

will fall within its jurisdiction, such as its natural resources; its own forms of economic management, subject to the maintenance of a unified Soviet market; and control over the forms of its political and cultural development, subject to the protection of common human rights throughout the Soviet Union. With this approach, it also seeks to meet the demands of the growing number of Russians, in the amorphous Russian federation, for a full-fledged Russian republic with its own institutions and its own separate capital.

For the centre, this proposed solution would have the virtue of allowing the republics to pay their own way, but it could also bring to the fore, as in Yugoslavia, the divisive problem of increasingly neglected areas that are now heavily dependent on central aid and are plagued by high unemployment. In this sense, its successful implementation would seem to depend on a broad expansion of economic activity that will take some uncertain time to achieve. Various elements of the platform could raise new problems, such as the treatment of the many extra-territorial minorities (totalling over sixty millions). Politically, the Soviet Party, as the bulwark of a strengthened federal system, will undoubtedly find that task greatly complicated by the need of the republican Parties to adjust to growing regional pressures and to compete, as is already the case in the Baltic republics, with the full-fledged political parties that will develop from the Popular Fronts and other independent movements. In such future circumstances, the moderation that the leaders of the Baltic Fronts are now displaying with respect to a specific target date for complete independence, may well become politically impossible for them to maintain. At that time, Gorbachev's nationalities policy and the new, more flexible and liberal federal system he has in mind will face their most crucial test. That time of testing, inevitably accompanied by increased tension and uncertainty, now seems to have arrived with the Lithuanian Parliament's declaration of independence on 11 March and its election of a non-Communist as head of state.

3. The Evolution of Foreign Policy

Gorbachev's use of "new thinking" has been particularly striking in the development of a radically new approach to the USSR's relations with the West. He is attempting to replace the idea of superpower rivalry with that of superpower cooperation