

## CONCLUSIONS--EAST-WEST RELATIONS IN TRANSITION: TOWARDS A NEW EUROPEAN ORDER

### The Prospects in the USSR and Eastern Europe

President Gorbachev's reform policies have set in motion a process of revolutionary change in both the USSR and Eastern Europe. The direction of these changes is towards democracy, modernization and more open, market-based economies. However, the obstacles to these changes in the USSR are formidable. The process is fragile and difficult to control or predict and its success is uncertain. The preceding scenarios present a range of possibilities for success or failure, none of which can be excluded.

Whichever of these scenarios comes closest to reality, it seems very likely that over the next five to ten years the USSR will continue to experience considerable instability which the central government will find difficult to control. The international power and influence of the USSR will also be reduced. Economically and politically the prospects are generally better in Eastern Europe, but the risks of political instability and domestic violence in some of the countries concerned are also substantial.

One important effect of these developments is a decisive shift in the balance of political and military power in favour of the West. As a result, the maintenance of peace and of general conditions favourable to the continuance of the current evolution in the East with a minimum of violence, will depend to a large extent on the strength of purpose, unity and leadership of the West.

### The West's Interests and Influence

Gorbachev's new policies and the trend of developments in both the USSR and Eastern Europe present a unique opportunity to end permanently the division of Europe, and to establish a more stable, cooperative and predictable relationship between the West and the Soviet Union based on greatly reduced levels of armed forces. Should the course of reform in the USSR be halted or reversed, however, this opportunity could vanish, at