

and such others, is vital if he is to succeed in bringing about a psychological revolution within the Soviet Union and overcoming people's cynicism, apathy, and alienation. As well, it would send a strong message to recalcitrant bureaucrats demonstrating that the leadership is indeed serious in calling upon them to break with past habits and work in a new way.

Once the decision to release Sakharov was taken, Gorbachev moved to capitalize on it. Rather than simply let Sakharov return quietly and unheralded to Moscow, Gorbachev personally called him in Gorky — on a phone that had to be installed just for this purpose — with the news of his release, thereby displaying an excellent sense of public relations and reaping much personal praise abroad. Far from trying to isolate Sakharov and intimidate him into silence through K.G.B. harassment, Soviet authorities went so far as to make a television studio available to him so that he could be interviewed by Western television networks. To defuse potential criticism from abroad — and to capitalize on Sakharov's opposition to S.D.I. — he was even invited to address the star-studded international peace conference that was held in Moscow in February 1987.

Gorbachev's adroit handling of the Sakharov case provides a good example of the "new thinking" that he has been advocating. It reflects a willingness to jettison old positions and the ability to move boldly to convert liabilities into assets for Soviet foreign policy.

It is also indicative of a major change in how the Soviet leadership approaches its goal of promoting a favorable foreign image of its country. Previous Soviet leaders were preoccupied with the worry that the Soviet Union might appear weak and vulnerable in the eyes of its foreign adversaries. Gorbachev, on the other hand, has come to recognize that one of the benefits of *glasnost*' is that it deflates overblown conceptions of Soviet military capabilities and counteracts exaggerated estimates of the unity and single-mindedness of Soviet society. As Nikolai Shishlin, an official in the Information Department of the Central Committee, candidly observed during an interview with a Hungarian reporter: