

Memorandum from the International Department of the Central Committee of the CPSU to Alexander Yakovlev

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Soviet Union
Communist Party
Central Committee

THE STRATEGY OF RELATIONS WITH EUROPEAN SOCIALIST COUNTRIES

1. Our relations with socialist countries, including the allies of the Warsaw Treaty Organization, entered a difficult critical stage. The transition to the principle of equality and mutual responsibility, which began in April 1985 and was affirmed during the Working Meeting in Moscow in 1986, gave us an opportunity to remove many layers and eliminate perceptions of our conservatism. Perestroika, the development of democratization, [and] *glasnost*, confirmed the role of the Soviet Union as the leader in the process of socialist renewal. More and more, we are influencing our friends by our own example, by political means.

However, having broken with the previous type of relations, we have not yet established a new type. And the problem is not only that the process of restructuring the interactions between the socialist countries on the basis of “balance of interests,” which we have proclaimed, is objectively difficult, but, subjectively, it creates an impression in the eyes of our friends that we are abandoning them, retreating from the priority character of relations with socialist countries. The problem is that the transition to the “balance of interests” is seriously aggravated by the prolonged crisis of the model of socialism which developed its main features in the Soviet Union in Stalin’s time, and was then transferred to the countries that were liberated by us, or with our decisive participation. Their political system still suffers from a lack of legitimacy to this day, and the stability-oriented socio-economic system is incapable of giving an adequate response to the challenge of the scientific and technological revolution.

The relaxation of tensions, the diminishing of the threat of war, to which the socialist countries contributed in a decisive way, caused deep changes in their national security priorities. The economic factor, the ability of a country to join and to assimilate into the world economy, moved to the top of their priorities, for not a single country can overcome the growing gap individually, but socialist economic integration is clearly in a stalemate, so that if the countries stay with it, they would risk being left out of world development for the foreseeable future. This constitutes the main national interest of the majority of the socialist countries right now, and it should be primarily taken into account in our relations with them.

The European socialist countries found themselves in a powerful magnetic field of the economic growth and social well-being of the Western European states. Against this background, on the one hand, their own achievements grew dim, and on the other hand, the real problems and difficulties that exist in the West are practically imperceptible. The constant comparing and contrasting of the two worlds, of their

ways of life, production, intellectual cultures, entered our daily life thanks to the mass media, and there is no way around it. And we are speaking about the countries in which they still remember the times when they were close or on the same level of development with the Western European countries. The influence of this magnetic field will probably grow even stronger with the beginning of functioning of the European Common Market [in 1992].

As a consequence, in a number of socialist countries, the process of rejection of the existing political institutions and the ideological values by the societies is already underway now. Nonconformism is spreading more and more widely among the youth, and it is moving from a passive, kitchen level toward a civil and political one.

2. The difficult and transitional character of the present period is that the ruling parties cannot rule in the old way any more, and the new “rules of the game”—of reconciling the group interests that are pouring out, of finding a social consensus—have not been worked out yet. And to the extent that this process is postponed and prolonged, the parties could find themselves in more and more difficult situation.

Against the background of the general tendencies that are observable in all socialist countries, there are specific features of individual countries, [a fact] which requires a differentiated response from us.

In Poland and Hungary events are developing in the direction of pluralism, toward a creation of coalition, parliamentary forms of government. In these circumstances, the Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party (HSWP) and the Polish United Workers’ Party (PUWP) can count on preserving their positions only in a framework of political alliances. A lot will depend on whether they are able to attract a part of the opposition to constructive cooperation. Taking into account the fact that a considerable part of the population of Poland is tired of crises, the probability of an evolutionary development here is higher. In Hungary, at the same time, notwithstanding their seemingly better living standards, the situation might unfold in most unexpected ways.

Some of the party activists in both the HSWP and the PUWP expressed their willingness to use extremely forceful measures in case of a rapid deterioration of the situation. There is no unity of opinion on all of these issues in the leadership of the HSWP and the PUWP, therefore we should expect the rise of factional fighting there.

In Czechoslovakia the tension has been rising considerably recently. Here the “1968 syndrome” is still present, which interferes with the party’s ability to define its position toward perestroika, especially in the sphere of democratization and glasnost.

A significant part of the leadership leans toward employing administrative measures in the struggle against opposition sentiments. In general, there is a tendency to begin changes in the economy and to postpone the reform in the sphere of democratization and glasnost’ to a later stage.

The stabilizing factor is that so far they managed to preserve a relatively high standard of living in the country, although they achieve it with more and more effort now.

In Bulgaria, there is, in essence, a simulation of perestroika, which is to a large extent a consequence of Todor Zhivkov’s personal ambitions. The loud declarations about a comprehensive reconsideration of Marxist-Leninist theory, and about the creation of a principally new model of socialism lead in practice to endless

reorganizations, shuffling of personnel, and to the further tightening of the screws. All this discredits the Party, socialism, and casts a shadow on our perestroika. Nonetheless, T. Zhivkov still controls the situation rather well by employing methods of political manipulation, and by relying on a well-developed administrative apparatus, even though discontent is growing in the Party and in the country.

In the GDR a particularly complex situation is developing against the background of seeming well-being. Even though the GDR can be distinguished from other socialist countries by the better state of the economy and standard of living, the economic situation of the country is deteriorating. There is the debt pressure and the growing dependence on the FRG. The party leadership, to a large extent under the influence of personal ambitions, is striving to avoid the problems of renewal. In giving critical assessments of the conservatism of the GDR leadership, one has to keep in mind that it has some objective basis. The GDR was founded not on a national, but on an ideological, on a class basis, and therefore a rapid transition to democratization, glasnost', [and] openness might be accompanied by special problems in this country.

In Romania, there is still the oppressive atmosphere of the personality cult of Ceausescu's authoritarian rule. Striving to isolate the country from our influence, he is now trying to dress in the robes of a "fighter for the purity of socialism," and indirectly puts forth arguments against us. Some eruptions of discontent are possible in the country, but it is unlikely that they will become widespread at the present time. The situation will, most likely, change only with Ceausescu's departure, which could be accompanied by quite painful developments.

Yugoslavia entered a phase of political crisis in the context of very deep economic problems and national contradictions; this could lead to a substantial weakening of the positions of the UJY [League of Yugoslav Communists], and even to a fracture of the federation.

3. Several possible scenarios for further development of socialist countries are distinguishable now. One of them is a smooth movement of society toward democratization and a new form of socialism under the leadership of the ruling parties. Under this [scenario], some concessions regarding the issue of authority, significant growth of self-government, [strengthening of] the role of representative organs in political life, bringing the constructive opposition into running society, and even possibly its [the Party] turning into one of the forces contesting for power, cannot be excluded. This road toward a parliamentary, or a presidential socialist republic in some countries (Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia) would be preferable to us. If the initiative for democratic changes originates with the ruling party, the chances of preserving internal stability and obligations to allies are very high.

Another scenario—is a way of leaps and bounds, which would be a direct continuation of the preceding development, when the ruling party offers a new portion of political concessions after the next mini-crisis. This scenario lets us avoid the worst—a political eruption—but it moves the Party away, to the curbside of political life, and strengthens the pessimism and the skepticism of socialism, stimulates the demands of the opposition, and gradually prepares society for leaving the framework of socialism. The transition of a country to a traditional mixed economy and free play of political forces would not, in all cases, lead it to abandon its

obligations to the allies, but in such a case the foreign policy orientation of that country would become a subject of intense political struggle.

Finally, a third way is also possible—preservation of the existing power relations in society along with suppression of the social and political activity of the masses. Under this scenario, it would be characteristic to undertake an openly conservative course, limited reforms, mostly in the management of the economy, and active non-acceptance of Soviet perestroika. In the future, such a course does not exclude a spontaneous resolution of the crisis situation via a social explosion with unpredictable consequences for the country's internal and foreign policy. The main catalyst of such a crisis could be an increase in the dissatisfaction of the population as a result of economic deterioration and worsening living standards.

4. In this critical, transitional period, our relations with socialist countries continue to remain our priority. But not in the sense which we implied before, when the Soviet Union and its allies were, in essence, in international isolation, and so the relations with each other considerably outweighed our ties with the rest of the world. Since then, the new political thinking, the energetic efforts undertaken by the USSR and its allies in recent years have rapidly changed the international situation. It is natural that the relative weight of our relations with the socialist countries in our foreign policy became different. However, that does not change the fundamental fact that the degree of our interdependence with the socialist countries remains higher than that with the rest of the world, and that the internal stability and the influence of socialism in world affairs depend on that.

From a geopolitical point of view, the importance of European socialist countries for the Soviet Union was determined by the fact that from the very beginning they played a unique role of a security belt, which created a strategic umbrella [prikrytiye] for the center of socialism. Today, notwithstanding all the changes in the international situation, this role of Eastern Europe, and especially of the GDR, Poland, and Czechoslovakia, remains unchanged to a certain extent.

It is a complicated question—what could and should be the forms of our influence on the socialist countries under the new conditions?

Authoritarian methods [and] direct pressure have clearly outlived themselves. In the political sphere, even in the case of a sharp deterioration of the situation in one of the countries—and we cannot exclude such a possibility today—it is very unlikely that we would be able to employ the methods of 1956 and 1968, both as a matter of principle, but also because of unacceptable consequences. Use of force would be admissible only in one case—if there were a direct and clear armed interference of external forces in the internal developments of a socialist country. Therefore, essentially, our only methods of leverage could be our political and economic ties.

5. The state of economic relations is assuming growing political importance. Their role is evident for the majority of socialist countries. And for us they have a great importance as well also. We should decisively discard the stereotype of those countries as our parasites [nakhlebnyki]. In contradistinction to routine perceptions, the economic effects of our trade with European COMECON countries is rather favorable for us. It can be seen from the following examples.

Share of goods imported from the COMECON countries in the overall volume of goods consumed in the USSR:

Metal rolling machinery—40-50%; food industry equipment—40%, textile industry equipment—50%, chemical industry equipment—35%; lumber and wood-working equipment—about 30%; printing industry equipment—more than 40%; meat, meat products, vegetables and other produce—up to 10%; non-food consumer products—10-15%.

According to our calculations, we get up to 4 rubles of profit for each ruble of the value of the oil sold in the COMECON countries (the effectiveness of oil exports to these countries in 1987 was 493%). Apart from that, by buying food products and consumer goods in those countries, we have a substantial budgetary profit when we sell them in the USSR at our retail prices. Thus in 1987, for each ruble of expense for the import of meat and meat products we had the following profit from domestic sales— 96 kopecks, cotton textiles—1.76 rubles, coats and dresses—2.24 rubles, leather shoes—2 rubles, personal care items—2.92 rubles, china—2.81 rubles, furniture—89 kopecks, and so on.

The conditions for grain purchases, in particular, in the countries of COMECON (Hungary, Bulgaria) are more favorable for us than on the world market. For example, we need to sell approximately 1.45-1.5 tons of oil to buy a ton of wheat on the world market for convertible currency; to buy it in the COMECON countries mentioned above, we would need to sell approximately one ton of oil.

At the same time, the old forms of economic cooperation have been to a large extent exhausted. The volume of trade is decreasing. The USSR is already unable to satisfy the demand of the COMECON countries for increases of deliveries of fuel and raw materials; and on a number of vitally important resources—oil, for example— we are actually planning to decrease the deliveries in the coming five-year period. We are also unable to provide these countries with modern technology. As a result of drop in prices for energy resources (mostly oil), by the end of the next five-year period, the Soviet Union could end up with a negative trade balance with European COMECON countries of more than 7 billion rubles.

The issue of a transition to integration has already been raised. It is especially acute for our COMECON partners. Without actively joining the processes of international economic integration they are simply incapable of ensuring a radical renewal of their economies. It appears that the strategic goals established for this sphere earlier—the policy of creating a COMECON common market and appropriate instruments (convertibility of currencies, wholesale trade, and others) continue to be fully relevant. However, their realization has been unsatisfactory. A multitude of joint decisions notwithstanding, industrial cooperation is clearly stagnant. The comprehensive program of scientific and technological cooperation of the COMECON countries, which raised such hopes, has been practically wrecked.

Following the Working Summit in 1986 the joint work of COMECON countries picked up somewhat. Direct ties between enterprises were developed and joint enterprises were established. However, the new forms of interaction have not had any significant impact on the volume and structure of mutual interchange (direct ties represent less than 1% of trade).

The temptation to reorient the economies of the socialist countries toward the West grows stronger. Export of products of the best quality production to the West

has become the norm. Often COMECON countries compete with each other on the capital markets.

Experience shows that it is impossible to solve the problem of economic integration with the help of general, even the best programs. It is necessary to accumulate relevant material, organizational, legal, and other types of prerequisites in all the countries. Success here will depend, first of all, on cardinal changes in the Soviet economy, in its structure, in [its] administrative mechanism, and in expansion of its export potential, which would take at least several years.

What could we do in the existing situation? First of all, we should not allow our prestige as a reliable economic partner to weaken. Each breach of contract—and such cases are becoming more frequent—puts the socialist countries in a difficult, sometimes even hopeless situation. Accumulation of similar facts in the economic sphere unavoidably leads to unfavorable political consequences for us. We should overcome this illness, as far as reconsidering the proposals of our ministries on such a complicated issue as the volume of our oil deliveries for the next five-year period. This should be done in the spirit of our former agreements.

Coordination of efforts for the conversion of the military economy could become one of the new channels of economic influence on the socialist countries, especially because the military-industrial complex of the socialist countries is integrated to a higher degree than their civilian economies. One more opportunity would be to develop a common concept of alleviating foreign debt, which is extremely large in a number of socialist countries.

Lastly, when we intensify our economic ties with the West, it is important to actively try to bring our socialist partners into those [contacts], in order to overcome the impression, which some of them have, that we are lessening our attention to the fraternal countries. We probably should hold specific discussions with them to talk about a possibility of their joining in the realization of projects that are carried out with the help of Western credits, trying in the final account to work out a coordinated strategy of integrating the socialist commonwealth into global economic relations.

6. A number of new tasks have emerged in the sphere of political cooperation. Just several years ago we would have considered many of the developments that are underway now in the socialist countries as absolutely unacceptable for us. Today we need a deeper, more flexible, and differentiated approach to what is useful for us, to what is admissible and what is unacceptable. At the same time, it is important that we realistically assess our opportunities, carefully weighing where we can realistically have an influence, and where our interference could only aggravate the situation.

The measure of socialism in the transformations that are underway now in the socialist countries is a difficult question. Some of them are allowing not only the extensive development of market relations, but also forms of private property, and widespread inflow of foreign capital. And still, it appears that we should not exaggerate the danger of one of the countries simply switching to the capitalist way of development. The roots developed by socialism are very deep. Such a transition would mean a fast breakup of the entire economy [and] its structures, development of crises, [and] rapid deterioration of living standards for the majority of the population. And it is very unlikely that the West would be inclined to take on its balance sheet countries whose economy was marked by crisis elements and large foreign debts.

It is characteristic that the ideas that are presented from time to time about the “Marshallization” [i.e., a new “Marshall Plan”—ed.] of certain socialist countries (in particular, Hungary and Poland, for example in the form of a conversion of their debt into foreign capital investment) so far have not enjoyed any noticeable support in the West— due to the size of the expense and the unpredictability of economic and political consequences. Although we should not completely discard this possibility in the [future], we should be more concerned about the possibility of an economic collapse or anarchical explosions in the context of social tensions and hopelessness. This concerns the countries where the regimes continue to stay in power by further tightening the screws (Romania, North Korea).

We need to give special comprehensive consideration to the processes of formation of the structures of political pluralism, of the coalition and parliamentary type, [and] legalization of the opposition that are unfolding in a number of countries. Of course, this is an uncharted [and] risky road, which requires that the parties possess both the strength of principles and tactical flexibility; [they need] the ability to lead the process, and not to leave it up to the opposition forces.

The lessons of several crises have shown that the main danger posed by an opposition is not the fact of its existence in itself, but that it could unite all kinds of forces and movements in the society which are dissatisfied by the existing situation in a negative, destructive platform. Therefore, pulling apart of the opposition into the official structure, entrusting it with responsibility for constructive solutions to the problems that have accumulated, could play a stabilizing role.

In the existing difficult circumstances the processes of our perestroika have a special influence on internal processes in the socialist countries. In some sense, it has also created a new situation. Whereas before, any mass expressions of dissatisfaction with the existing situation which flared up from time to time in the socialist countries assumed an anti-Soviet character almost automatically, now there is no such harsh feature. A serious blow has been dealt to the idea of the impossibility of reforming uni-dimensional socialism that finds its basis in the experience and example of the Soviet Union.

Perestroika has brought us objectively closer to the countries which are trying to reform their economic and political systems (China, Yugoslavia, Poland, Hungary), but at the same time has created certain problems in relations with some of our traditionally close allies, whose leadership continues to rely on the command administrative methods.

In this situation we have to face the question of how to build our relations with parties and countries, whose leadership exhibits a restrained attitude toward our perestroika (the GDR, Romania, Cuba, North Korea). Here, clearly, we need restraint and tolerance, we need to understand the positions of such parties as the [SED] [and] the Communist Party of Cuba, which, due to their specific, and sometimes even front-like circumstances of development, experience particular problems in accepting and implementing the processes of economic restructuring and the democratization of society.

7. The general development of world politics and the increased differentiation of the national interests of socialist countries require that we make corrections to the approach to coordinate of our joint steps in the international arena.

Most importantly, the process of deconfrontation in the world, the decreasing weight of the military-strategic and the increasing weight of political factors of security, objectively increases the role of our friends. And it is not only because the reductions of conventional weapons in Europe moved to the forefront of the all-European process in its various dimensions, taking into account the new quality that was conferred on it by the Vienna meeting. Without the active and positive participation of our allies, progress in these directions is simply impossible. Therefore, we can speak about not just mutual information, about informing sometimes “at the last minute,” but about preliminary coordination of our actions.

However, the problem is much larger. Essentially, the period when the reduction of military threat was achieved primarily within the framework of Soviet-American relations is not that far from its logical conclusion. The internationalization of major international issues is growing. And if that is so, then friends’ advice [and] consultations with them should involve not only concrete topics under consideration where their interests are directly affected, but also the entire complex of the issues of world economy and politics. Only in this case can they have a real, not just superficial feeling of belonging to the development and implementation of a common socialist foreign policy. At the same time, our initiatives would assume a more weighty, and, considering the experience of our friends, in some ways a more substantive character. However, there is also another side to this. The pluralism of interests of different socialist countries is more and more noticeable. Reduction of military budgets in some of them is acquiring a rate that is ahead of our own, whereas in others it creates anxiety for the future of their own military industry [which is] rather developed and integrated with us. In a similar fashion, the humanization of international relations [and their] confirmation of human rights is perceived by the leadership of some governments as a threat to socialism; for others it serves as an additional impulse to enter the road to “openness” in their own countries.

The difference of interests sometimes leads to outbreaks of nationalist feelings that aggravate relations between the countries (Romania-Hungary). It could be anticipated that internal socio-economic and political difficulties would strengthen the desire of the leadership of certain countries to strengthen their authority and play on sensitive nationalistic strings.

Taking into account all these different interests, it is not at all necessary to try to achieve consensus for the sake of consensus during our discussions and consultations with our friends. We should not allow a situation where one of the countries would tie our hands based on their national ambitions. Each country should have a right to preserve its freedom of action, of course, along with explaining its position to the other allies and substantiating it. It is not in our interest either to transfer any kind of aggravated nationalist tensions between our friends to a multilateral basis, especially if such a “dispute” involves us directly. Of course, it is a different matter if we are faced with opposition to our steps by many, or even a majority, of the socialist countries—in such a case it would be a signal for us to have another look if that step was the right one.

8. Despite the fact that we have repeatedly stressed that we had discarded our command administrative approach to socialist countries, the syndrome of such an approach persists in the thinking of our friends. At the same time, the conservative part of the

leadership would like, in essence, for the Soviet Union to continue its role as some kind of “protector” of socialist countries. But a significant portion of the public, on the other hand, expresses its anxiety concerning the existing situation in which they see vestiges of such paternalism. This finds its expression in different attitudes toward the presence of the contingents of our troops in socialist countries, and it is linked with the influence on the internal processes, not with external threats to their security. There is continuing anxiety about how the Soviet Union would react in the situation of a political crisis in one of the countries, in which the ruling party’s control of the situation would be threatened. There is dissatisfaction with the still persistent inequality in the military mechanism of the Warsaw Pact, the leadership of which practically represents a Soviet military headquarters with the purely formal presence of representatives of other countries.

Here lies a significant reservoir of our possible steps for removing the above-mentioned “irritants”, including ensuring real participation of our friends in the military mechanism of control of the Warsaw Pact, eliminating the negative internal political aspect of the presence of our troops, possibly through “internationalization.” It would be advisable to direct our efforts to achieve a situation where in some countries, where it is necessary, they would have, instead of Soviet troops, joint formations of troops of the Warsaw Pact countries which agree to it.

It is most necessary to work out a balanced approach to the problem of the possibility of our interference in the event of a political crisis in one of the countries. It presupposes our affirmation of the principle of freedom of choice as a universal basis of the world order. But at the same time it should leave a certain vagueness as far as our concrete actions are concerned under various possible turns of events so that we do not stimulate the anti-socialist forces to try to “test” the fundamentals of socialism in a given country.

Finally, it is necessary to take into account the growing attention of our friends to the still remaining “white spots” in our relations; this interest will most probably become even more pronounced this year [1989] in connection with the approach of the 50th anniversary of the beginning of World War II and the signing of the Soviet-German pact. It would be expedient to work on our interpretation of the nature and the origins of World War II in advance, employing the newly-defined approaches to the assessment of our policy in the 1930-40s, and to discuss it with our friends.

9. In the present circumstance we could formulate the following “minimum program” for our relations with socialist countries in the transitional period:

First of all, we should have a balanced and unprejudiced analysis of the development of socialist countries, of their relations, and we should prepare scenarios of our reaction to possible complications or sharp turns in their policies ahead of time, at the same time decisively rejecting the old stereotypes, and avoiding willful improvisations which did us great harm in the past. We should step up our joint study of and efforts to find ways out of the existing crisis situation, of a new vision of socialism and modern capitalism, and of the possibilities and the limits of their interaction, mutual influence, and mutual assimilation.

Second, we should keep in mind that the significance of our contacts with the party and state leadership of the socialist countries is preserved and even increases in significance, especially because in the existing situation our friends could develop a

“complex of abandonment,” a suspicion that the priority of relations with friends proclaimed by us does not have real meaning. Inter-party contacts, if they are accompanied by an open analysis of problems, discussions, [and] exchange of information about intentions, would allow us to directly feel the pulse of the fraternal parties, to give them moral support.

Third, in explaining the essence of perestroika policy, we should carefully try to avoid any artificial transfer of our experience to the context of other countries, which could be perceived by them as a relapse to command administrative methods, restriction of their independence, and could eventually lead to undesirable circumstances.

Fourth, by strictly adhering to our obligations, we should preserve the existing ties that link the socialist countries to the USSR and try to ensure that the inevitable and for the common interests to a certain extent beneficial process of integrating the socialist economies with the West develops in a balanced, coordinated way, [and] is not accompanied by unacceptable economic and political costs, and would strengthen integration processes among socialist countries.

Fifth, taking into account the key role of the armed forces in the case of a possible deterioration of the situation, it is important to maintain genuine partnership between the armies of the socialist countries both on a bilateral basis and in the framework of the Warsaw Pact by eliminating all elements of inequality.

Sixth, We should continue the policy of decreasing our military presence in the socialist countries, including the future possibility of a complete withdrawal of our troops from Hungary and Czechoslovakia. We should consider the scenario of “internationalization” of the remaining troops, of [the] creation of joint formations.

Seventh, It is certainly in our interest that the changes that are ready to happen in the socialist countries, with all the possible variations, develop as much as possible inherently without unnecessary shocks and crises, within the framework of socialist solutions. But we have to account for a possibility of a different turn of events. In such a situation, it is important that the ideological differences on the issues of the renewal of socialism, and finding ways out of the crisis situations that have manifested themselves in the socialist world, do not assume the character of conflict and do not have a negative influence on the relations between our states, and do not lead to antagonism toward the Soviet Union.

This presupposes making a distinction between the interests of an essential preservation of ruling communist parties at the helm of power and the interests of preserving allied relations with those countries.

Eighth. By making use of the favorable opportunities created by perestroika which overturned the stereotypes of “Moscow conservatism,” we should actively seek channels for contacts with all the forces in the socialist countries which compete for participation in acquiring power. Contacts [with] churches are becoming more important because the church’s influence is obviously on the rise in the socialist countries.

In general, at this stage it is particularly important to reject the old stereotypes in our approaches, which have outlived themselves. If a country disagrees with us, and sometimes even seriously—this still does not mean that it is turning to the West; if the role of the Party in one of the countries is questioned—this still does not

determine that it would definitely distance itself from us. The dialectics of the real processes, as our experience has shown, is much more complex. Yugoslavia and China “distanced” themselves from us some time ago, but they have hardly turned into capitalist states. In Poland, the Party can realistically become just one, and maybe not even the main [one] of the power structures; however, the geopolitical situation of the country is such that even in the opposition there is an understanding of the necessity of preserving some form of alliance with our country.

All this presupposes studying and forecasting specific scenarios of the development of the situation in individual countries, including the most extreme ones, making decisions as to what those scenarios could mean for our relations—and implementing them with practical actions on this basis.

[Source: Archive of the Gorbachev Foundation, Moscow; on file at the National Security Archive, donated by Professor Jacques Levesque. Translated by Svetlana Savranskaya and Gary Goldberg.]