformation of East-West relations in the years ahead.