

**ALTERNATIVE SCENARIOS FOR THE USSR  
OVER THE NEXT 5 TO 10 YEARS  
AND THEIR POLICY IMPLICATIONS FOR THE WEST**

Given the enormous problems and obstacles he faces, the success of the revolutionary reforms launched by Gorbachev remains very uncertain. Accordingly, an attempt is made in this section to examine plausible alternative scenarios of developments in the USSR over the next 5 to 10 years and to consider, in terms of each of these scenarios, the policy choices which would face the West.

Four scenarios are considered. They range from the most to the least successful in terms of the objectives of *perestroika*, broadly defined. All seem possible and none can be ruled out definitely at this time. However, events are unlikely to follow any one scenario; there is no necessary connection between Baltic separatism, for example, and a market economy in Russia. At best, the scenarios help to prevent surprise and to warn against facile assumptions.

The scenarios are as follows:

- 1) Continued (if difficult) progress with current Soviet policies.
- 2) Uneven progress with recurring crises and setbacks.
- 3) Reforms fail and attempts are made to reverse course.
- 4) Loss of effective central control of the situation.

Scenario 1: Continued (if difficult) progress with current Soviet policies

a) Domestic

- o The "reformists" with Gorbachev (or even a successor) stay in power and the main lines and directions of the new Soviet policies are maintained.
- o Parliamentary government develops; the Communist Party breaks into two or more factions but the Gorbachev wing remains in control.
- o A limited market economy begins to operate and to show results, beginning with certain sectors and parts of the USSR. More food is available. Foreign