

moratorium on nuclear testing from August 1985 to February 1987, despite some apparent unhappiness in the Soviet military about the cessation of Soviet nuclear tests at a time when the United States was continuing its own testing programme.¹²⁹ This adroit diplomacy provides an indication of the kinds of bold and innovative moves that Gorbachev is capable of when he perceives a need for decisive action. We should not rule out a similar activation of Soviet foreign policy in other areas at some time in the future. However, for now Gorbachev's attention is on urgent domestic matters. The main goal of Soviet foreign policy is damage limitation combined, where possible, with cautious incremental progress.

Nonetheless, despite Gorbachev's preoccupation with internal economic reform, there is a close interrelation between domestic and foreign policy. Thus, Western optimists hope that even a partial and limited liberalization within the Soviet Union will have a highly beneficial effect upon East-West relations. This might occur through two main channels: by lessening Soviet insecurities and by diminishing the internal repression that the West finds so objectionable.

The intrinsic difficulty of dealing with the Soviet Union, which springs from the profound differences between their society and ours and from the Kremlin's aspirations to expand its global power, is further complicated by Soviet political culture. Western experts, whether doves or hawks, have repeatedly remarked upon the deeply ingrained Soviet sense of insecurity, vulnerability, and inferiority which has led to an excessive reliance upon military might, the subjugation of neighboring states, as well as to mistrust of foreigners, obsessive secrecy and glacial rigidity. These traits have their roots in centuries of Russian history and have been reinforced by more than two generations of Communist rule. Recurrent invasions from abroad, Tsarist autocracy, the conspiratorial origins of the Bolshevik Party, and long years of Stalinist oppression have all left a deep imprint on Soviet attitudes and perceptions. Soviet political culture

¹²⁹ The Soviet military's uneasiness over the moratorium is discussed in Griffiths, "'New Thinking' in the Kremlin," pp. 22-23.