

subject only to commentary.”¹²¹ His close associate on the Politburo, Aleksandr Yakovlev, has warned against viewing “science as a set of infallible ‘truths’ and propositions,” and has declared that the “ideological-theoretical underpinning of restructuring presupposes the scrapping of dogmatism. . .”¹²²

Gorbachev’s most urgent objective is to foster a new climate within the Soviet Union, one that is supportive of far-reaching economic change. But if domestic policy is in the process of being questioned and rethought, is foreign policy likely to remain immune from this process for long? Brezhnev’s occasional homilies on the dangers of a nuclear catastrophe were embedded in speeches which were pervaded by traditional thinking and complacent self-congratulation. Gorbachev’s statements on the dangers posed by a nuclear holocaust have differed from Brezhnev’s, not just because they have been stated more forcefully and with a greater sense of urgency, but because they have come against the backdrop of a genuine assault on unimaginative and out-dated thinking. Gorbachev’s remarks on foreign policy have been made at a time of new dynamism in Soviet society and politics. The call for “new thinking” in international politics clearly does not constitute a doctrinal revolution, but neither can it be dismissed as a carefully executed hoax designed solely to mislead the West.

The skeptics are clearly correct in pointing out that for all the talk about *glasnost*, there has not been as yet much openness in the Soviet Union when it comes to discussing how foreign policy was conducted in the pre-Gorbachev period and in indicating how it might be reformed. However, while a veil of silence has been drawn across the public discussion of Soviet foreign policy, this does not mean that it has escaped a critical re-examination within the private confines of the Party apparatus and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. On the contrary, the available evidence suggests that Gorbachev and his associates are highly dissatisfied with the the past conduct of Soviet

¹²¹ *Kommunist*, 1987, No. 3, p. 7.

¹²² *C.D.S.P.*, XXXIX, No. 15, 1987, p. 1.