

[Omitted here is discussion unrelated Eastern Europe]

MR. HARTMAN: I have asked Hal to lead our discussion this morning on Eastern European issues.

MR. SONNENFELDT: I would like to couch my remarks this morning in a very broad perspective because many of you from the Eastern European posts will have the opportunity to meet in a smaller group to deal with specific issues.

I start from the premise, the historic fact that we are witnessing the emergence of the Soviet Union as a super power on a global scale. This will be a long-term process. It is a process that is just beginning in global terms as the Soviets are just now breaking out of their continental mold. They are just now developing modalities for carrying out such a global policy.

The reason why it is possible for the United States and its Western European allies to develop the policies that will allow us to cope with this situation is that Soviet power is developing irregularly. It is subject to flaws and to requirements which in some cases only the outside world can meet.

Their thrust as an imperial power comes at a time well after that period when the last imperial power, Germany, made the plunge, and it hence comes at a time when different rules and perceptions apply. The Soviets have been inept. They have not been able to bring the attractions that past imperial powers brought to their conquests. They have not brought the ideological, legal, cultural, architectural, organizational and other values and skills that characterized the British, French and German adventures. None of these things have been a hallmark of the Soviet emergence as an imperial power.

In addition, there are serious underlying pressures and tensions in the Soviet system itself. The base from which imperialism asserts itself has serious problems in the economic and social sectors. There are also internal nationalist groups which are growing. Non-Russian nationalist groups in Russia are growing at a disproportionately faster rate and which will add to these tensions in the base whence springs Soviet imperialism.

The Soviets have been particularly unskilled in building viable international structures. They have nothing approaching the European Community or the many other successful Western institutions. In Eastern Europe particularly, the single most important unifying force is the presence of sheer Soviet military power. There has been no development of a more viable, organic structure. If anything, the last thirty years have intensified the urges in Eastern European countries for autonomy, for identity. There has been an intensification of the desire to break out of the Soviet straitjacket. This has happened in every Eastern European country to one degree or another. There are almost no genuine friends of the Soviets left in Eastern Europe, except possibly Bulgaria.

The Soviets' inability to acquire loyalty in Eastern Europe is an unfortunate historical failure because Eastern Europe is within their scope and area of natural interest. It is doubly tragic that in this area of vital interest and crucial importance it has not been possible for the Soviet Union to establish roots of interest that go beyond sheer power.

It is, therefore, important to remember that the main, if not the only, instrument of Soviet imperialism has been power.

The reason we can today talk and think in terms of dealing with Soviet imperialism, outside of and in addition to simple confrontation, is precisely because Soviet power is emerging in such a flawed way. This gives us the time to develop and to react. There is no way to prevent the emergence of the Soviet Union as a superpower. When viewed in terms of the historical flows that are accompanying the emergence of the Soviet Union as a superpower it is inevitable that this will happen.

What we can do is affect the way in which that power is developed and used. Not only can we balance it in the traditional sense but we can affect its usage -- and that is what detente is all about.

With regard to Eastern Europe, it seems to me that it must be in our long-term interest to so influence events in this area -- because of the present unnatural relationship with the Soviet Union -- so that they will not sooner

or later explode, causing WW III. I consider this inorganic, unnatural relationship to be a far greater danger to world peace than the conflict between East and West. There is one qualification to this statement. If Western Europe becomes so concerned with its economic and social problems that an imbalance develops, then perhaps the dangers to the United States' interests will be endangered by the simple change in the balance of power.

So, it must be our policy to strive for an evolution that makes the relationship between the Eastern Europeans and the Soviet Union an organic one. Our policy should be the Finlandization of Eastern Europe. Any excess of zeal on our part is bound to produce results that could reverse the desired process for a period of time, even though in my view the process would remain inevitable within the next 100 years. But, of course, for us that is too long a time to wait.

So, our policy must be a policy of responding to the clearly visible aspirations in Eastern Europe for a more autonomous existence within the context of a strong Soviet geopolitical influence. This has worked in Poland. They have been able to overcome their romantic political inclinations which led to their disasters in the past. They have been skillful in developing a policy that is satisfying their needs for a national identity without arousing Soviet reactions. It is a long process and one in which I am pleased to say we have been able, partly through the help of two Ambassadors at this table today, to skillfully participate.

A similar process is now going on in Hungary. Janos Kadar's performance has been remarkable in finding ways which are acceptable to the Soviet Union which develop Hungarian roots and the natural aspirations of the people. He has conducted a number of experiments in the social and economic areas. To a large degree he has been able to do this because the Soviets have four divisions in Hungary and, therefore, have not been overly concerned. He has skillfully used their presence as a security blanket for the Soviets, in a way that has been advantageous to the development of his own country.

The Romanian picture is different as one would expect from their different history. The Romanians have striven for autonomy but they have been less daring and innovative in their domestic systems. They remain among the most rigid countries in the internal organization of their system.

Without taking a grand tour of countries, I have been trying to illustrate the way in which we see our policies. We seek to influence the emergence of the Soviet imperial power by making the base more natural and organic so that it will not remain founded in sheer power alone. I recognize the arguments that we are helping the Soviets maintain their control over Eastern Europe. I would again argue that there is no alternative open to us other than that of influencing the way Soviet power is used.

MR. HARTMAN: Thanks, Hal. I think this has been one of the most comprehensive analyses of the situation that I have heard. I would like to make one comment, if I may, on Soviet power in the world. There is an irony which is that their system seems more attractive in the world as a whole. When people adopt authoritarian forms of government, for instance in places in Africa, that sort of government can be cloaked in the language of ideology. The justifications for the Soviet system can buttress the natural inclinations of some of these other governments. And there is another irony. In Western Europe, there are those who think that there are benefits in the development of communism in their societies, which is different from the East, where they have seen the system at work, and have, therefore, tried to adapt some of the ways things are done in the West. I think this is a worthwhile observation, and that we need not be so defensive.

AMB. RICHARDSON: Hal, I was wondering if you might clarify something. It seems that the Soviet system is incapable of power-sharing, that it cannot decentralize, and that it lacks internal security or the ability to control the transfer of power. How can a society or regime like that become organic if they have failed internally? And I don't see how they can let the states on their border develop faster than they themselves can develop. How do you visualize the more organic evolution process you describe?

MR. SONNENFELDT: It all depends on the Soviets. They have acceded to some innovations, although not as much as the East Europeans who have in some instances been more daring than the Soviet Union, for instance in Poland and Hungary. But you are right. The key to it is in Moscow. That's why I keep harping on the same theme as I did yesterday. If we continue to be preoccupied with containment as we were in the 40s and 50s and ignore the leverage available to us, then we are on the wrong track.

The Soviet Union is no longer hermetically sealed as it used to be. They recognize the need for a world system, and the industrialized nations need to use this opportunity to affect this development. I don't mean that we should be involved in Kremlin politics, but there are other openings, and we should reach in, and encourage the development of complexity in the system.

Again, as I have said, the argument in Washington is, "How can you permit yourselves to help these people, or why help your enemy? You're just building up their power." Well, if you have that attitude, you're lost. But if you don't share that attitude, then there is an historic opportunity to affect in some way this giant as it emerges on the international scene. So I agree with your premise. There is the possibility of a Finlandization in Eastern Europe, so we need to approach these problems with enormous care and responsibility, most of all among East Europeans themselves. And there must be restraint in the West.

I should say a word about CSCE in this regard. Here is an issue in which we have done ourselves enormous injustice. You know that I was unenthusiastic about the whole process of CSCE, and that the Secretary had misgivings also. But we got involved for a number of reasons, not the least of which was that the East Europeans wanted it. But if words can do anything, then CSCE recognized a need for change. It did not recognize Soviet hegemony. There is nothing in the document about hegemony, and the Soviets are slowly discovering that. Why the American press wanted to deprive President Ford of a platform to preach and proclaim American commitment to an organic evolution, I don't know. I never understood it, or why this was called a concession to Brezhnev. I just don't understand. It is a self-inflicted wound that is totally unnecessary. So CSCE and CSCE follow-up should be seen in this broad context that I've outlined, and should be applied to particular countries in particular ways. It requires a sense of nuance. Dean Rusk used to say that we should treat Communist countries differently. And we must understand how they are different, and from that be able to apply CSCE.

AMB. STOESSEL: I have a few random comments on Hal's perceptive presentation.

First, on the Soviet system itself, I think he is right that there has been an evolution and growth of

confidence. I certainly have sensed this evolution. It is clear to me, since my first assignment there in 1947, that there has been a tremendous change. The society is evolving, although slowly, and the Soviets do not have an overwhelming self-confidence for obvious reasons; but their accomplishments have been impressive and they are gaining a sense of confidence. They still have an underlying sense of inferiority to the West. I have also been impressed with the influence in the Soviet Union of events and conditions in Eastern Europe. This influence is obvious to those who visit Poland or East Germany or Hungary where they see higher standards there and comparatively more freedom. They go there by the millions and they come back with these impressions.

On Soviet imperialism, I think Hal's remarks were excellent. The greatest manifestation of this imperialism is in the Soviet Union itself. They have problems with the various nationalities within the Union, but they've done a lot there as well. When you visit some of the Central Asian republics, you often find that the situation there is better than across the border in Iran or Afghanistan. In fact, it can be impressive. We do not have a very good understanding of the nationalist thrust in the Soviet Union, but I can't see serious separatist activities there. They will probably focus on economic or perhaps cultural matters, but not serious political problems which are not terribly acute anyway.

Hal stressed the importance of Soviet power and dominance in Eastern Europe. The Soviets are becoming more sure of themselves as they industrialize. And the East Europeans are coming to rely on the Soviet Union for materials so that the Soviet Union is increasingly in a position to control those countries in that way. There has been evidence in Moscow of some increased efforts to tighten relations with the East Europeans, especially after CSCE, to seal them off from the pressures of CSCE. At the same time, the East European countries are reaching out to the West, which the Soviets are not opposing as much as we might have guessed. It is not necessarily a contradiction, Soviet control as opposed to East European contact with the West. In fact, the surer they are of their control, they may even see that contact as an advantage.

AMB. AUSTAD: I know it has become something of a cliché, but I object to the use of the word "Finlandization." It is overused. I can't relate the democracy that I have seen in Finland with socialist authoritarianism, so I don't think the word is right.

MR. SONNENFELDT: I only use it in the security of this room.

MR. HARTMAN: I agree that it is a word we should not use too often.

AMB. AUSTAD: It's just that there is a very good democracy there.

AMB. DAVIES: I would like to see what we see in Finland now elsewhere, perhaps in 30 or 40 years. The people in East Europe do not resent their security relationship with the Soviet Union; they resent being told to be communists.

AMB. HILLENBRAND: I was struck between the similarity in Hal's presentation and the sophisticated justification for the old arguments of Ostpolitik.

MR. SONNENFELDT: Whose was more sophisticated, Marty?

AMB. HILLENBRAND: They are equally sophisticated. The argument in Ostpolitik was to create attractive conditions for the traditional expansion of German influence in Eastern Europe. In inducing this gradual change in Eastern Europe, we should work closely with the West Europeans, and there are certain aberrational tendencies there, for instance with the Germans. There is a feeling that they alone can influence these conditions in Eastern Europe. I think your rationale and analysis are akin to what East Europe is doing.

MR. SONNENFELDT: I agree with your emphasis on the need for harmony between the US and the other industrialized nations. There is nothing worse than German illusions that their industrial largesse will do it. A precondition for any of this is a power base on our own side. The weakness of Ostpolitik was that it was not anchored in the alliance system. If we're weak, then we're going to be lost no matter how sophisticated our reasoning is. A strong power base is an indispensable condition, and we must be able to balance Soviet power physically. I proceed from that premise. Without it, the critics are right, and without it, the policy would produce the time-honored Soviet reaction of going for power and power alone.

But I would agree that some thoughts in Ostpolitik are not dissimilar. It's just that we do it better than when they do it.

AMB. DAVIES: I think it is extremely important to bear in mind that we do not initiate what is going to happen in East Europe. We must be responsive to developments there and do what the leaders think is feasible. We can't rush it. We have to rely on the East European leadership's best estimate of what is possible, and also what is in our interest. They should know best how far they can go and we must be guided by that.

AMB. STRAUZ-HUPE: Of late, I have been sitting at the feet of my Chinese colleague. His analysis is that the structure of the Soviet Union is beyond repair and, therefore, cannot be transformed into an organic whole. Therefore, and now I am quoting him exactly, a Soviet attack on Western Europe is imminent. I presume that behind this theory, expressed by my Chinese colleague, are more detailed considerations. Ambassador Bruce, I wonder if you can tell us how the Chinese view this process, not only in Western Europe, but in Eastern Europe as well.

AMB. BRUCE: I don't think I can add much to what your Chinese colleague told you. The Chinese never permit indiscretions by their officials abroad and only very occasionally at home. Their central message is clear. They want to engage as much as possible the attention of the United States to build up its defense against a potential attack by the Soviet Union. They are worried about increasing Soviet power, and they have every reason to be worried. But their concern, though partly ideological, is principally in looking after Chinese national interests. Those interests are to divert the attention of the Soviet Union to the West and from the East.

MR. HARTMAN: Are there any other comments? I am rather surprised that our Eastern European colleagues have not asked us about differentiation in our policy but that may be less of a problem in our post-Helsinki situation. We can get into that at lunch.

AMB. SILBERMAN: I would like to ask how he sees relations with Yugoslavia in the period ahead.

MR. SONNENFELDT: I think we and the Western Europeans, indeed the Eastern Europeans as well, have an interest which borders on the vital for us in continuing the independence of Yugoslavia from Soviet domination. Of course we accept that Yugoslav behavior will continue to be, as it has been in the past, influenced and constrained by Soviet power, but any shift back by Yugoslavia into the Soviet orbit would represent a major strategic set-back for the West. I should say here that I don't accept the argument by some that this eventuality is just what is needed to revitalize the non-Communist forces in Italy. I think it would have exactly the opposite effect. So we are concerned about what will happen when Tito disappears, and it is worrying us a good deal. We have had discussions, informal ones, with some of our NATO friends and have agreed that our policies should be directed to provide as much deterrent as possible ahead of time. I would also emphasize that any idea that with Tito's departure, there should be a concerted Western effort to orient Yugoslavia to the West would be seen by the Soviet Union as exacting its vital interests and would solicit a strong response. So our basic policy continues to be that which we have pursued since 1948-1949, keeping Yugoslavia in a position of substantial independence from the Soviet Union. Now at the same time we would like them to be less obnoxious, and we should allow them to get away with very little. We should especially disabuse them of any notion that our interests in their relative independence is greater than their own and, therefore, they have a free ride. I am sure that you, Larry, will find ways to remind them in this regard--I have in mind Puerto Rico, Panama and the like.

AMB. COOPER: This is the first meeting of this kind I have attended and I have listened carefully to the political and economic concepts outlined here. It seems to me that East/West detente depends on time. Today, looking at it from the outside, it seems we have made some successes in the past several years. But there have also been setbacks. I detect a growing feeling of confidence on the part of the Soviet Union, and this is reflected in the GDR. Fear is also certainly part of it. But if there is a retrogression in detente, what do we do now--especially with regard to Eastern Europe?

MR. HARTMAN: We will be discussing at lunch the tools we have at hand. As the Secretary and Hal have indicated, we are handicapped by the lack of a trade instrumentality but we do have other means, both government and private, to influence to some extent their behavior.

MR. SONNENFELDT: I would like to make one comment, John, if I may, concerning your question -- your question of how detente is doing. I frankly confess I don't like the question itself because I think it evades the central issue we are trying to pose. That is, what do you do in the face of increasing Soviet power. We will be facing this increased power if our relationship with the Russians is sweet or our relationship with the Russians is sour. As the Secretary has said, the day when the U.S. could choose its preferences from two alternatives is over. That is, turning our back on the world -- usually behind the protection of another power like the British Navy -- or ~~engaging~~ the world. That choice no longer exists for us. There is too much power in the world for us to ignore, not just the Soviets, but other industrial powers, raw material producers, and even the combined political power of the dwarf states. Nor do we today have enough power to simply overwhelm these problems. So the Soviets will be seen and heard on the world stage no matter what we do. Therefore, the question of whether or not detente is up or down at a particular moment is largely irrelevant. We Americans like to keep score cards, but the historic challenge of the Soviet Union will not go away and the problem of coping with the effects of that growing Soviet power also won't go away. As the Secretary said, we don't have any alternative except to come to grips with the various forms of power which surround us in the world. We have to get away from seeing detente as a process which appeases or propitiates Soviet power. We have to see our task as managing or domesticating this power. That is our central problem in the years ahead, not finding agreements to sign or atmospheres to improve, although those have some effect. Our challenge is how to live in a world with another super power, and anticipate the arrival of a third super power, China, in twenty years or so.

MR. HARTMAN: One final conclusion. Hal, and to some extent the Secretary, have complained about criticism of our policies toward the Soviet Union elsewhere. That is the principal reason for the Secretary's swings around the United States and the series of speeches he has been making. Unless there is basic support for these policies in the U.S., no amount of convincing intellectual analyses will be enough. It will not replace broad public support. I would, therefore, hope that all of you when you return to the U.S., when you see friends in Congress, you will try to follow these lines of argument you have heard this weekend and the analyses which support those lines.

Finally, in conclusion, I would like to thank all of you for taking part in this conference and for your work and contribution to its success. I have found it interesting and worth doing. I also want to thank Ambassador Richardson and his staff for the magnificent job they have done in organizing our stay here and making it as profitable as it has been. AMEN