

postures between the two countries remain unchanged, although Soviet strength has been reduced in both the Mongolian and Chinese border regions; the territorial dispute over the four Northern Islands continues to fester; and Tokyo rankles because its interests and concerns have never been treated sufficiently seriously by Moscow. Given Japan's economic superpower status, and the key role it will now play in any major international economic decisions – as well as its crucial interest in the whole arena of Pacific security – it is a high priority to harmonize all “Western” (including Japanese) approaches to improved East-West relations. Canada is well-placed to pursue this special dialogue with Japan in the context of the Summit Seven and elsewhere.

The “Hangover” Scenario for Eastern Europe

The falling dominoes of oppression and stagnation across Eastern Europe in the autumn of 1989, most graphically symbolized by the collapse of the Berlin Wall, and sweeping through country after country in a euphoric tidal wave, cannot go on at the present pace.

In some countries, (Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia) new power-holders are already faced with the stupendous challenges of government and rehabilitation, with limited experience, sparse resources, unbearably high public expectations and a Pandora's box of ethnic, ideological, religious and other tensions. Other countries (East Germany, Bulgaria and finally, even Romania) may soon move to the same position. Although Lech Walesa openly expressed his preference for a more gradual transition to non-Communist administration, it is difficult to visualize how such a revolutionary tide could ever have been channelled and regulated.

Ironically, while it was the Soviet Union's dynamic and visionary leader who permitted and encouraged the collapse of Communist monopolies of power in neighbouring countries, it is in the USSR itself that reform has bogged down. With the explosive difficulties of the Soviet Union's diverse nationalities erupting on many fronts, the reformers have become more and more vulnerable to the accusation by conservatives that they have jeopardized order and the very integrity of the state. Simultaneously, the painfully slow progress of economic restructuring – which still leaves most Soviet citizens worse off materially than they were four years ago – has now eroded President Gorbachev's support to the point that he has attempted to postpone further reforms.