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A COUNTRY LIKE ANY OTHER: THE STATE DEPARTMENT AND THE SOVIET UNION

INTRODUCTION

President-elect George Bush will need sophisticated and tough-minded guidance to meet the challenge of Mikhail Gorbachev's dynamic new Soviet foreign policy. It is unlikely that the U.S. State Department, as currently structured, can give Bush such guidance. He and Secretary of State-designate James Baker therefore should reshape the State Department's internal structure and modify its interdepartmental role in developing United States policy toward the Soviet Union.

Though the State Department oversees diplomatic relations with over 150 countries, the day-to-day management of U.S.-Soviet relations is by far its most important task. This is and must be the case because only the USSR poses a direct military threat to the U.S. Despite recent doctrinal statements, moreover, Moscow still views world politics as a contest of indefinite length between the "progressive" forces of socialism and "historically doomed" capitalism. Eventually, perhaps, Gorbachev's reforms could affect the conduct of Soviet foreign affairs. So far, however, in sharp contrast to rapid developments on the domestic scene, Soviet foreign policy making has been characterized by continuity and certain tactical modifications in rhetoric rather than significant change.

The State Department's conduct of U.S.-Soviet affairs often fails to reflect the threat that Moscow poses to the U.S. and the special character of Soviet diplomacy. This is because of

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the norms, objectives, and practices that the State Department, as an institution, brings to dealing with the Soviet Union. These include:

1) Rejection of the possibility that ideology could be a principal motive in international behavior.

2) Perception of conflicts as stemming from misunderstandings rather than from deliberate policy choices and, therefore, as always amenable to resolution through compromise achieved by patient negotiations.

3) Support for the status quo in international politics.

4) Seeking better relations, rather than advancement of U.S. interests, as the ultimate goal of diplomacy.

5) The tendency toward a "clientitis" that transforms State Department careerists into advocates of whatever nation they happen to be working with at the moment.

The most serious structural problem impeding State's handling of U.S.-Soviet diplomacy results from State's treatment of the USSR as if it were just "any other country" — a Canada, India, or France. This is reflected in the structure of State's Soviet affairs bureaucracy. Geography, rather than the nature of U.S.-Soviet conflict, determines the place of the Soviet Union in the State Department's machinery. The Office of Soviet Union Affairs (the "Soviet desk") is in the Bureau of European Affairs along with such close American NATO allies as Britain, West Germany, and Canada. The result: the Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs is responsible for relations both with America's closest allies and with its principal adversary.

For George Bush and James Baker to craft a more effective U.S. policy toward the USSR, they must define State's role in U.S.-Soviet relations carefully and improve staffing procedures for State's Soviet affairs functions. This requires:

◆◆ Strengthening White House control of U.S.-Soviet relations by creating the position of Deputy National Security Advisor for Soviet Global Affairs. This official would coordinate Soviet-related activities of all federal departments and agencies and act as the principal advisor to the President on U.S.-Soviet relations.

◆◆ Upgrading State's Office of Soviet Affairs (the Soviet desk) by removing it from the Bureau of European Affairs and making it the Bureau of Soviet Global Affairs, headed by an Assistant Secretary of State.

◆◆ Enforcing the President's mandate in foreign affairs by placing carefully selected political appointees in such positions of day-to-day management of U.S.-Soviet affairs as Assistant Secretary of State for Soviet Global Affairs, the Deputy Secretary, and the section heads.

◆◆ Intensifying training for Foreign Service Officers (FSOs) who are selected for specialization in Soviet affairs.

LESSONS OF HISTORY: TWO APPROACHES TO DEALING WITH THE SOVIET UNION

The State Department has not always regarded the Soviet Union as just any other country. Viewing the USSR as a special case was stressed by William Bullitt, an early and enthusiastic advocate of U.S. recognition of the Soviet Union and President Franklin Roosevelt's appointee as the first U.S. Ambassador to the USSR (from 1933 to 1936), and by George Kennan, a diplomat and scholar who was a member of the first U.S. diplomatic team in Moscow and later served as Ambassador to the Soviet Union in 1952.

After serving three years in Moscow, Bullitt concluded that the Soviet Union should pay an admission price for joining the family of nations: unless Moscow abided scrupulously and fully by the agreements it made, wrote Bullitt, there could be no genuinely friendly relations with Moscow. Until that happened, Bullitt urged caution and firmness in dealing with Moscow. He strongly disapproved of loans and long-term trade credits sought from the U.S. by the Soviet Union in the early and mid-1930s and suggested that the U.S. should advise American industrialists against "putting in expensive machinery to produce for the Soviet market."¹

Hardheaded Diplomacy. George Kennan's prescription for dealing with Soviets, articulated in 1946, was based on the assumption that the U.S. should not search for a "community of aims" with Moscow because such community simply did not exist. Kennan was against, as he put it, "acting chummy" with the Soviets or making "fatuous gestures" of good will. Instead, he recommended tough bargaining and hardheaded diplomacy. For example, he wrote in his 1967 *Memoirs*: "Make no requests of the Russians unless we are prepared to make them feel our displeasure in a practical way in case the request is not granted."² In dealing with the Soviets, Kennan explained that it was imperative not to be afraid to use heavy diplomatic weapons even in minor matters and, when necessary, not to shy away from "unpleasantness" and "public airing of differences." The U.S. should not beg for negotiations, argued Kennan, and the initiative for high-level exchanges of views must come from the Soviets in at least 50 percent of the cases. Finally, Kennan suggested that to the extent possible all U.S. activities relating to Russia, both government and private, be coordinated.³

In contrast to the paradigm for dealing with Moscow suggested by Bullitt and Kennan was that promulgated by Joseph Davies, who replaced Bullitt as Ambassador and served until 1938. For him and his followers, good relations with the Soviet Union were the paramount objective to which differences and problems should be subordinated. To avoid irritating

1 Loy W. Henderson, *A Question of Trust. The Origins of U.S.-Soviet Diplomatic Relations* (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 1986), pp. 409-410.

2 George Kennan, *Memoirs 1925-1950* (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1967), p. 291.

3 Kennan, *op. cit.*, pp. 291-292. Since his retirement in 1963 and becoming a Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Studies at Princeton, Kennan's views have changed dramatically. Apparently forgetting what he had learned and taught about Moscow, he became one of the most vocal advocates of disarmament, accommodation, and cooperation with the Soviet Union.

Soviet authorities, therefore, Davies avoided raising “unpleasant” subjects with them personally, letting his staff deal with such matters as arrests and disappearances of American citizens in the Soviet Union, divided families, delays in issuing visas, and arrests of the U.S. Embassy’s Soviet employees. George Kennan served under Davies as Third Secretary in the Moscow Embassy and recalled that the Ambassador’s goal was to make sure that “American-Soviet relations should have the outward appearance of being cordial, no matter what gnashing of teeth might go on under the surface.” This required, wrote Kennan, “turning the other cheek in the face of various Soviet harassments.”⁴

“Tolerant Understanding.” Davies believed that “a common ground between the United States and the USSR [which] will obtain for a long time, lies in the fact that both are sincere advocates of peace.”⁵ In his final dispatch from Moscow, written in June 1938, Davies argued that

... methods employed in all [U.S.-Soviet] matters should be based not on upon a critical and intolerant attitude that induces irritations, but upon an attitude of tolerant understanding of the difficulties the [Soviet] officials are laboring under. . . . It has been my experience here that where matters are projected in a spirit of tolerance, understanding and friendliness, there has been a prompt and generous response on the part of the [Soviet] government to accommodate itself to a reasonable agreement.⁶

Bullitt (along with Kennan) and Davies thus offer competing broad strategies for dealing with the Soviet Union. The State Department, as an institution, for years seemed to accept the one advocated by Davies as more consistent with the way it handled U.S. relations with other countries.

Of course, there have been and are now many individual Foreign Service Officers whose views of conducting U.S.-Soviet relations hue closer to those of Bullitt and Kennan than to those of Davies. Depending on their position in the bureaucracy and willingness to buck the dominant orthodoxy, these individuals can and do make a difference. But they cannot reform State’s institutional behavior.

STATE’S INSTITUTIONAL ETHOS: THE CYRUS VANCE PARADIGM

President Jimmy Carter once noted that Cyrus Vance, who was his Secretary of State from 1977 to 1980, “mirrored the character of the organization he led.”⁷ Carter was absolutely right. Vance’s thoughts and perceptions and the policies he advocated offer insight into State’s dominant institutional mentality. Typifying this is Vance’s assessment of

4 Kennan, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

5 Henderson, *op. cit.*, p. 422.

6 *Ibid.*

7 Jimmy Carter, *Keeping Faith* (New York: Bantam Books, 1982).

U.S.-Soviet relations in 1978 — the year when thousands of Cuban troops were dispatched to Ethiopia and the Soviet Union continued its most severe crackdown on dissidents (including the imprisonment of refusenik Anatoly Shcharansky as a U.S. spy), while the Soviet military buildup continued apace, despite U.S. unilateral restraint. Wrote Vance later:

... the Soviets. . . felt our human rights efforts were aimed at overthrowing their system; they saw our behavior as unpredictable; and they were growing uncertain whether we still wanted a SALT Treaty. I believed that the hostility could lead to new Soviet hard-line actions to which we would be compelled to respond, imperiling our relations at a critical period when a leadership change in Moscow seemed possible in the near future.⁸

Pursuing Vague Objectives. The options recommended by Vance at the time, in response to Soviet actions, also exemplify persistent tendencies at State. He advocated conclusion of the SALT II Treaty to stabilize the strategic competition; a review of U.S. human rights policies vis-a-vis the Soviet Union because “there was a critical point beyond which our public pressure was causing the Soviets to crack down harder on Soviet dissidents”; avoiding trying to play China off against the Soviets; accepting U.S. competition with the Soviets and not linking Soviet behavior in the Third World to issues of fundamental interests, such as SALT II.

As to the introduction of Cuban troops in Africa, Vance’s idea of retaliation was diplomatic pressure, strengthening U.S. ties with Third World states, and increased economic and military aid to key countries.⁹

Vance’s ideas exemplified State’s dominant institutional ethos: the vague objectives of stability, peace, and better relations instead of a more focused pursuit of U.S. interests; obfuscation of the profound moral differences between the totalitarian Soviet regime and U.S. democracy in value-free diplomacy; the perception of the U.S. and the Soviet Union, in effect, as equal superpowers, equally burdened with the responsibility for world peace and equally to blame when the process broke down.

STATE’S RULING PASSIONS: SUPPORT FOR PROCESS AND DESIRE FOR AGREEMENTS

Seeing its prime mission as improving relations with the Soviet Union, the State Department is strongly influenced by two institutionalized sentiments: support for “process” and desire for agreements. Everything that furthers process — State’s code word for negotiations and improvement in relations — and helps agreements is emphasized. That which impedes process is pronounced nonessential — or ignored outright. The overriding

⁸ Cyrus Vance, *Hard Choices* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), p. 101.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 101-102.

objective is to make more new agreements, regardless of whether the old ones are observed or of how beneficial they have proved to the U.S.

This objective has been apparent as the guiding principle shaping State's positions on arms control, the end of Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, and U.S.-Soviet scientific exchanges.

State and Arms Control

Nowhere is State's infatuation with process more obvious than in its arms control strategy. The Department seems determined to maintain momentum regardless of whether the outcome is in the U.S.'s best interests. As a former Reagan Administration high official, who asks not to be identified, put it, "State hates deadlocks: they are always looking for ways to do something with the Soviets."

Substituting diplomacy for policy, State's Bureau of European Affairs tends to look at arms control solely in terms of its effect on U.S.-Soviet relations. Often these officials lack detailed knowledge of the substantive military aspects of an arms control issue. As a result, according to a former high official in arms control who dealt extensively with State's representatives, they tend not to realize what is at stake.

An Unacceptable Proposal Accepted. Fearful of a breakdown in negotiations or even a lack of progress, State constantly has advocated what amounts to preemptive concessions to Moscow by modifying U.S. proposals to make them more palatable to the Soviets. When opportunities for such modifications are exhausted, the State Department often seeks to change the U.S. position itself. Thus it objected vehemently to Ronald Reagan's proposal for a "zero option" in the INF negotiations, which would eliminate all medium-range ballistic missiles. Many at State saw this proposal as unacceptable to the Soviet Union and thus unacceptable for the U.S. to put forward. (The Soviets eventually accepted the zero option.)

A similar State Department effort to soften the U.S. bargaining position to make it more acceptable to the Soviets took place in early 1982, as the U.S. was developing a strategy for Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START). Because most Soviet strategic missiles carry nuclear warheads with a greater destructive capacity than U.S. warheads, an equitable arms control agreement must establish limits on this "throw-weight." Claiming that a U.S. demand for throw-weight limits would be unacceptable to Moscow and, as such, would undermine the arms control process, the State representatives fought a long and bitter battle with other arms control specialists to remove throw-weight from the negotiations agenda. Eventually, State was overruled, and in the current draft of the START agreement, Moscow agrees not just to limit but actually to reduce the throw-weight of its strategic missiles.

Avoiding Sanctions. Support of process is most conspicuous in the State Department's efforts to resolve the issue of Soviet arms control violations without any sanctions against Moscow. In fall 1987, for example, State's Policy Planning staff prepared a memorandum for the Secretary of State on how to deal with such violations. While acknowledging that they represented "matters of most serious concern," the memorandum cautioned against

the U.S. insisting on strict compliance with the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty for fear that this would have “a corrosive effect on U.S.-Soviet relations.” And since, continued the memorandum, it would be “unrealistic to expect the Soviets to dismantle the [illegal Krasnoyarsk] radar unilaterally,” the U.S. should “settle for somewhat less.” A recommendation circulating within the State Department: let the Soviets finish building the illegal facility but get them to promise not to operate it.¹⁰

The Afghan Settlement

The institutional ethos of State puts the highest premium on settling armed conflicts around the world. More often than not, however, State appears to be more concerned with the settlement itself than with a political outcome favorable to U.S. interests. The problem arises when State tries to settle armed conflicts in a way that would leave a totalitarian pro-Soviet regime in power. In Afghanistan, Nicaragua, and Angola, the State Department has diligently sought solutions to the insurgencies in those countries that would end fighting at the price of preserving unpopular communist regimes.

State’s Afghan solution illustrates the pattern best. In 1985 three U.S. Soviet specialists, meeting secretly with Soviet negotiators, found what they considered a means of breaking the deadlock over the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. They drafted an agreement that would end “foreign interference” in Afghan affairs by the removal of the Soviet troops and the termination of Western aid to the Afghan freedom fighters. According to the draft, the Western aid was to end on the day the Soviet withdrawal was to begin.

Denying Support to Freedom Fighters. There was nothing in this agreement that would have prevented the Soviets from continuing to provide military supplies to the Soviet puppet regime in Kabul during and after the Soviet withdrawal. Thus Moscow would be allowed to sustain the communist regime in power, while Western support to the *mujahideen* freedom fighters would be denied.

This secret understanding with Moscow surfaced two years later, in late 1987, when the Afghan accords were about to be guaranteed by the United States and the Soviet Union. The 1985 understanding was a total surprise to Ronald Reagan, and following an outcry in Congress, the President ordered the State Department to inform the Soviets that U.S. military assistance to the freedom fighters would continue as long as Moscow continued to supply the communist regime in Kabul.

State’s Scientific Exchange Policy

The relentless pursuit of agreements with the Soviet Union is often rationalized in ways that overlook completely the reality of dealing with a totalitarian communist state. Typical of such rationalization are State’s arguments in favor of expanding scientific exchanges with

10 The Heritage Foundation, *National Security Record* 105, September 1987, p. 6.

the Soviet Union. This is perhaps the most chaotic area of U.S.-Soviet relations, in which U.S. long-term priorities and interests have never been established and articulated, let alone systematically pursued.¹¹

Backward Science. It is not clear, for example, how the U.S. benefits from scientific cooperation with a country that, by the admission of its own scientists, is often decades behind the U.S. in almost every field. One of the most respected Soviet scholars, cyberneticist and physician Nikolai Amosov, noted recently that only in space exploration and physics could Soviet science be considered in the forefront, while in all other areas it was backward.¹²

Since nearly all areas of Soviet science and technology, in one way or another, are used by the military, the Soviets have always regarded scientific exchanges with the U.S. as means to gather information for their military effort. In the course of these scientific exchanges, Moscow has obtained information in such areas as composite materials for missiles and space systems, aerial photography, lasers, and acoustical data for developing low-frequency sonars for submarines.¹³

Yet, the State Department apparently views the perils of Soviet military-industrial espionage as minor compared with the benefits of strengthening the exchange process. Former Assistant Secretary of Defense Richard Perle recalls that while "no one has overall responsibility for assuring that the risks inherent in exchange programs with the Soviet Union are kept within reasonable bounds. . . the attitude among my diplomatic colleagues is that any exchange is in our interests because it is the State Department's mission to promote exchanges."¹⁴

Successful Soviet Bluff. In exchange agreements with the Soviets, State's diplomacy is based on the same premise as it is in other areas of U.S.-Soviet relations: a mediocre or even a poor agreement is better than none. Thus, shortly before this year's Moscow spring summit, acting Assistant Secretary of State Richard J. Smith concluded an exchange agreement with Moscow, which would allow Soviet access to private U.S. companies engaged in scientific research and development, including major defense contractors. In the opinion of one participant in the negotiations, the agreement "would give the Soviets automatic U.S. government blessing to approach our industries, our companies."¹⁵ When some members of the U.S. team objected to that part of the agreement, the Soviets threatened to "climb on the plane and go home." The Soviet bluff worked. The chief U.S.

11 See, for example, Richard N. Perle, "Like Putting the KGB into the Pentagon," *The New York Times*, June 30, 1987.

12 "Realities, ideals and models," *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, October 5, 1988, p. 14.

13 *Soviet Acquisition of Militarily Significant Western Technology: An Update*. (Washington; D.C.: 1985), pp. 21,

24. For a detailed account of the Soviet uses of scientific exchanges with the U.S. see Mikhail Tsympkin, "U.S.-Soviet Academic Exchanges No Longer Should Favor Moscow," Heritage Foundation *Background* No. 478, January 9, 1986.

14 Perle, *op. cit.*

15 Gene Grabowski, "Scientific agreement terms favor Soviets, worried officials charge," *The Washington Times*, May 19, 1988.

negotiator agreed to the proposed draft. Explained Smith: "I had to make a choice. Either lose the negotiations which would have opened everything, much of which is great value to us, or initial [the agreement]. And I noted that there were concerns."¹⁶

HUMORING THE SOVIETS

State's unwillingness to rock the boat is reflected in the consistent opposition to efforts to force Moscow to reduce the number of its diplomats in the U.S. Long ago it was established beyond reasonable doubt that a large share of these Soviet so-called diplomats were full-time spies. In summer 1985, for example, following the National Security Council's recommendations, President Reagan approved the expulsion of 80 Soviet diplomats from the Soviet mission to the United Nations in New York. Just before the expulsion was announced, Secretary of State Shultz urged the President to postpone the decision, arguing that it would damage U.S.-Soviet relations.¹⁷

State equates U.S.-Soviet negotiations with a dialogue, and dialogue means peace. Thus, instead of a means to advance U.S. interests; negotiations become an end in themselves. As such, they are, in State's view, to be protected by all means available.

For State's functionaries, even nabbing Soviet spies is not a sufficiently urgent reason to jeopardize negotiations. For example, when in 1986 the FBI was preparing to arrest Gennady Zakharov, a Soviet employee/spy at the United Nations, Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs Rozanne Ridgway bitterly opposed the FBI action on the grounds that Zakharov's arrest might disrupt the preparation for the Reykjavik summit.

An especially bizarre effort in this respect occurred on September 15, 1987, during the visit of Soviet Foreign Minister Edward Shevardnadze. On that day, the State Department declared itself a foreign mission in order to take advantage of a law preventing demonstrators from getting too close to a foreign embassy. State did not want Americans to upset the Soviet foreign minister and perhaps distract him from the most important thing of all — negotiations. Shortly thereafter, an appalled Senate passed a bill prohibiting any similar acts in the future.

THE MOSCOW EMBASSY DISASTER

Few, if any, instances of the State Department's treatment of the Soviet Union as "any other country" produced such a spectacular disaster as the case of the new U.S. Embassy in Moscow. Originally scheduled to be completed in 1983 at a cost of \$75 million, the new Embassy was about to be completed in 1987 (at a cost of \$157 million), when it was found to be riddled with Soviet listening devices. The State Department had allowed the Soviets to pre-fabricate concrete components of the structure away from the construction site,

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *The New York Times*, April 20, 1987, p. 6.

where they were able to implant listening devices in them. This happened because during the negotiations the State Department apparently accepted Soviet assurances that "Soviet construction practices did not allow for on-site pouring of concrete."¹⁸

James R. Schlesinger, former Secretary of Defense and Director of Central Intelligence, who was asked by Secretary of State Shultz to investigate the affair, charged State with naivete and complacency, which provided the Soviets "with an opportunity. . . even a temptation, that no one engaged in that line of business was likely to be able to resist."¹⁹ Senator Lawton Chiles, the Florida Democrat, called the concessions made to the Soviets on the Moscow Embassy disgraceful.²⁰ Equally disgraceful, in his view, was the State Department's unwillingness to confront the problem. Said Chiles, "In 1982 we knew we had security problems but construction was not stopped for another three years."²¹ Reagan has since directed that Embassy building be razed completely and a new structure built in its place.

IMPROVING STATE'S PERFORMANCE

The Bush Administration can move where its predecessor has failed. To improve the Department of State's carrying out U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union as formulated by the President, the Bush Administration should:

Recognize State's Limitations

The White House should recognize that the State Department, which is responsible for executing U.S. foreign policy, is ill-equipped institutionally to develop a long-term strategy for dealing with the Soviet Union on the basis of fundamental U.S. national security interests. Because State confuses diplomacy and foreign policy, because it concentrates on current minor achievements at the expense of major future victories, and because its achievement and reward structures are based on the maintenance of warm relations and the conclusion of agreements, the State Department should not be asked to formulate U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union. Bush should reaffirm the role of the White House and the National Security Council in strategic analysis and planning of the entire range of U.S.-Soviet global competition, thus avoiding the experience of the last few years of the Reagan Administration when a decision-making vacuum was filled with traditional State Department agenda and priorities.

To strengthen White House direction of U.S. Soviet policy, the President should create the position of Deputy National Security Advisor to the President for Soviet Global Affairs. As the principal advisor to the President on U.S.-Soviet relations, this official would coordinate Soviet-related activities of various government bureaucracies to assure the faithful execution of presidential policies.

18 *The New York Times*, June 30, 1987, p. 1.

19 *The New York Times*, June 9, 1988, p. 11.

20 *The New York Times*, June 30, 1987, p. 15.

21 *Ibid.*

Upgrade the Organizational Status of Soviet Affairs

The unique position of the Soviet Union as the main U.S. adversary in the world must be reflected in the organizational structure for monitoring and analyzing Soviet global operations and conducting U.S.-Soviet relations. These crucial matters should not be confined to a small part of the State Department bureau that deals with all European nations and Canada. A bureau dedicated exclusively to Soviet domestic and global affairs should be reestablished; it existed by and large from 1924 to 1937 as the Division of Eastern European Affairs, legendary for the quality of its analysis and caliber of its staff. The Division was abolished as a result of what Kennan called the "strongly pro-Soviet influence in the higher reaches of the government."²² The new Bureau should be headed by an Assistant Secretary of State, who is a political appointee.

Supervise U.S.-Soviet Scientific Exchange

To achieve more equitable U.S.-Soviet exchanges and prevent Moscow from using such exchanges for military-industrial espionage, a bipartisan Supervisory Committee for U.S.-Soviet Exchanges should be created by the U.S. Congress. In addition to overseeing the State Department's exchange policy to assure that taxpayer dollars are spent to promote U.S. national interests, the Committee would advise private professional and other groups on the best way to conduct exchanges with the Soviet Union. The Committee would report periodically to Congress on how various government exchange programs were functioning.

Improve Training for Soviet Affairs

State Department staff with a background in Soviet studies in theory are given preference for assignment to Moscow. In practice, these assignments are very much a product of bureaucratic roulette, determined largely by who is available when the need arises and who can be relocated most conveniently to Moscow. While those chosen for senior political and economic assignments to Moscow generally receive adequate language and area training, junior staff do not. Thus administrative and security officers and most clerical and technical personnel are sent to the Soviet Union without sufficient training either in Russian language or in the nature of the Soviet political system. A 1986 State Department study singled out four languages in which State was failing to develop real proficiency. They are Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, and Russian.²³

Training by itself, of course, cannot guarantee a better policy toward the Soviet Union. Yet a better knowledge of the Soviet Union is likely to produce Foreign Service Officers whose instincts are less likely to emphasize accommodation of Moscow and who are less naive about the security risks involved in the assignment to Moscow. As such, special selection and training procedures should be instituted for those chosen to specialize in Soviet affairs. Those who are admitted to the Soviet program should receive more intensive language training plus such specialized area studies as history of Soviet diplomacy, the

22 Kennan, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

23 Duncan L. Clarke, "Why State Can't Lead," *Foreign Policy*, Spring 1987, p. 133.

strategy and tactics of Soviet public diplomacy, propaganda and disinformation, and the conduct of Soviet global affairs.

CONCLUSION

The next few years in U.S.-Soviet relations are likely to be very trying, fraught with risk and opportunity. The U.S. must be prepared to match imaginative Soviet foreign policy with initiatives of its own. These should be timely and creative, and they should faithfully reflect the will of the President as the supreme custodian of U.S. national security.

By virtue of its position as the principal tool of U.S. diplomacy and by the sheer weight of the collective expertise of its employees, the State Department will, and should, play a key role in helping George Bush to face the challenges inherent in U.S.-Soviet relations. Guided by the White House, led by knowledgeable men and women dedicated to carrying out the President's mandate, aware of its limitations and used only for appropriate tasks, the State Department could successfully advance U.S. interests in the crucial world competition that will dominate its foreign policy well into the next century.

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