

of these qualities, particularly where it may seem possible to be of assistance to him in critical situations, for example, through the provision of humanitarian aid.

On another central issue of the Cold War, "new thinking" represents a notably innovative turn in Soviet policy. The slogan of "comprehensive security" reflects a strong national interest in bringing down the levels of nuclear confrontation. Gorbachev has extended this interest to include deep reductions in conventional forces and the settlement of regional conflicts, sometimes at the apparent expense of friendly regimes, such as Nicaragua, Ethiopia and Angola. Traditional Soviet (and indeed Western) suspicion of on-site verification of agreements by international inspection has virtually disappeared, and the UN is being urged to accept expanding responsibilities for the control of conflict and the policing of the environment. With diminishing secrecy on Soviet defence spending and military deployments, the advice of "trust but verify" is becoming a more practical proposition.

Clearly, "new thinking" underpins a more activist Soviet foreign policy, one however, with stated aims that should largely prove to be acceptable to the West. There will undoubtedly be fluctuating limits to the Soviet process of "normalizing" relations with rivals and with neighbours. Among the latter, difficult problems remain to be resolved with China, Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan. Moreover, Soviet relations with the East European countries, where the rapid transition to greater freedom and independence will test Soviet tolerance, will continue to be the main source of tension in Soviet relations with the West. The outlook for agreement on reduction of troops in this area is now good. But under any such agreement, the Soviet Union would still want to retain the capability of unilateral military intervention in Eastern Europe. For example, too rapid political movement in Eastern Europe, out-pacing that in the Soviet Union, could arouse strong Soviet fears about its own security and territorial interests. In this connection, the Soviet leadership, from the latest indications, is more concerned about the "dynamic" character of change in East Germany than about developments elsewhere in Eastern Europe.