

As part of this new approach, he called for broad international efforts to create a “comprehensive system of international security” which would encompass not just the military dimension but political, economic, and humanitarian aspects as well.⁸²

In addition to de-emphasizing the military component of security, Gorbachev also called for a less self-centred approach to East-West relations. Here, too, his remarks could be read as a condemnation of the counter-productive nature of much of Brezhnev’s diplomacy and of the military buildup which ultimately damaged Soviet security interests, by intensifying Western fears of “the Soviet threat” and by provoking the extensive American military effort of the early 1980s. He stated:

Security, if we are talking about relations between the U.S.S.R. and the US, can only be mutual, and, if we take international relations as a whole, it can only be universal. The highest wisdom is not to be concerned exclusively for oneself, especially when this is to the detriment of the other side. It is necessary that everyone feel equally secure, since the fears and anxieties of the nuclear age give rise to unpredictability in policies and concrete actions.⁸³

In this connection, he seemed to acknowledge the virtues of self-restraint and to recognize that Soviet security may ultimately be diminished if other nations feel threatened by Soviet actions and feel compelled to respond to them. He stated: “In the military sphere, we intend to continue to act in such a way that no one will have any reason for fear — even imaginary — for his security.”⁸⁴ In defining his approach toward foreign policy, he noted: “What is needed is special precision in evaluating one’s possibilities, restraint, and the loftiest responsibility in making decisions.”⁸⁵

Although earlier Soviet spokesmen had on occasion spoken of the

⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 62-64.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*