istituto affari internazionali
88, viale mazzini • 00195 roma
tel. 315892-354456 • cable: intaffari-roma

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THE WARSAW PACT AT THIRTY: SOVIET AND EAST EUROPEAN SUCCESSES AND FAILURES

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by Marco CARNOVALE

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Introduction

The focus of this paper is on the developments of the Warsaw Pact, officially the Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO), with respect to both its original goals and subsequent goals which arose during its thirty year life.

After a brief outline of the background of relevant political and economic components of Soviet-East European relations, I will elaborate on the goals which were at the roots of the Pact's formation in 1955; on how they evolved; on new goals which arose afterwards; and on the degree to which both sets of

goals have been achieved. I will then draw some conclusions with respect to Soviet-East European politico-military relations in the Pact. Finally, I will discuss some implications of all of the above for the West.

My main theses in this context are the following: first, while the WTO was initially mainly an outgrowth of Soviet military considerations, it over time developed more and more into a political organization with a distinct and decisive East European component.

Second, the Soviet Union successfully achieved her initial military objectives but subsequently failed to achieve new political objectives which arose over time. On the contrary, the East Europeans failed to achieve their initial military objectives but subsequently succeeded to achieve much of their new political ones.

Third, the success of the Soviets in consolidating the alliance on the military plane made it possible for the Eastern Europeans to diverge on the political plane, as became evident during the process of renewal of the treaty itself during late 1984 and early 1985.

The background: the USSR and the integration of Eastern Europe

It can not be overemphasized that, for historical, military, politico-ideological and economic reasons, from the Soviet point of view Eastern Europe remains the most important and sensitive region of the world. The Soviet Union, and Russia before it, has periodically tried to integrate it into a greater Russian-dominated political entity, and it has to a large extent been successful.

The historical and military reasons are closely connected and well known: the Soviets, and especially the Russians, will not easily forget that most major threats to the integrity or even the survival of Russia as a political entity came either from or through Eastern Europe. The post-World War II era is the first one in which the Russians wield a virtually complete control of the region and hence are assured that no military threats to their homeland will originate from it. This is the oldest and most deeply felt Soviet security concern with the region, and the one which will likely be the most difficult to eradicate.

From the politico-ideological point of view, Eastern Europe became particularly important only after the defeat of Nazi Germany and the establishment of communist regimes in the various countries of the region. These countries are now part of what the Soviets see as the kernel of the world communist system-to-be, and have therefore acquired paramount importance for Soviet domestic politics: the loss of all or part of Eastern Europe would put tremendous pressure on the ideological legitimacy of the Soviet regime vis-a-vis both its own people and other communists around the world. This concern is much newer, but hardly less important, than the previous one, and there is no reason to think it will become any less important for the foreseeable future. Economically, Eastern Europe has recently become to a good extent comple- mentary to her colossus to the East: she can absorb raw materials and providemanufactured goods in exchange. From the Soviet point of view, the economic convenience of this trade has recently become questionable, but Eastern Europe still provides several imports which the Soviets could not acquire elsewhere--e.g. in high technology. This is the newest and probably the least important of all Soviet concerns in the region, as well as the most volatile and subject to change even in the short term.

For these three broad reasons, the Soviet Union strives toward the integration of Eastern European countries with herself and among each other.

This process of integration, which has been particularly noticeable after Stalin's death, has extended over the economic, the political and the military fields, albeit in different forms and with different degrees of success. Parts of the region, of course, have been absorbed in the USSR altogether--the Baltic states, Moldavia, Ruthenia and parts of Galitia and Eastern Prussia. On the contrary, Finland, Yugoslavia, Albania and Turkey, at the extremes fringes of the region, have managed to resist all Soviet pressure. But the core of Central-Eastern Europe falls somewhere in between these two extremes. By way of background, I will briefly highlight how this process of integration has developed economically, politically and militarily, and I will then assess the role of the Warsaw Pact in it.

Economically, after the war Stalin did little more than outrightly exploit Eastern Europe. The various means and procedures used to this end are well known and need not be repeated here; the bottom line was simply that resources flowed eastward much more than westward, and integration was a zero-sum game in which Eastern Europe played the role of an oil well rapidly being driven toward exhaustion. This process of outright exploitation ceased in the mid-'50s, when Khrushchev put economic relations on a more equitable basis. The trend continued until in the '70s the Soviet Union began to actually subsidize both exports to and imports from Eastern Europe. This phenomenon has been autoritatively dealt with elsewhere in this volume and will not be expanded upon here. Suffice it to say that in the course of 20 to 25 years the net flow of resources had reversed its direction and has become increasingly costly for the Soviet Union: economic integration has moved from exploitation to subsidization and is now a Soviet net economic liability.

Politically, Soviet-East European relation were originally based on straightforward subordination. After Stalin's death, it became apparent that the prevailing view among his successors was that Eastern European regimes should be enticed to cooperate rather than just obliged to obey unquestioningly. This was due in great measure to Khrushchev's belief that brother parties in Eastern Europe could be trusted and did not need constant Soviet whipping, and even though he was burnt by events in Hungary and Poland in 1956, the pattern of Soviet-East European political relations did not revert to the Stalinist scheme. Inevitably, however, the diluition of subordination brought along a measure of divergence in the initially monolithic political scenario of Soviet-East European relations. Albania left the bloc altogether.

However, existing divergences with other countries--including the maverick Romania--are not dangerous for the USSR because they have developed within a consolidated alliance framework in which the leaderships of all members still share fundamental interests and perspectives and, for now, differ on matters which are not vital for the political cohesion of the alliance itself. Such political cohesion is facilitated by the current East European economic dependence on the USSR mentioned above, and also by the military interdependence which constitutes the main object of this paper. In sum, Iwould argue that political relations still constitute an asset for the Soviets, even if they contain the potential for deterioration should either East European perceptions continue to broaden their divergence from those of the USSR or Soviet subsidization become too expensive for Moscow to sustain.

Military integration is in my view the best asset which the Soviet Union has been able to build within the framework of her relations with the junior members of the alliance. Such integration has been gradually developing within the framework of the Warsaw Pact. 1985 marked the thirtieth anniversary of the Pact's foundation as well as the expiration of the initial thirty-year term.

The formal treaty was renewed in April in Warsaw, in the very same hall where it had been signed in 1955, for another thirty year period. It seems then appropriate at this time, to evaluate the performance of the military alliance from the point of view of its members in light of its initial objectives, of new objectives which developed over time and of events which punctuated its history.

The origins of the Warsaw Pact

The Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance was signed in Warsaw on 14 May 1955, in the wake of the ratification of the Paris agreements which sanctioned West Germany's entry into NATO and one day before the signing of the Austrian Treaty which reinstated sovereignty to a nonaligned government in Vienna. While both of these events certainly contributed to the Soviet decision to create a military alliance among the socialist countries of Eastern Europe (1), other considerations played a role as well. The object of this section is to outline some of these other factors.

It is important is to underline that this was an essentially Soviet decision, which the Eastern Europeans did not object to in the least. Four factors operated simultaneously to give the Soviets virtually unopposed power over the formation of the military alliance. These four factors were: a)Soviet military domination of and actual presence in Eastern Europe; b) the then still close loyalty of all of the national communist parties to the CPSU; c) the prostrated state of the economies of Eastern Europe; d) the fact that no credible sign of support for resistance against the USSR came from the West. Each of these factors was indispensable to give the USSR the unquestioning support of her satellites--precisely because of these four factors, at that time one could hardly speak of "allies".

Yet, Soviet preponderance notwithstanding, the leaderships of the Eastern European countries had reasons of their own to welcome the institutionalization of their military bind with the USSR. It would be erroneous to think that the WTO was merely a Soviet imposition upon the smaller socialist countries, even if the USSR possessed the wherewithal to force such decision upon them. In sum, it can be concluded that "in retrospect, as it was set up, the Warsaw Treaty served multiple Soviet and to a lesser extent East European purposes" (2).

There is no agreement in the Western literature as to which objectives were more or less important in the minds of the Soviet and East European leaders and it is probably not too important that an answer to that question be found. Moreover, Soviet leaders differed among themselves as to the emphasis that each of them attached to the treaty. Molotov, the then Foreign Minister, saw the Pact mostly as a useful tool for "socialist consolodation", i.e. as a mechanism for internally oriented bloc politics. Khrushchev, on the other hand, wanted the new socialist alliance to become one more asset in the struggle against the West, and thus expected it to play more of an externally oriented foreignpolicy role. (3)

Eastern Europeans surely differed among each other at least in the emphasis that each placed on one particular aspect of the treaty or another. However, for analytical purposes, it is useful to group together the common denominators of Eastern European motives and compare them with those of the Soviets.

In general, two considerations are in order: first, the Soviet were much more successful than the Eastern Europeans in achieving their ends. Second, one will notice how both Soviet and East European objectives were predominantly, even if not solely, of a military nature; conversely, the next section of this paper will show how by the end of the sixties the main goals had become of a fundamentally political character.

Soviet initial objectives in the WTO

Soviet initial military objectives, by far the most important ones, in the formation of the Warsaw Pact can be summarized as follows:

a)Improve the military effectiveness of the Eastern European military establishments.

b)Counter the then on-going build-up of NATO, and particularly of the Federal Republic of Germany.

c)Gain a legal right for the continuing presence of their troops in Hungary and Romania.

d)Shift some of the military burden for the defence of "socialist gains" to the East Europeans.

There was also one political goal which the Soviet leaders probably also had in mind, and that was:

e)Create the image of a genuine alliance for their East European satellites.

Finally, some of the Western literature on this topic refers to two more possible Soviet goals, which, however, I will contend were not in the minds of the Soviet leaders in 1955 and only later acquired significant relevance for them; these are:

f)Diminish the degree of national control over national armies.

g)Create an instrument that could be used to police the bloc against internal threats to the survival of the communist regimes.

will now examine each of these in turn:

a)Improve the Eastern European military effectiveness. As Malcom Mackintosh aptly pointed out, one major military problem for the Soviets was that Eastern European forces were very poorly organized to fight effectively against NATO forces (4). In 1955 there was a need for both organizational and hardware improvement in these forces.

Organizationally, one should bear in mind that, during Stalin's time, these forces were controlled through non-institutional personal links--the example of Soviet Marshal Rokossovski serving as Minister of Defence of Poland being only the most glamorous case of a long list of high and middle-rank officers whom the Soviets employed to maintain strict control of Eastern European forces. After Stalin's death, however, this system was no longer considered either desirable or viable in the long run. It was not viable because Khrushchev could see how such direct Soviet interference was having a disruptive effect on the pride and morale of the Eastern Europeans. It was not desirable, because Khrushchev believed that the Eastern European brother parties could be trusted more than Stalin had done and therefore no longer wanted to base Soviet-East European relations on the earlier suspicion and mistrust.

Therefore, the old system began to be done away with. As it began to disintegrate, there obviously arose a need for an alternative system of control which should ensure the continuing effective coordination of the Eastern European military establishments with the Red Army should their contribution berequired in a conflict (5). Hence the need for a multinational institutionalized organization that could achieve this end without the blatant breaches of sovereignty of previous years.

East European forces needed also more and more modern arms and equipment. Much of what they had was World War II vintage and fairly obsolete by 1955.(6) The Soviets did provide additional weaponry as well as military education for the East European officer corps, and thus contributed somewhat to the modernization of those forces (7), and thereby naturally became more interested in increasing military cooperation and coordination with them. (8) The Soviets

also dropped their previous insistence on very high manpower levels and allowed a rationalization of the force structure which entailed force cuts.

However, it should be underlined that, until 1961, this was coordination and not integration. It was only in 1961, one year after Marshal Grechko had substituted Marshal Konev at the helm of the Pact, (9) that real steps toward integration were initiated by the Soviets. Meetings of the Political Consultative Committee became more frequent, more and better equipment was provided to the junior allies, the training of Eastern European officers in Soviet academies was intensified and, perhaps most importantly, joint maneuvers began to be held. This shift from coordination to integration was dictated by military considerations, but carried with it the beginning of the erosion of Soviet absolute preponderance within the alliance as the junior partners began to have more and more opportunities to raise their individual national concerns at multilateral meeting where they would not have to face the Soviets alone as was previously the case. This point will be further elaborated below.

In sum, it can be concluded that the Soviet Union has been fundamentally successful with respect to this first military goal. It is true that the effectiveness of the Eastern European military contribution to the Warsaw Pact is still doubtful because the Soviets are reluctant to share the use of the most advanced weaponry and because of the shaky political reliability of most junior partners in the alliance (10); but the overall military potential of the bloc in the event of a confrontation with NATO has certainly benefited from the collective modernization, coordination and integration which has developed through the years within the context of the Warsaw Pact (11)

However, in recent times the combat value of Eastern European troops has fallen from the top priority list of the Soviet Union. Probably as a consequence of both economic constraints and, more importantly, of political second thoughts after the events in Czechoslovakia and in Poland in the late '60s and through the '70s and early '80s, the Soviets have slowed down their transfers of advanced weapons to their Eastern European allies. The one exception to this trend seems to be the highly modernized National People's Army of the German Democratic Republic, which however does not command front level units, is closely integrated with the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany, and would not operate in any strategically significant independent way in case of war.(12)

b) Counter NATO and particularly FRG build-up. It has been authoritatively argued that, because of the formation of NATO, Stalin's successors at the helm of the USSR felt a need for the involvement of the East Europeans in the defence of their own territory so as to strengthen the Soviet buffer zone facing NATO. (13) Stalin himself was of course much too suspicious of the satellites to delegate any major responsibility for the defence of their own homelands, but by the mid-'50s Soviet-East European relations had changed: Khrushchev had much more faith than his predecessor in the autonomous potential of the people's democracies for achieving political legitimacy and economic viability, and therefore thought he could entrust them with military responsibilities as well.

The admission of the Federal Republic of Germany into NATO surely strengthened Khrushchev's confidence that the East Europeans would prove reliable allies against NATO and rightly so. The war was still less than ten years away, Nazi horrors had hardly been forgotten and Bonn's revanchism was quite unequivocable. The nightmare of a new rebirth of Prussianism and German militarism loomed large in Eastern Europe, (14) and was only made worse by the prospect of West Germany acquiring nuclear weapons at some time in the

future. With the benefit of hindsight, we can argue today that entry into NATO actually worked to slowly temper German revanchism and that the continuing presence of US forces and nuclear weapons contributed significantly to the West Germans' decision to forego their own nuclear force. But this could not have been so clear to the East Europeans in 1955.

Robin Remington took this argument to the extreme and argued that the formation of the Warsaw Pact can be interpreted as one aspect of the Soviet Union's German policy, (15) and her thesis is reinforced by the fact that the East Germans--whose value in fighting West Germans must have seemed highly questionable in 1955--were initially kept out of the Treaty altogether and later gained only a partial capability to conduct military operations.

The Soviets have not been as successful with respect to this second goal as they have been with the first, in that the WTO did not deter or reverse neither West Germany's integration into NATO nor its development of the Bundeswehr into a formidable conventional deterrent. But they were successful in a more general military sense in that the greater effectiveness of Soviet and allied forces which resulted from the formation of the Pact was achieved partly thanks to the political steam provided by the FRG's integration in NATO. The next part of this paper will deal with specific Eastern European motives for joining the Pact; suffice it to say here that NATO's build-up in the eraly '50s and Germany's new status in 1955 made Soviet efforts much easier. The official Soviet argument is that this is precisely the reason behind the formation ofthe Pact; this seems a little farfetched in that it neglects all of the other factors analyzed in ths paper, but it does seem that it was at least the last drop which pushed the Soviets to go ahead with the treaty.

c) Acquire a permanent legal right to station troops in Eastern Europe. With the signing of the Astrian Treay in 1955, the Soviet Union lost the official justification for the continuing presence of her troops in Hungary and Romania. The treaty provided for a complete withdrawal within forty days of the signing; thus, it was hardly a coincidence that the WTO was signed within twenty-four hours of it. The Red Army had of course withdrawn from Czechoslovakia already in 1946; her presence in East Germany remained of course very substantial in the absence of a peace treaty, but the issue had not yet been settled with Poland and Albania.

While it can be argued that the USSR did not necessarily need the WTO to keep her troops in Hungary and Romania, there are several reasons to contend that the treaty made things easier for Moscow. First, as of 1955 there were still no status-of-force agreements with the individual Eastern European countries, and those agreements were finally signed--with the exceptions of Albania and Czechoslovakia--only in the 24 months which followed the WTO founding, and there is reason to believe that their smooth conclusion was made easier by the previous existence of the multilateral WTO. Second, the WTO substituted for bilateral agreements in one strategically important country with which no agreement was signed, that is Albania. No Soviet troops were permanently stationed in Czechoslovakia until 1968.

Thus, I would conclude that the creation of the WTO contributed, from theSoviet point of view, to the military stabilization of Eastern Europe by facilititing and reinforcing an international legal framework by which the USSR legitimized her right to perpetual military presence in the region. Thisframework was further strengthened by the the lack of any treaty provision for the withdrawal of a member state before twenty years, and then only after a notification of one full year, during which the Soviets would have time to exert pressure to reverse the decision (16)

d) Shift military burden to Eastern Europeans. Several authors have emphasized that one reason why the Soviets wanted to involve the Eastern Europeans more directly in a collective defence mechanism was to better exploit their resources. The three main ways in which this could be done were: i) to tap their manpower reservoir; ii) to push them to increase their financial contributions; iii) to force tham to restructure their armaments industry so as to exploit the comparative advantages that each country had to offer.

The manpower motive is a convincing one (17). The East European armed forces had large but underutilized conscripted armies, which included considerable skilled manpower. As mentioned above, however, the integration of combat forces in the Pact did not begin until the early '60s; in the first several years Eastern European skilled manpower was utilized mostly for non-combat roles (18). This of course represented an economic burden on the Eastern Europeans in that it drained skilled labor from their civilian economies.

The financial motive is less clear, because the prostated state of the Eastern European economies could hardly have looked as a promising source of financial contribution to the Soviets. In any case, the well known pattern of economic exploitation which the USSR had already set up since 1945--see introduction above--did not require the additional infrastructure of the WTO to be implemented. Subsequent events seem to confirm this skepticism: even if it is notoriously difficult to properly compute the level of defence expenditures of the varius Pact member states, all estimates agree that the USSR continuedto contribute the overwhelming share of those expenses; one author estimated that share to be roughly equal to 80% of all Pact expenditures, clearly a higher burden if one compares with the relative weight of the GNPs of the same group of countries. (19) Moreover, the WTO burden sharing is closely intertwined with the broader web of Soviet-East European economic relations, which in turn is heavily influenced by political considearions. Suffice it to point out that, for political reasons, the Soviet Union has been in recent years subsidizing other CMEA member states, and that such subsidies have been required by non-military considerations, thus upsetting any intra-WTO burden sharing arrangement. However, there appears to be a correlation between the extent to which single Eastern European countries are willing to spend for the common defence and Soviet subsidies: subsidies have increased for the GDR which almso increased her military burden in the WTO; they decreased for Romania, which not only decreased her military effort but also made public her disagreement with the other allies on this matter; subsidies remained stable for Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria, whose military efforts also remained fairly constant; the only exception here is of course Poland, which in consideration of the particularly shaky state of her economy has been awarded increased subsidies (the extent of which is however unclear) while reducing her defence expenditures. (20)

The final burden-sharing motive derived from strightforward military considerations: the division of labor in the military industries produced several desirable effects from the Soviet point of view. First, it exploited more effectively the comparative advantages of individual countries throughlarger economies of scale. Second, it made each Eastern European country dependent on the others, and most of all on the USSR, for the supply of a large array of military hardware categories--the USSR, of course, remainedelf-sufficient. Third, it helped to force Soviet design and technologiesthroughout the arms industries of the alliance, thus increasing Soviet political as well as military leverage. (21)

In sum, the Soviets were quite successful in shifting the national resources of Eastern European countries toward the pursuit of WTO objectives. Apart from the fuzzy question of defence expenditures, the Eastern Europeans did incur opportunity costs in terms of skilled manpower and in terms of independent military technology development. The fact that they, too, somewhat benefited from the increased economies of scale does not take away from the fundamental conclusion that the USSR succeeded in her effort to increase the collective effort in a defence establishment in which she commands a preponderant position.

Let us now consider two more non-military goals which some Western analysts believe contributed to the Soviet decision to create the Pact.

e) Create an alliance image for the bloc. I have already mentioned in this paper why the successors of Stalin wanted to do away with the most odious of his ways of dealing with the Eastern Europeans; one of the undesirable consequences of Stalin's handling of Soviet-East European relations was a definite image problem for the bloc, both within the member states and vis-a-vis the West. Stalin's arrogance and ruthlessness had expectedly produced much resentment and hatred in Eastern Europe and had seriously damaged the West Europeans' perception of the USSR as well. The creation of a formal multilateral alliance among nominally sovereign states was also intended to boost the dignity and the prestige of the East European socialist regimes vis-a-vis both their own people and the West.

This was particularly needed in light of the existence of NATO (22) on the Western side and of the upcoming Geneva negotiations, which at that timewere seen by some to be possible precursors to long-term pan-European talks (23).

In sum, unlike with their military objectives, I conclude that the Soviets were on the whole unsuccessful with respect to this political goal. The image of the USSR in Eastern Europe did not benefit a great deal from the new formal dignity accorded to the junior allies, and the West was never convinced that the creation of the WTO marked the birth of a new Soviet-East European military and foreign policy consensus and the end of Soviet interference and prevarication. The fact that the WTO has acquired a de jure recognition in some East-West fora such as the M(B)FR talks does little to change this.

Some Western analysts contend that the USSR had two additional reasons that prompted it to push for the creation of the Warsaw Pact: reduce East European national control over national armies and create an instrument for bloc policing purposes. I believe neither of these reasons played a role in the Soviet decision.

On the first issue, some argue that the Soviets felt the need to increase their control over the military establishments of Eastern Europe by decreasing that of the national command authorities over their own respective armies. (24) Others argue that the WTO served to maintain Soviet control in the wake of the renationalization of the various national armies which the Soviets began to implement in 1955 by calling back the thousands of Soviet officers who had served in Eastern European services since the end of the war. (25). These analysts further argue that Romania, Yugoslavia and Albania were able to maintain their national sovereignty precisely because they maintained national control over their national armies.

Quite to the contrary, I would argue that the Khrushchev leadershipgenuinely intended to restore national control over the East European national armies by 1955. Not only does this hypothesis fit in well with the general Khrushchevian tendency towards increased trust for the allies and involvement of the national authorities in the affairs of the bloc; it is also

confirmed by the fact that until the early '60s there was hardly any Soviet effort toward the effective integration of the WTO armed forces. Confirmation for this can also be found in authoritative Soviet sources such as the 1962 edition of Marshal Sokolovski's Military Strategy (26)

On the second issue, it must be noted that the WTO played no role whatsoever in the repression of the Hungarian revolutin of 1956, when the Soviets acted alone: No meeting of the Political Consultative Committee was held after January 1956, long before the situation in Hungary developed to the point of requiring the Soviets to consider intervention. Moreover, there was never any mention of Soviet-East European consultation after the invasion. Finally, there was never any East European endorsement of the Soviet action. (27) In the Czechoslovak action of 1968, the WTO played only a marginally greater role than in 1956: it did put political pressure on Dubcek by issuing declarations of disapproval for his policies and it did ask for maneuvers on Czechoslovak soil, thus facilitating the eventual repression. But the actual military contribution to the invasion was small: Romania did not participate, Albania used it as a pretext to formally abandon the Pact altogether; Bulgaria sent only token representatives; and Poland and the GDR sent four divisions but pulled them out almost immediately. Moreover, all operations were conducted under direct Soviet, not WTO, command. (28)

Eastern European initial objectives in the WTO

I will now turn to Eastern European objectives at the time of the formation of the WTO. As I mentioned above, the East Europeans did not have the leverage in 1955 to alter Soviet policies in their region in any meaningful sense, but they nonetheless did not just give in to Soviet pressure when they accepted to sign the treaty; on the contrary, they had at least three military reasons of their own to do so. Such goals can be summarized as follows:

a) Extend the protection of the Soviet nuclear umbrella to themselves.

b) Counter German revanchism.

c) Keep themselves in power.

a) Soviet nuclear protection. In 1955, it was far from clear which countries would have gained access to their own nuclear arsenals in the next few years. Prediction varied, but the consensus was that the number would have been much higher than it then actually turned out to be. Given the economic and technological superiority of the Wester European countries and the general cold war political climate, it was not irrational on the part of the East European regimes to assume that it was in their best interest to try and find a way to tie their defence and survival to that of the USSR. (29) It is unlikely that they expected to be attacked by the West, and it is also unlikely that they expected that the Soviet Union would risk nuclear war with the United States for their sake. But it nonetheless probably seemed reasonable to them that a formal alliance with the USSR would have helped restrain the West Europeans, and particularly the West Germans, from any action that did not have the full and unconditional backing of the United States behind it.

In retrospect the East Europeans failed to achieve the protection of the Soviet umbrella. Nuclear weapons did not proliferate in Europe beyond England and France, neither of which ever had a desire to interfere militarily inEastern Europe. West Germany, the country which might have been the most dangerous in this respect, gave up both nuclear weapons and any hope for forceful change in the region. Therefore any real threat to the region todaywould have to have the United States behind it, and if that were the case it seems unlikely that the Soviets would accept the risk of mutual assured

destruction for the sake of Eastern Europe. In many ways the WTO non-nuclear states are faced today by the same dilemma of trying to "extend" the deterrent of their allied superpower that worries non-nuclear NATO states.

b) German revanchism. With or without nuclear weapons, in 1955 Germany must have looked like a long-term threat by the Easter European regimes. One need only remember that the Munich agreement of 1938 had not yet been repudiated--and will not be until 1966. The Eastern Europeans also remembered that the USSR did not resist German expansionism in the region in the late '30s, at least in part because it did not have the military wherewithal to do so. Joining forces with the Soviets and allowing them to be more closely based to the West German border was a way to make it possible for the USSR to defend Eastern Europe while acting in her own self interest--i.e. fighting the Germans in Eastern Europe while trying to prevent war from reaching Soviet territory.

The East Europeans failed in this as well. As mentioned above, NATO membership moderated, rather than emboldened, German behaviour towards the East, and by the late sixties it became increasingly clear that the Bundeswehr has ceased to be a credible military threat to the status quo. I would conclude that the NATO allies and Willy Brandt did more to moderate West German attitudes toward future change of the post-war geopolitical situation in Eastern Europe than the alliance offered to the states in the region by the USSR.

c) Maintain power at home. When discussing Soviet-East European relations, it must be remembered that all states in the WTO, including Romania, still share their most important long term strategic interests: to remain in power. This requires not only facing off external threats but also repressing internalones. Hence, membership in an alliance under the patronage of the Soviet Union was probably considered by the East European leaders to be a good insurance policy against internal turmoil, as potential trouble-makers would be deterred knowing that the USSR was behind the local regime they might want to overthrow. In this sense, the WTO was hoped to serve an internal, as well as external, security role (30).

Here, too, the East European regimes failed: their restless populations have not been deterred by the USSR and when the discontent over domestic conditions built up, they rose against their leaders in defiance of the Soviets. This did not mean that they always resisted repression or fought to the bitter end; but it does mean that fear of the Soviets was always prevailed upon by the hope for change. Soviet intervention (or threat thereof) did of course contribute to repress internal upheavals; but it would have done so also without the WTO. On the contrary, formal alliance with the Soviets did very little to prevent such upheavals, as some of the leaders who entered into it probably hoped it would.

Transformations in the Warsaw Pact

The late sixties witnessed a gradual increase of the political significance of the WTO. This increase manifested itself formally through an upgrading of the institutional framework, but could also be detected in the overall higher emphasis accorded to the general interallied political debate. The institutional framework of the Pact was developed and expanded in 1969 with the creation of the Military Council, which greatly increased the access of theEast Europeans to the decision-making process. Meetings of the Pact's policy-making bodies became more frequent and regularized. This transformation was made easier by the fact that the WTO had always been a basically peacetime organization, structured around peacetime rather than wartime

requirement. Malcom Mackintosh is right when he states that the WTO already looked in many ways like a traditional European War Office, with a largely administrative role. (31)

At a more general noninstitutional level, there were at least two domestic and two international reasons why the WTO acquired a greater political and a lesser military face in the late '60s and early '70s. International considerations were by far the most important. First, the Czechoslovak crisis seems to have pushed the Soviets and the loyalists in Eastern Europe to put more emphasis on the need for greater collective political action to prevent the repetition of situations in which the leaders of one particular country in the alliance might go too far in the pursuit of a reformist line before they had to be stopped by violent means. For a variety of reasons the Soviets and the loyalists would have rather avoid force it at all possible to maintain cohesion in the bloc. Therefore, political activity in the WTO was an obvious alternative to keep under collective control undesirable developments in this or that country, and to exert political pressure early enough to avoid having to use military force later.

Second, the political debate within the alliance rose to higher level of relevance and intensity also with respect to East-West issues. This process had begun in the mid-'60s when United States intervention in Viet Nam provided the Soviets convenient ammunition for the collective political mobilization of the junior allies. The dawn of detente called for increased coordination of the foreign policies of the WTO, and all the East Europeans--with the exception ofUlbricht--were eager to pursue the new opportunities opened by the renewed East-West economic and political openings, and particularly by the Soviet-German and Soviet-American dialogue. (32)

The first reason was also connected with the Czechoslovak crisis. In theaftermath of the repression, the Soviets feared the destructive effect that the breach of Czechoslovak sovereignty could have had in the long struggle for legitimacy which had been a top priority for the other Eastern European regimes ever since they had risen to power. Giving the junior allies a greater visibility in collective security arrangements was intended to aid that uphill struggle.

Some analysts point also to a second domestic reason behind the increased political character of the WTO. They argue that the organization had over the years become a consolidated bureaucracy, and displayed therefore a natural tendency to expand and widen its scope (33)

There is no general consensus as to the degree to which each of these four factors was important in determining the "politicization" of the WTO, and it is probably not too important that a definitive answer be found. It is however important to note that this transformation changed the nature of the objectives and expectations of all the members of the alliance. Both Soviet and East European objectives in the WTO acquired an increasingly political character after the end of the first decade of the Pact's life. However, unlike with their original military objectives discussed above, the East European were much more successful with respect to these political ones. On the contrary, the Soviets largely failed in theirs. After a brief overview of these new sets of objectives, I will draw what I believe to be some consequences which are relevant for the West.

Emerging Soviet Objectives in the Warsaw Pact

During the second decade of existance of the WTO, there arose two new broad Soviet objectives which either did not exist or were largely dormant before. They can be described as follows:

a) Create an instrument for the coordination of the foreign policies of thevarious East European governments.

b) Coordinate the military establishments of the alliance's member states.

a) Integrate the foreign policies of Eastern Europe. While the Khrushchev leadership did want to involve the East Europeans more directly in bloc affairs, it certainly did not wish to allow the foreign policies of the individual countries to diverge from that of the Soviet Union. In light of the declining relevance of the Cominform--which was eventually dissolved in 1956--the WTO was seen as the logical alternative to ensure political cohesion in the bloc. Shifting the emphasis from inter-party to inter-state relations was considered more in tune with the new image that the Soviets were trying to create for the East Europeans. However, not everyone in the Kremlin was happy with the new arrangement, and the hardliners complained in the late '50s that the Pact was not as effective as the Comintern and Cominform had been and advocated the rebirth of an inter-party organization. (34)On the whole they were probably right; the political role of the WTO was negligible in the early years, but it is not clear that a new Cominform would have been more effective.

Yet, until the Czechoslovak crisis of 1968, Moscow did not make extensive use of the WTO as an instrument to channel foreign policies directives to her junior partners.(35) Foreign policy coordination was very often pushed informally, and the official declarations of the WTO never ceased to stress the sovereign rights of each member state. The one formal aspect of the treaty which was useful here was the provision whichforbade member states to join conflicting alliances. This kind of constraint would clearly have been more difficult to build into the bilateral treaties. (36)

However, after the events of 1968, the political bodies of the WTO witnessed increasingly frequent and intense activity. Viet Nam, detente, China,defence expenditures and Afghanistan have all been discussed among the allies, and the USSR has often had to compromise over the text of collective declarations. Without going into the details of the many meetings that took place in the last fifteen years or so, one need only recall the bland criticism of China in 1978 and 1983, thje bland approval of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in 1980, and the bland endorsement of Soviet policies in the Middle East to conclude that, while the Soviets certainly remained the most influential voice in the alliance, they have had to repeatedly accomodate to compromises with the East Europeans. (37)

In recent years, the Soviet Union has added another dimension to the political debate within the WTO, that is the policy toward the Third World. In particular, the USSR would like her junior allies to on the one hand accept closer relations with Third World countries with a socialist orientation and on the other to contribute to support pro-Soviet factions elsezwhere. Chapter ?? ((Berner) in this volume has already dealt with the economic side of this issue, and the treatment of it will not be repeated here. On the military side, the USSR has reportedly tried to expand the scope of the WTO in terms of both its membership and its defence responsibilities. (38) Such attempts have however consistently and successfully been resisted by the East Europeans--and particularly by the Romanians--on the basis of a narrow interpretation of the letter of the treasty, which confines the responsibilities of the signatories to the European continent. (39)It is no accident that, with the limioted exception of some East German military advisers whom have served in various countries of the Third World, the Soviets have sought the cooperation of Cuba when they did not want to intervene directly but needed allied military force to be used around the globe.

b) Military integration. Military integration was only pursued in the WTOafter 1961, when the new Commander, Soviet Marshal Grechko, began to hold regular joint maneuvers. It can be convincingly argued that such a decision was taken, at least in part, in order to avoid the repetition of the Romanian and Albanian experiences, that is to say the adoption of a territorial defence posture which helped those countries to break away from the military structure of the WTO between 1958 and 1961. (40) On the contrary, the Soviet pushed for the adoption of a "coalition defence" strategy, which certainly makes good military sense for defence planning against NATO, but it also has the collateral advantage of restricting the East European ability to opt out of a conflict.(41)

Moreover, these exercises served as a catalyst for a whole series of other measures directed toward the amalgamation of the fighting forces of Eastern Europe with those of the USSR. First, they activated the Joint Command, which had been created in 1955 but had been laying dormant since. Second, they prompted the standardization of the arsenals of the various countries so as to icrease the interoperabilities of the forces. Third, they catalyzed the adoption of common fighting docrines--i.e. the Soviet doctrine. Fourth, they prompted the further integration of the administrative structures. Finally, they increased the requirement for joint officer training, and since practically all of it has taken place at Soviet schools and academies, this built a kind of esprit de corps among officers around the region and thus conferred a further element of homogeneity to the various national forces. (42)

Emerging East European Objectives in the WTO

The East Europeans, on their part, also developed distinctively new objectives in the WTO. These are:

a) Use the WTO as a collective political forum against both Soviet preponderance and possible national deviation.

b) Increase bloc cooperation but resist integration. a) WTO as a political forum. There are indications that the East Europeans successfully tried to increase their political leverage against the USSR by making use of the collective WTO bodies, particularly those which were created in the last fifteen years or so, i.e. in the period when the political role of the WTO has been on the rise. (43)Such new bodies include the Council of Defence Ministers, the ilitary Council and the Committee on Coordination of Military Technology--created in 1969--and the Council of Foreign Ministers and the Joint Secretariat--created in 1976.

Instances of resistance to Soviet foreign policy positions have already been mentioned above; suffice it here to reiterate that this resistance was in all likelihood made easier, maybe possible, by the opportunity that the various WTO organisms provided for collective--as opposed to bilateral--Soviet-East European debate. While Romania has been the most vociferous to resist Soviet policies--e.g. with her public rejection of the Soviet request for increased defence budget in 1978--several other countries have been able to articulate their separate voices at various times.

In other words, when issues of disagreement come up in the agenda, the East Europeans find it easier to confront the Soviets in multilateral gatherings which help to diffuse Soviet preponderant power than in bilateral meeting where each has to face the Soviets alone. (44)

Comparing the present situation with that of some twenty years ago, one must conclude that the East Europeans have achieved a good measure of success in their effort to increase their political input into the WTO. The extent of this success is of course subject to somle uncertainty, but the negotiations

leading to the renewal of the Pact during 1984-85 seem to indicate that it was not negligible, and that it is likely to continue.

b) Promote cooperation but resist integration. The regimes of EasternEurope share common long-term political goals with the USSR. Both they and the Kremlin desire to perpetuate their rule indefinitely, be it out of ideological reasons, or out of strict self-interest, or out of both. This is not surprising, as most rulers usually desire to hold on to power. This commonality of goals constitute the basis of a mutual search for cooperation between the Soviets and their allies. I believe that even Romania, and under extreme circumstances Yugoslavia and Albania as well, would not like to see the Soviets leave Eastern Europe and retreat into isolationism, as that would sooner or later spell the end of their communist rule. None of the regimes of Eastern Europe, no mtter what their particular disagreements with the Soviets, would feel more secure without the Soviet military weight projected into the continent. Each would have to fear both the long-term incompatibility of their rule with the overwhelming power of the West and, not less importantly, the reignition of old but by no means forgotten regional conflicts that the Soviets have forced into the background of intra-WTO relations. Looking at the issue from a different perspective, one could argue with ????Cladwell tht the East Europeans would need the security cooperation of their colossus to the East independently of the ideological system prevailing in the region. (45)

However, the East Europeans do not have as much of an objective interest in integration with the USSR or among themselves. They have in fact resistedSoviet attempts at integration, and even on the military plane they have been at least partially successful when, in 1976, the Political Consultative Committee's communique after the Bucharest meeting talked of cooperation but not of integration.(46) This does not of course mean that no military integration has taken place; much indeed has. But it does mean that international security considerations do not detract from the nationalistic desire of all East European governments to avoid any outside interference in their internalpriorities and in their diverse relations with the West.

Prospects for Soviet-East European Relations in the WTO.

There seem to be strong reasons to expect some continuity and some change in Soviet-East European relations in the WTO. On the one hand, there continues to be a fundamental identity of security interests among the various leaderships of the WTO. These interests include both the preservation of a strong military posture vis-a-vis NATO and the prevention of destabilizing national deviations within the region itself. All current WTO members are agreed on this, and even the defiant Romanians alternate expression of dissent on specific issues with reiterations of solidarity and support for the alliance. Bucharest resists the perfecting of the WTO but remains firmly committed to its existence in its present form (47).

On the other hand, several factors might cause fundamental change in the intra-alliance relations. First, the evolution of the WTO indicates that the East Europeans are increasing their say in it, especially at the political level. We have seen why the Soviets have had reasons of their own to allow this to happen, but in the long run East European leverage may develop beyond what the Soviets originally intended.

The case of Romania is particularly relevant here. The military problem posed by Bucharest's defiant attitude is clearly not an insurmontable one:while the WTO might need Romanian help against either the Southern flank of NATO or Yugoslavia--or both--neither possibility is a major military threat for the USSR. However, given the increasing political importance of the WTO,

Ceaucescu's policy of autonomy is harmful both because it very often prevents the Soviets from reaching consensus and because it might eventually open the Pandora's box of Eastern European nationalism, with consequences for bloc unity which are difficult to forecast but which might well snowball into theunmanageable for the Soviets.

Second, East European nationalism is on the rise. The conflict between nationalists and Muscovites is not new among the ranks of the communist parties of the region, but in recent times the former seem to be gaining strength, particularly in Hungary and East Germany; nationalist feelings have always been high in Poland and Romania, and remain so; finally, there are some symptoms of nationalism also in Bulgaria, while Czechoslovakia seems to be the only country where the Muscovites are basically unchallenged. Should nationalism continue to intensify around the region, the USSR might well be faced with heigthened challenges to her current protectorate over the junior members, particularly if nationalist outbursts should break out in several countries simultaneously

Finally, economic problems might also work to increase East European leverage vis-a-vis the USSR, in the WTO as well as in other bloc bodies. The USSR can not allow the junior allies to risk political destabilization because of popular discontent. Therefore, she may find herself obliged either to provide economic aid or to allow national reforms in order to let each country achieve economic viability on her own.(48) If the economic performance of both the USSR and of her allies deteriorates further, the former might very well be unable to continue to provide sufficient economic support to the latter, and might then be forced to allow for more domestic reforms thanshe might deem desirable. These, in turn, might acquire political ovetones and work to the detriment of overall bloc cohesion.

In sum, while the probability of sudden and dramatic change in Soviet-East European security relations is low, there are political and economic reasons to expect that the current trend toward increasingly high East European input in bloc affairs is likely to continue. Therefore the Soviets will likely experience greater difficulty in the realization of their main currentobjectives in the WTO, i.e. both in the coordination of bloc foreign policies and in the further integration of Pact military forces.

Implications for the West

The WTO had only a minimal impact on East-West relations during the first decade of its existence. It was not taken very seriously in the West, where it was seen as little more than a transmission belt for Soviet military policies and interests, and rightly so. This Western perception has changed since the mid-'60s, particularly after the Romanian declaration of autonomy of 1964. Bucharest's new stance convinced many in the West both that something was changing in intra-Pact politics and that the East Europeans were trying with some success to play a more active role in it.

In a very concrete sense, then, Romanian defiance has helped to improve the image and the respectability of the Pact in the West and elsewhere, and thereby served one of the Soviet objectives in it. (49) The less glamorous but no less important recent attitudes of Hungary and East Germany also contribute to reinforce the image of the Pact as a truly collective body.

At the same time, to the extent that it contributed to dilute Soviet absolute power in the region, Romania--and more recently Hungary and East Germany--also served Western interests: Western countries, and particularly West Europeans, can now constructively deal directly with East Europeans to a muchlarger extent that they had to until the mid-'60s. Other factors have contributed to the improvement of direct contacts between East Europe and the

West, but the political emancipation of several East European countries in the WTO has been an important one.

The current state of affairs in Soviet-East European relations bears important implications for the West, these suggest several policy options. In order to assess the latter, it is necessary to define the former. The main implication of Soviet-East European relations for the West is that a continuation of current trends is in the latter's interest, and should therefore be encouraged to the extent that it is feasible to do so. By current trends here I mean both the politicization of the WTO--which has been taking place for the last twenty years--and the increasing role of the East Europeans in it. There are three reasons why both should be seen favorably in the West. First, a higher political stature for the East Europeans makes it possible to continue the process of European detente even if relations with the USSR deteriorate. In other words, greater East European political leverage vis-a-vis the USSR decreases the latter's influence in Western Europe as well.

Second, the present lower emphasis over the military aspects of the WTO decreases the reliability of the Pact as a military instrument for the USSR--especially for offensive purposes (50)--as it puts a greater burden on the Soviet own forces, and this in all likelihood complicates Soviet war planning. This should in turn translate into greater Soviet caution, and therefore greater insurance against war in case of a serious crisis.

Third, the continuing fundamental committment of the East European governments to the WTO is another source of stability as it provides continuing reassurance to the USSR that her basic security interests are not jeopardized. The East Europeans will remain committed to the WTO--and, implicitely, to thestatus quo in Europe--as long as in their perception it will remain worthwhile for them to do so. West Europeans are in a mush silimar situatin in NATO. Therefore, to the extent that West Europeans wish to maintain the status-quo in Europe, or to change it only very gradually and only by peaceful means, it is in their interests that the WTO does not undergo destabilizing changes which might provoke political and military deterioration in the continent.

In conclusion, both the politicization of the WTO and the increasing political voice of the Eastern Europeans, should be seen in a favorable light by the West, which should operate to encourage their continuation.

The next question to be addressed, of course, is how should the West do so. This however brings up issues that are closelyu intertwined with the enormous web of East-West political, economic, social,and other relations which range much beyond the scope of the WTO. Therefore, only general criteria can be outlined, and the specifics inevitably would have to be decided on an ad hoc basis. Within this limitation, however, I would suggest the following:

a) Western countries should develop closer bilateral political ties with the Eastern Europeans, so as to increase the leverage of the latter vis-a-vis the USSR.

b) at the same time, the West should discourage attempts on the parts of East European countries to break away from their aliance system--WTO, CMEA, etc.--because that would risk destabilizing the region adn because, even if it did not, it would deprve the West of an indirect mens to influence the USSR. In other words, Romanian, East German or Hungarian disagreements with the Soviets would be more beneficial for Western leverage if those countries remain in the WTO than if they left it. Moreover, should the USSR be pushed toward newmilitary interventions in Eastern Europe, this would result into decreased political diversity in the bloc and this, too, runs against Western interests.

In sum, the West's interests require that a finely tuned policy between overtures and restraint be followed in order to both maintain stability and cultivate diversity in Eastern Europe. Overtures to Eastern Europe are needed because they can increase her leverage with the Soviets and thereby also our own. Restraint is mandatory because change must be peaceful and gradual if it is to take place in a direction that is favorable to the West: as was clear in 1956, in 1968, and again in 1981, the West can not and will not risk confrontation with the USSR to prevent her repression of rapid or violent change in Eastern Europe.

ENDNOTES

1) The German Democratic Republic was fully integrated into the Pact only in 1956, while Albania pulled out of all Pact activities in 1961, and formally withdrew in 1968 after the invasion of Czechoslovakia.

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3) ibidem, p.26

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6) Mackintosh, Malcom: "The Warsaw Treaty Organization: a History", in Sharp, Jane and Holloway, David (eds.) The Warsaw Pact: Alliance in Transition, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), p. 42.

7) Herspring, Dale R.: "The Warsaw Pact at 25" in Problems of Communism, September/October 1980, pp. 5-6.

8) Caldwell, Lawrence T.: "The Warsaw Pact: Directions of Change", in Problems of Communism, September/October 1975, P.17.

9) Cason, Thomas, op.cit., p.227.

10) There is no simple answer to the question of to what degree WTO armies are "reliable" allies of the Soviet Union. To a good extent, the answer depends on the purpose for which the small allies' armies would be tested against Soviet demands and potentially diverging Eastern European interests. For example, Eastern European reliability would probably be higher in a defensive war against a NATO attack than in an unprovoked offensive against Western Europe or the neutral countries in central Europe. The issue of reliability is thoroughly discussed in Nelson, Daniel N. (ed.): Soviet Allies: The Warsaw Pact and the Issue of Reliability, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1984).

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12) Martin, Richard C.: "Warsaw Pact Force Modernization: a Closer Look", in Parameters, Summer 1985, p.9.

13) Mackintosh, Malcom: op.cit., passim.

14) Cason, Thomas: op.cit., p.215.

15) Remington, Robin A.: op.cit., p.165.
16) ibidem.

17) Erickson, John: "The Warsaw Pact--The Shape of Things to Come?", in Dawisha and Hanson (eds.), op.cit., p.161.

18) Mackintosh, Malcom: quoted in Cason, Thomas: op.cit., p.218-220.

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22) Remington, Robin A.: op.cit., p.165.

23) Cason, Thomas: op.cit., p.215.

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26) Mackintosh, Malcom: "The Evolution of the Warsaw Pact", in Adelphi Papers, the International Institute for Strategic Studies, no. 58, June 1969, P.6.

27) Remington, Robin A: op.cit., p.66-67.

28) Remington, Robin A.: op.cit., p.169; Cason, Thomas: op.cit., p.218; Martin, Richard: op.cit., p.10.

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31) Mackintosh, Malcom: "The Evolution of the Warsaw Pact", op.cit., passim.

32) Caldwell, Lawrence: op.cit., p.16-19.

33) ibidem, p18

34) Remington, Robin A.: op.cit., p.41.
35) Cason, Thomas: op.cit., p.215; Moreton, Edwina: "Security , Change and Instability in Eastern Europe" in Leebaert, Derek (ed.) European Security: Prospect for the '80s (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1979), p.168.

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37) Hutchings, Robert L.: op.cit., p.104-108.

38) Herspring, Dale R: op.cit., p.13.

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40) Jones, Christopher D.: Soviet Influence in Eastern Europe: Political Autonomy and the Warsaw Pact, (New York: Praeger, 1981), p.229.

41) Kramer, Mark N.: op.cit., p.57-58.

42) Jones, Christopher D.: Soviet Influence in Eastern Europe: Political Autonomy and the Warsaw Pact, op.cit., p.231.

43) Hutchings, Robert L.: Anatomy of the Warsaw Pact, unpubluished paper, 1983, Passim.

44) Erickson, John: "The Warsaw Pact--the Shape...." op.cit., p.169.

45) Caldwell, Lawrence D.: op.cit., p.18.

46) Moreton, Edwina: op.cit., p.170.

47) Remington, Robin A.: op.cit., p.7.

48) Brown, J.F.: "The Future of Political Relations in the Warsaw Pact" in Sharp and Holloway (eds.), op.cit., pp.205ff.

49) Cason Thomas: op.cit., p.226.

50) See note 10 above.