

appropriate doctrine, and the doctrinal changes indicate the policy changes.”²

The approach which this study takes is to examine the evolution of Soviet foreign policy doctrine as a means of gaining a better understanding of how Soviet leaders have approached East-West relations. It is divided into five chapters, each dealing with the foreign policy doctrine and perspectives of one of the major Soviet leaders, Lenin, Stalin, Khrushchev, Brezhnev, and Gorbachev. This approach has been adopted in order to provide a better understanding of what Soviet doctrine is and — equally important — what it is not. All too often, Western analysts have proceeded on the basis of assumptions which are either false or which constitute a perilous oversimplification of a far more complex reality.

In examining the impact of individual Soviet leaders on the development of Soviet doctrine, it will be argued: (1) Lenin did not bequeath to his successors a carefully developed doctrinal framework for viewing East-West relations. (2) The dichotomic, class-based view of the world crystallized under Stalin during the 1920s and 1930s. Thereafter, Stalin refused to alter it, despite the vast changes in the Soviet Union’s international position resulting from World War II, the emergence of Communist regimes in Eastern Europe and China, and the development of atomic weapons. (3) A doctrinal revolution of unprecedented proportions occurred under Khrushchev’s leadership in the years 1956-1960. (4) Brezhnev, in sharp contrast to his predecessor, did little to advance the process of doctrinal change, and Soviet perspectives on East-West relations were largely frozen for the two decades from 1964 to 1984. (5) Since Gorbachev has been General Secretary for less than three years, a final verdict cannot presently be reached as to the true meaning and long-term significance of his call for “new thinking” about international politics. However, a careful examination of what he has said thus far suggests that the “new thinking” involves far more than a

² Walter LaFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War, 1945-1984*, New York: Knopf, 1985, 5th ed., p. 18.