

How Can We Study Soviet Foreign Policy? An Actor-Driven Approach

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Analysts of Soviet foreign policy, as with the students of any other academic discipline, before they can proceed with any analysis, must answer the question: how will I study my subject? In most cases the question is not asked openly, and the answer is tacit. In fact, reading Soviet scholarship would be tedious indeed if every article began with a discussion of the nature of the study. It is important, however, that there is an open discussion of the way a subject is approached, in order that the study may be advanced. Refining our approach to a subject is every bit as important as increasing our substantive knowledge, perhaps it is even more important as 'the data' is only useful in the context of some approach.

The purpose of this paper is to enter briefly into the debate over approach. To begin it will discuss some of the problems inherent in the traditional approaches to Soviet foreign policy, exemplifying these with reference to the literature of the field.² This is no way intended as a literature review, as such a task is beyond the scope of this article, rather it is an, admittedly unrepresentative, few examples designed to illustrate certain central problems in that literature. Having presented these problems, the paper will discuss James Rosenau's recent attempt to advance the approach to the study of Soviet foreign policy. Finally, working from Rosenau's discussion, it presents a preliminary outline of a framework for the analysis of Soviet foreign policy within a comparative context.

I. The Study of Soviet Foreign Policy: Instrumentalism, Essentialism and Empiricism

Some assumption as to the purpose of the study is necessary before we

can answer the question of how to approach foreign policy analysis, as the method adopted will in part be dictated by the purpose that you have in conducting the analysis. This discussion will operate under the assumption that the purpose of studying foreign policy is to understand that policy, which means that study must provide some general relationship between that which is identified as the object of study (policy) and the factors that are identified as influencing that policy. It seems reasonable to use developing understanding as a criterion in assessing any approach to the study of Soviet foreign policy, as developing such an understanding is a necessary first step in addressing any other purpose.³

The first of the problems in the literature derives from misconstruing this purpose. As Adam Ulam has argued:

Most studies of Soviet foreign policy imply or state the question: What can the West do about it? And in the process of asking this question, we very often and unavoidably distort the problem according to our hopes or fears, or indulge in natural irritation because the drift of world affairs has not gone according to our plans and expectations.⁴

Thus, analysts are often more concerned with instructing the U.S. government, or the government of one of its allies, on how to respond to the Soviet Union, than with coming to a better understanding of the policy of the U.S.S.R.

This instrumentalist approach is clearly evident in what is arguably the foundation of the post-war American study of Soviet foreign policy, George Kennan's "The Conduct of Soviet Foreign Policy" (more commonly referred to as the X Article, as it originally appeared under the pseudonym Mr. X). That the X Article was instrumentalist is not surprising, as Kennan's explicit purpose was to argue for a particular U.S. policy response to the Soviet Union—the policy which, having been simplified by the U.S. government, became Containment.⁵ In fact, the article was a public version of an internal, U.S. government document Kennan wrote in order to try and change U.S. policy, and was released in order to garner support for the new policy of Containment. More than just supporting the Government's policy, the article had an important influence on the academic study of Soviet foreign policy, and much of the early writing in the field can be seen as a debate centred on the X Article. As this was the period of Cold War, scholars tended to be concerned with supporting their view of the how the United States should conduct this war.

The instrumental approach, however, has outlasted the Cold War. Stephen Cohen, arguing for a very different policy in the United States than

were the Cold Warriors, provides a recent example of this tendency in Soviet scholarship. In an article entitled "Soviet Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy," Cohen argues that, "[a]ny rethinking about Soviet intentions and behaviour abroad must begin with an understanding of Soviet domestic politics and society."⁶ Yet, rather than focussing on the links between Soviet foreign policy and its domestic politics, Cohen discusses the possibilities for Soviet domestic reform and what the United States can do to facilitate the process.⁷ In fact, Cohen's article could well be titled, "Soviet Domestic Politics and U.S. Foreign Policy."

From a very different ideological position, Richard Pipes commits the same instrumentalist error. Pipes also purports to be addressing the links between Soviet domestic and foreign policy. However, the underlying instrumentalist focus is clear in his conclusions:

Experience has repeatedly shown that attempts to restrain Soviet aggressiveness by a mixture of punishments and rewards fail in their purpose because they address the symptoms of the problem, namely aggression, rather than the cause, which is a political and economic system that induces aggressive behaviour. The West, therefore, should in its own interest encourage anti-Stalinist forces and the processes active inside the Soviet bloc. Such a policy calls not for subverting communism but for letting communism subvert itself.⁸

This quotation highlights not only Pipes' instrumentalism, but also the second fundamental problem in the Soviet foreign policy literature: essentialism.

Ulam noted, in the passage quoted above, that by addressing Soviet policy instrumentally, analysts "very often and unavoidably distort the problem according to [their] hopes or fears." This is often a function of a larger problem, what William Zimmerman has called an essentialist perspective on the Soviet Union.⁹ Analysts suffering from this problem tend to explain Soviet policy in terms of some overriding element which they present as the essence of Soviet policy. In early essentialist work the key element tended to be Communism or Totalitarianism. The problem with such an explanation is that it explains everything, and thus explains nothing.¹⁰

The quotation from Pipes comes very close to presenting an essentialist position. Soviet behaviour is aggressive (a given for Pipes) and it is so because of the nature of its social and political system—that is it is *essentially* aggressive. Why the system is aggressive is suggested by the closing lines of the paragraph: things will change when "communism subverts itself," and thus it is reasonable to assume that things are the way

they are because the Soviet Union is communist. Such a rigid, essentialist perspective is very useful for policy prescription as it has the dual advantage of simplicity and caution. "A communist Soviet Union is naturally aggressive" poses a simple model to which to respond, and in responding to it the United States is unlikely to underestimate Soviet hostility and be caught off guard.¹¹ It is not, however, conducive to the development of an *understanding* of Soviet policy.

Zimmerman has explicitly warned against essentialism, but unfortunately, in responding to the essentialist problem, he commits the final error to be discussed. He is a representative of a school of political scientists that came to prominence in the 1960's and which attempted to turn the study of politics into a physical science. Thus, as Zimmerman himself admits, he is "a scholar with an incorrigible empiricist bent."¹² While I do not want to suggest that empirical investigation is irrelevant, empiricism runs the risk of neglecting explanation in its search for data, as the discovery of interesting facts replaces understanding as the scholar's goal. Facts are description, and even correlated facts are only complex description. In order to gain understanding it is necessary to go beyond the facts and explain *why* they are what they are, *why* certain facts correlate with other facts. A passage from Zimmerman provides an excellent example of this narrow empiricism:

Nevertheless we can still know a lot if we will but do the research. To illustrate this point relatively vividly, let me illustrate by giving an example of something few specialists would ever have suspected could be predicted about Soviet policy. Some research I and Glenn Palmer have recently done shows that over the past 25 years, there exists a strong correlation between the words used by the Soviet finance minister in the annual budget message . . . and annual changes in Soviet defense spending . . . *It is a remarkable finding.*¹³

What I find remarkable is that Zimmerman would choose to stop at this point and claim to have provided an insight into Soviet policy. He has added some detail to our picture of Soviet policy. He has uncovered an interesting fact that can then be used to support or attack possible explanations of the nature of the Soviet Union and its politics. Without such an explanation, the mere fact of a correlation tells us nothing.¹⁴

These three criticisms—the problems of instrumentalism, essentialism and narrow empiricism—suggest that there are two important criteria that must be met by an approach to understanding Soviet policy. It must be concerned with that policy, that is it must provide first and foremost for furthering understanding of Soviet policy, not aiding American policy.

Secondly, it must allow for theory building. By theory building I mean that it must allow for the generation of linkages between influences and policy that can be applied to various aspects of that policy. These linkages must provide some explanation of why the facts that you uncover are the way they are. That is, an approach to Soviet policy must provide a picture, however abstract, of policy making in the Soviet Union that links the various empirical phenomena and provides some answer to the question: "why did this happen?." This is not to suggest, however, that this picture must provide for perfect prediction; in fact, the approach suggested below is inherently indeterminate. Rather it must provide some mechanism that connects influences on policy to the policy itself.

II. James Rosenau's Single Country Approach

James Rosenau has addressed the problem of how to approach the study of Soviet foreign policy from a slightly different perspective than that of the authors considered above, as Rosenau approaches Soviet foreign policy from comparative foreign policy analysis. In a paper entitled, "Toward Single Country Theories of Foreign Policy: The case of the U.S.S.R.," he argues that scholars of foreign policy have divided themselves into two camps: those who study comparative foreign policy and those who are concerned with a single country or geographic area. Each camp, he argues, has been reticent to appreciate the contributions of the other. The area specialists believe that the only way to understand foreign policy is to examine the elements influencing policy that are unique to that country or area (idiographic factors), while the comparative analysts believe that knowledge is gained in discovering the influences that are common among various states' foreign policies (nomothetic factors).¹⁵

Rosenau argues that these two perspectives can be combined into a 'single country theory of foreign policy,' that is a theoretical perspective that considers both idiographic and nomothetic factors in developing explanations. Foreign policy, he argues in another article, is inherently a complex study:

The whole gamut of human experience falls within [the purview of foreign policy analysts]. No facet can be safely ignored or easily held constant. Where students of local politics tend to hold the national scene constant, where students of national politics tend to do the same for the international scene, and where students of world politics tend to treat sub-national variables as constants, those who study foreign policy must, perforce, concern themselves with politics at every level. For the sources of foreign policy span all the levels as the collective energies, hopes, and fears of people converge around their state's efforts to ward off threats from

abroad and procure the wherewithal from the global community necessary to the realization of goals.¹⁶

As if to support this claim, in "Single Country Theories," he provides a list of 37 factors of influence, drawn from a single book on Soviet foreign policy.¹⁷ Thus a single country theory of foreign policy must be able to accommodate a wide variety of possible causal factors, and relate them in some comprehensible way to the policy under discussion.

However, 37 is a somewhat unmanageable number of variables to integrate into an argument (particularly when it is considered that these are by no means the only factors that could be relevant, only the ones that happened to be considered in a single work). What is thus necessary is an organising framework within which the myriad of factors which influence Soviet foreign policy can be considered. Such a framework should include a conception of policy that provides the theoretical link between influences and policy, and it should provide a number of categories into which these influential variables can be placed in order to render analysis more practical.

III. An Actor-Driven Framework for Soviet Foreign Policy Analysis

Elsewhere I have presented a similar style of framework for the analysis of strategic relations, particularly the relations between the Soviet Union and the United States.¹⁸ While such a framework certainly cannot simply be transferred to the study of Soviet foreign policy, the fundamental argument and method of organisation may prove a suitable base for a framework applicable to that study.

Essentially, I have argued that change in the strategic relationship can be understood as decision-makers acting, indeterminately, in response to a changing context which created and precluded options for action and thereby ordered the possible outcomes. The indeterminism of decision-maker action was accredited to two factors: the most important was basic human freedom of choice, the second was a modified version of James Rosenau's habit-driven actor.¹⁹ Thus change *results*, not from any external cause, but from the actions of decision-makers. It is this that makes the argument suitable for application to foreign policy, as it is a particular area of these decision-makers' actions that we call foreign policy. Charles Kegley has recently argued that the decision-maker should provide the focus for integrating the various factors which have been identified as influencing foreign policy:

Only by incorporating decision-making-level phenomena can domestic and inter-

national factors be causally linked to foreign policy behaviour. What is needed to include human beings and their decisions and motives in accounts of foreign policy is an integrating concept which can combine the multiple sources of influence operating on foreign policy from different levels. The field has suffered from the absence of such a construct.²⁰

My earlier work provides one such construct in the notion of indeterminate actor response to the various environmental factors, and thus it is labelled an Actor-Driven Approach.

I am here suggesting that we can build a similar framework for the consideration of foreign policy. Policy is seen as the result of decision-makers making decisions in response to a collection of environmental factors or influences which order the likelihood of given options by creating and precluding possibilities and by rewarding certain options while penalising others. Because we are concerned with human decision-makers, however, the influence of these factors is not direct. Rather the external influences are mediated by human capabilities and institutions.

This bifurcation leads to a two-part categorisation of influences: a collection of categories of more or less objective external influences, and a further set of categories of mediating factors. The interaction of these variables orders the environment in which the policy makers act, determining policy by their actions. This basic framework should be constructed in terms sufficiently general that it can be applied to any country's foreign policy, but filled with the influences particular to the Soviet Union. This allows for comparative analysis, by examining how the different sets of influences interact in different states: which influences are more important and why. At the same time it allows for careful consideration of the idiographic features of Soviet policy.

Rather than just setting the parameters for such a framework, however, this paper considers a preliminary sketch in order to clarify the argument by dividing the environmental influences into four categories, and the mediating factors into two.²¹ Figure 1 provides a reformulation of Rosenau's 37 factors, organised into the framework here suggested. While these categories will be presented sequentially, this is for analytic utility. In fact the categories are conceived as interactive, with the potential for one set of factors to change the impact of the others. This is most apparent in the influence of the mediating factors, but obtains for all the categories of influence.

For want of a better term, the first set of factors can be labelled 'Geostrategic Factors.' This allows for the consideration of those forces traditionally seen to be motivating states: the state's geographic location

and its position in the international system. Each of these provides imperatives that can influence policy. Thus, for example, the geographic position has in large part ordered the options for the expression of Soviet power. Their lack of access to warm water has essentially closed the option of developing sea power while rewarding the development of land power. In addition, the Soviets' post-war domination of Eastern Europe and the creation of a land buffer is an option given prominence by the positioning of the U.S.S.R. at the end of the open North German Plain.

As well as geography, Geostrategic Factors comprise strategic or systemic imperatives. In this case the traditional state search for power, for example, can be seen as a motivating factor in policy. Such imperatives can be used to explain, in part, the large armed forces, particularly nuclear forces, which, until recently, have been the mainstay of Soviet power.²² Thus, the Soviet position as one of the two great military powers and the leader of a substantial bloc of states can be seen as having created a series of options for Soviet Union in the post-war, options that are either not available or irrelevant to the decision-makers of other states.²³

If we apply a different definition of strategic imperatives, this category can be used to discuss 'ideological' expansion into the third world. That is, it could be argued that the U.S.S.R. has been motivated not simply as a great power, but as an proponent of a new social system. This aptly demonstrates the purpose of this type of analytic framework. It is not intended to contain in itself the answer to questions of Soviet policy motivations, rather it serves as a set of parameters within which academic debate can proceed coherently.

The second set of factors that should be considered are 'Other States' Actions.' States do not operate in a vacuum, and so the activities of other states are of particular importance to a state's foreign policy.²⁴ In many instances states, even the Soviet Union, are seen to be reacting to the policies of other states. This can be seen directly, for example, as when the Soviets broke off the START talks in response to the NATO's deployment of theatre nuclear forces. The deployment was seen as reducing the possibility of maintaining the arms discussions with the United States. In the terms suggested above, the deployment changed the ordering of options for the Soviet Union, increasing the likelihood of their breaking off discussions.

The third set of factors can be labelled 'National Political Factors.' The old aphorism that 'politics stops at the water's edge' has long since been discarded, as it has become clear that domestic concerns motivate foreign actions, and external events have domestic impact. The most

obvious example of this linkage comes with change in domestic political leadership. Certainly the accession of Gorbachev instead of some other leader (for example Yegor Ligachev or Boris Yeltsin) has had profound influence on the conduct of Soviet foreign policy. As well, his domestic political battles with the conservative forces within the CPSU can be seen to influence his foreign policy options.²⁵ The influence of domestic politics on foreign policy, in fact, is one that Gorbachev explicitly acknowledges:

The organic tie between each state's foreign and domestic policies becomes particularly close and practically meaningful at crucial moments. *A change in the domestic policy inevitably leads to changes in the attitude to international issues. . . .* The new concept of the Soviet foreign policy, its guidelines and practical actions are all an immediate projection of the philosophy, program and practice of restructuring.²⁶

This restructuring, or Perestroika as it is commonly known, promises to be the most important domestic political influence on Soviet foreign policy in the next few years. The political reforms that Gorbachev has introduced involve a substantial redefinition of the political process in the Soviet Union. For example, rather than the locus of political power resting in a CPSU General Secretary whose tenure is unlimited, it is being shifted to a President with a proscribed term in office.²⁷ Such a change, along with the other Soviet political reforms, would seem to be resulting in a substantially new political system in the U.S.S.R. Such a transformation is likely to have a profound impact on all aspects of Soviet policy.²⁸ A comparison of the Soviet and American approach to foreign policy may well disclose the options open to a leader of essentially unlimited tenure that are closed to one with a limited term.²⁹

The final category of environmental factors that needs to be included in this discussion is 'National Economic Factors.' Not only is a sizeable portion of most states' foreign policy economic in content, but the economic condition of the state will directly influence both the goals it pursues and the means it adopts to pursue them. In fact, consideration of economic conditions provides the best example of the sort of interaction which obtains among these categories.

Consider, for example the relationship between Geostrategic Factors and Economic. In large part the economic condition of a country is determined by its geographic location. It is this position that determines the state's resource base, and the transportation requirements and agricultural potential of the economy. In turn, this economic condition is in large part responsible for a state's position in the international system, as a state's

power, a key defining characteristic of the international system,³⁰ is in large part a reflection of its economic performance and potential.

The current economic reform in the Soviet Union (the heart, in fact, of Perestroika) is the most pressing example of economic influence on foreign policy. For example, the search for a more efficient economy has led the Soviet Union to amend its long standing opposition to linking itself to the capitalist political economy and has even applied for membership in the IMF. On the other hand, a more dynamic Soviet economy could well provide the foundation for a more challenging Soviet Union internationally. Certainly the United States was able to convert its massive economic power into international influence, and there is no reason that the Soviet Union should be any less efficient given the opportunity.³¹

The influence of factors in these four categories can thus be seen to create and preclude possibilities for Soviet action internationally. Improved economic conditions may create opportunities for expansion, for example, but at the same time it seems to be resulting in greater links between the Eastern and Western economies. The determination of which of the myriad of possibilities these influences raise will be realised depends on the decision of political actors in positions of power within the policy process. Thus there are two factors that need to be included in this framework to account for the role of humans and human institutions.

The first and probably most important is the role of perceptions. People do not react to their environment objectively, rather they react to an environment filtered through a set of perceptual lenses. These lenses tell the decision-maker not only what it is that he is seeing, but what are the appropriate responses to that situation. Thus in order to determine the causes of policy it is important to consider not only the more or less objective environmental influences but the perceptual lenses that mediate between the decision-maker and that environment.

In the Soviet case the obvious informant of this perceptual lens has been the leaders' ideology. Ideology may play a role in other areas—particularly, it may underlie the political battles that manifest themselves in the policy process and are considered in this framework under the rubric of National Political Factors. However, the greatest influence of ideology on policy is to explain the world to Soviet decision-makers. This ideology provides explanations for why things are the way they are and it makes certain solutions to international problems more acceptable than others, and thus more likely to be chosen by decision-makers. This provides a very useful simplification for students of policy, as it allows for substantial analysis without requiring the performance of psychoanalysis on individual

leaders by providing a roughly applicable, general perceptual set for Soviet decision-makers. Until recently, this ideological lens has also been fairly well understood. The changes that are sweeping the Soviet Union and the rest of Eastern Europe mean that the ideological foundation of the decision-makers, as with the rest of the political process, is in flux.

The perceptions of the decision-makers are not all that mediate between the decision-maker, his environment and subsequent policy. Policy making in most modern societies is the province of substantial permanent bureaucracies with their own procedures that influence the policy they produce. Information invariably reaches decision-makers through bureaucratic 'action-channels,' and the implementation of policy is similarly left in the hands of bureaucrats. These procedures, as Graham Allison has taught us, can therefore distort both inputs and outputs.³² Thus the 'Decision-Making Process' must be included in a framework of policy analysis.

One advantage of including this set of factors is that it allows application of the literature that has examined the influence of process on policy, and thus broadening the theoretical tools available to the student of Soviet foreign policy. Karen Dawisha has argued, however, that the conclusions of Bureaucratic Politics analysis of the United States cannot simply be applied to the U.S.S.R. One of her central arguments is that the Party has successfully suppressed the sort of parochial bureaucratic interest which characterises the U.S. bureaucracy.³³ What Dawisha's argument suggests is that bureaucrat's interests must be considered in different ways in different countries. She suggests, for example, that the Soviet bureaucracy is characterised by "family circles" with entrenched interests. Such entrenched interests may operate in similar fashion to the departmental interests in the United States. It thus still seems reasonable to suggest that a large bureaucracy with its own processes and interests will have an important influence on policy, even if those processes and interests are markedly different than those studied in other countries. For example, it seems clear that the bureaucracy is currently opposing Gorbachev's Perestroika.

IV. Conclusion

Such an Actor-Driven framework would seem to satisfy the minimum requirements established above for an approach to Soviet foreign policy. It provides a theoretical link between empirical influences and policy by suggesting that policy results from decision-makers making decisions in response to possibilities created by environmental influences and mediated

by another series of influences. In addition, it is a sufficiently broad set of categories to incorporate most if not all putative influences on policy and provide a description of their relationship to policy. Finally, it is organised sufficiently generally to allow for comparative analysis with other state's policy, but is filled in the Soviet case with the specifics of Soviet politics.

The framework is by no means intended as a definitive answer to the question posed in this paper of how we can study Soviet foreign policy. In fact, it is not even intended as a complete answer to the question. Rather it is indicative of a potentially fruitful approach to foreign policy analysis. With further exposition and with much more rigorous application than could possibly be given here, this framework may provide a useful tool for the comparative analysis of Soviet foreign policy. That is, it might provide a way in which Soviet policy can be explained and understood in all its complexity, while at the same time not obscuring the elements Soviet foreign policy shares in common with the foreign policy of other states.

Figure 1

Rosenau's "Factors Central to a Theory of the U.S.S.R."
Reorganised by the Actor-Driven Framework

Category	Idiographic	Nomothetic
Geostrategic Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Sense of Encirclement * Satisfaction over increased power and status since World War 2 * Tensions in relations with Eastern Europe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Reliance of rulers on large national armed forces
Other States' Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Supportive communist parties throughout the world * Traditional Soviet fear of being used by its clients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Hard-currency problems in managing trade with the West
National Political Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * History of political stability * A nationality problem: domestic pressures for rectification of national grievances * Soviet citizens expect to be governed, not left free to pursue any path 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Increased intelligentsia decreased peasantry * A wiser, more alert public in foreign affairs * Complexity fostering a "need-to-know" explosion, an erosion of autocratic rule * Profound demographic changes * Internationalization of nationalities problem
National Economic Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Food prices kept artificially low * Inefficient agriculture * Serious energy crunch pending for a variety of reasons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Industrialization renders domestic conditions more relevant to foreign policy and fosters less compartmentalism of foreign and domestic policy * Increased social mobility * A fluctuating economy * Profound demographic changes: pending crisis of productivity * Hard-currency problems in managing trade with the West

Category	Idiographic	Nomothetic
Perceptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Traditional Russian-Soviet nationalism is both defensive and aggressive * Sense of encirclement and intense memory of suffering in Second World War * An explicit but flexible ideology * Common experiences and career patterns among leaders * Longstanding Left-Right cleavage within the leadership * Memories of Stalin's excesses * Foreign policy success prime means of regime legitimation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "Rallying around the flag" consensus readily occurs in international crises * Relative weight of traditional political culture diminishing * Learning process that emancipates top elites from doctrinal stereotypes
Decision-Making Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Bureaucratic habit of intruding intermediaries into economic relationships * Longstanding Left-Right cleavage within the leadership * One party dictatorship * Weight of individual at apex of the political structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Growing access to the decision-making process in foreign policy * A wiser, more alert public in foreign affairs * Complexity fostering "need-to-know" explosion, an erosion of autocratic rule * Dynamics of collective decision-making * "Rallying around the flag" consensus readily occurs in international crises * Inexorable process of functional differentiation since Stalin

[Source: This table is derived from Table 4.1, "Factors Central to a Theory of the U.S.S.R." in James Rosenau, "Toward Single Country Theories of Foreign Policy: The case of the U.S.S.R.," in Charles Hermann *et. al.*, eds., *New Directions in the Study of Foreign Policy*, (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1987), 66]

ENDNOTES

- 1 An earlier draft of this paper was presented to Dr. Keith Krause. I am indebted to Professor Krause for a series of very helpful comments, which I have used in preparing this revised version. I take full responsibility, however, for what appears here.
- 2 There is an obvious danger in this sort of work at this point in time: it is easily dismissed as irrelevant. The changes in the Soviet Union under Gorbachev and the subsequent transformation of Eastern Europe suggest that the bulk of Soviet scholarship is now obsolete. While this may be true, it is also true that whatever emerges from these changes will have emerged *from* the prior conditions. It is not responsible scholarship simply to forget the past because the present is either so exciting or so different. In order to advance the study of the foreign policy of the new Soviet Union, it will both be necessary to understand the past foreign policy and, more importantly, understand the political relationships that gave rise to it. It is only in this way that we can hope to understand the changed foreign policy once those relationships change. This discussion, then, will focus mainly on the policy and scholarship of the post-war, pre-Gorbachev era, however, certain illuminating points of change will be indicated — although unfortunately, little more than in passing.
- 3 I recognise that this conception of understanding, and consequently of the nature of theory building is underdeveloped. It is posed, in large part, in response to the problems of instrumentalism and essentialism which I discuss below.
- 4 Adam B. Ulam, "Soviet Ideology and Foreign Policy," in Erik Hoffmann and Fredric Fleron eds., *The Conduct of Soviet Foreign Policy*, (New York: Aldine, 1980), 152.
- 5 Kennan is widely, and correctly, recognised as the father of containment. However, the containment policy that Kennan argued for was much more subtle and sophisticated than the one that the Truman administration implemented. For a useful, and sympathetic, discussion of Kennan's role in the development of Containment, see John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 25–88.
- 6 Stephen F. Cohen, "Soviet Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy," in Laird and Hoffmann eds., *Soviet Foreign Policy in a Changing World*, (New York: Aldine, 1986), 66.
- 7 Cohen, "Soviet Domestic Politics." See particularly the conclusions he reaches, all of which are addressed to the United States and outline the policy that Cohen believes the US should pursue (80–1).
- 8 Richard Pipes, "Can the Soviet Union Reform?" in Laird and Hoffmann eds., 867.
- 9 William Zimmerman, "What Scholars Know about Soviet Foreign Policy," in Laird and Hoffmann eds., 84–98.
- 10 None of which is to suggest that essentialist explanations may not be true. It is possible, for example, that the Soviet Union is an ideological power bent on

world domination and following a long term strategy to achieve it, but willing to make short term retreats of any kind in order to further this goal. (This is something of a caricature of one of the leading essentialist explanations). However, if it is true, it tells us nothing about Soviet behaviour because not only does it stretch to cover all observable actions of the U.S.S.R., but all possible actions.

- 11 Of course, such images tend to become self-fulfilling, and so while the United States is unlikely to be caught off guard by assuming an aggressive U.S.S.R., it is also likely provoke what it was it supposedly guarding against.
- 12 Zimmerman, 85.
- 13 Zimmerman, 97. Emphasis added.
- 14 I must confess that I find it odd that it is still necessary to discuss the correlation/causation problem at all.
- 15 James Rosenau, "Toward Single Country Theories of Foreign Policy: The case of the U.S.S.R.," in Charles Hermann, Charles W. Kegley Jr. and James Rosenau, eds., *New Directions in the Study of Foreign Policy*, (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1987), 60–61. Referred to in the text as "Single Country Theories."
- 16 James Rosenau, "Introduction: New Directions and Old Questions in the Comparative Study of Foreign Policy," in Hermann *et. al.* eds., *New Directions*, 1.
- 17 Rosenau, "Single Country Theories," 67. The factors, both idiographic and nomothetic, are drawn from Seweryn Bialer's *The Domestic Context of Soviet Foreign Policy*.
- 18 David Mutimer, "Analysing Change in the Soviet-American Strategic Relationship: An Actor Driven Approach," Unpublished MA Research Paper, York University, 1988. The remainder of this paper draws extensively on the theoretical framework developed in this paper.
- 19 James Rosenau, "Before Cooperation: hegemony, regimes and habit-driven actors in world politics," *International Organisation*, 40 (4) Autumn 1986, 849–90. Rosenau argues that decision-makers, as with the rest of us, are creatures of habit. Extending that argument with reference to Steinbruner's work on Cybernetic decision-making, I attempted to show how habits could preclude actors from acting in what would appear, objectively, to be the correct manner under certain conditions. Thus, as habits can and do intervene in the making of decisions, the outcome of the decision process becomes indeterminate as it cannot be known, for any group of individuals, just when habit will be superseded.
- 20 Charles W. Kegley, Jr., "Decision Regimes and the Comparative Study of Foreign Policy," in Charles Hermann *et. al.*, eds., *New Directions in the Study of Foreign Policy*, (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1987), 249.
- 21 In "Analysing Change," I presented a seven part typology of environmental factors and a three part typology of mediating variables. This can be safely reduced in this case for two reasons. First, because the subject of the analysis was narrowly focused on the *strategic* relationship, certain specific influences

- (strategic deployments for example) needed explicit consideration in the body of the framework. As well, the paper was concerned with analysing concrete results of policy decisions (that is the relationship between the superpowers), whereas in this case it is the policy itself that is under consideration. This meant, for example, that factors that can influence the effect of a decision must be given explicit recognition, whereas in this case such factors can be safely subsumed in other categories.
- 22 Rosenau, in the list of factors he presents in "Single Country Theories," for example, lists as the first nomothetic factor: "Reliance of rulers on large national armed forces." (67) In an appendix to this paper I demonstrate how this framework can be applied by placing each of the factors Rosenau presents into the framework categories.
- 23 This brief discussion of systemic imperatives betrays my basically Realist orientation. The framework, however, is not necessarily tied to a Realist conception of basic state motivation. A Marxist, for example, would see very different imperatives driving the state, but they could still be considered under the rubric of Geostrategic Factors.
- 24 While this would seem to be a fairly obvious point, in the process of changing the focus of our study from 'diplomacy' to 'foreign policy' in order to address domestic influences on policy, this could well be forgotten, or at least its importance diminished. It is interesting in this regard that Rosenau's rather extensive list of factors includes only three that could be slotted into this category, and all three are peripheral concerns. The United States, for example, does not appear once on the list.
- 25 Again Rosenau's list is instructive in this regard. One of the idiographic factors he notes is the policy legitimization role foreign policy success plays. With results from domestic reform slow to materialise, it may not be an exaggeration to say that Gorbachev's political fortunes are intimately tied to his foreign policy.
- 26 Mikhail Gorbachev, *Perestroika: New thinking for our country and the world*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1987), 132. Emphasis added.
- 27 As the time of writing, the Central Committee has approved a law granting the Soviet President wide discretionary powers, and thus removing the position even further from the control of the Party.
- 28 Michael Doyle has discovered that the incidence of major conflict is significantly lower among liberal democracies than among states with other forms of constitution. (Michael W. Doyle, "Kant, Liberal Legacies and Foreign Affairs," *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 12 (3 and 4), 205-35 and 323-53.) This suggests that there is a close link between the constitutional form of a state's government and its foreign policy. Thus, even if the Soviet Union does not become a liberal democracy (and there is very little chance of that), Doyle's findings would suggest that a substantial change in constitutional form would have a significant influence on Soviet foreign policy.
- 29 A number of studies of Soviet and American strategic culture, for example,

- reveals that the United States tends toward short, intensive projects, whereas the U.S.S.R. is more inclined to commit themselves for the long term. See, for example, Carnes Lord, "American Strategic Culture," *Comparative Strategy* 5 (3) 1985, and Rebecca Strode, "Soviet Strategic Style," *Comparative Strategy* 3 (4) 1982.
- 30 This is based on an acceptance of the definition of international structure developed by Robert Gilpin in *War and Change in World Politics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 26-34, who defines international structure as the distribution of capabilities (power) across the system and the network of relationships that obtain between states.
- 31 This is not to suggest that the Soviet Union could possibly attain the sort of economic dominance that the U.S. enjoyed after the Second World War, rather that an improved economy may well be convertible into greater latitude in international politics. In terms of this argument, greater economic resources provide a wider range of options to the decision-makers.
- 32 The classic discussion of this influence, of course, is found in Graham Allison, *The Essence of Decision*, (Boston: Little Brown, 1971).
- 33 Karen Dawisha, "The Limits of the Bureaucratic Politics Model: Observations on the Soviet Case," *Studies in Comparative Communism*, 13 (4) 1980, 310-313.