

8/9/89

Number 108

MEASURING GLASNOST AND PERESTROIKA: CRITERIA FOR MONITORING CHANGE IN THE U.S.S.R.

(Updating Chapter 24, "U.S.-Soviet Relations," in Charles L. Heatherly and Burton Yale Pines, eds., *Mandate for Leadership III: Policy Strategies for the 1990s* (Washington, D.C.: The Heritage Foundation, 1989).)

Many changes are taking place in the Soviet Union. How deep, extensive, and permanent these changes are will determine how the United States will respond to Soviet domestic and foreign behavior. A correct assessment of the pace and depth of Soviet change is needed to separate rhetoric from reality, the cosmetic from the fundamental, and the transitory from the lasting in what has become the extremely fluid situation of Mikhail Gorbachev's Soviet Union.

To guide U.S. policy makers, a set of criteria are required for evaluating developments in the Soviet Union. In general, the U.S. response to perestroika and glasnost should rest on how far and fast the Soviet Union moves toward a more humane and more democratic society that is less threatening to the U.S. and the West.

Mandate for Leadership III, published by The Heritage Foundation this January, suggested a preliminary list of such criteria. What follows is an updated and augmented checklist.

SHORT-TERM

Within one year the Soviet Union should:

Foreign Policy/Defense

- Reduce substantially the military threat to Western Europe by concluding a verifiable agreement in the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) talks in Vienna.
- In accordance with Gorbachev's December 7, 1988, U.N. speech, reduce unilaterally Soviet forces in Central and Eastern Europe by 50,000 men and 5,000 tanks.
- In accordance with the same speech, reduce unilaterally tanks in the European part of the Soviet Union by 5,000.
- In accordance with the U.N. speech, reduce the total Soviet Armed Forces by 10 percent (500,000 men).

- Reduce the Soviet defense budget for fiscal 1990-1991 by 15 percent as measured by the U.S. intelligence services.
- Cease anti-American propaganda abroad and anti-American disinformation.
- Reestablish diplomatic relations with Israel.

Domestic Politics/Economy

- Eliminate the land monopoly of state-owned (*sovkhozy*) or state-subsidized (*kolkhozy*) collective enterprises and introduce personal ownership of land by, perhaps, adopting this June's proposal by delegates to the Congress of People's Deputies for a law guaranteeing the permanence and inviolability of the personal ownership of land.
- Release all political prisoners in jails and camps.
- End psychiatric abuse and release all political prisoners in psychiatric wards.
- Expand glasnost to the activities of the secret police (the KGB) and bring the KGB under effective control of the Supreme Soviet.
- Repeal Supplement #1 to the December 29, 1988, Resolution of the Council of Ministers that prohibits independent entrepreneurial activity in many areas, including publishing.
- Abolish residence permits (*propiska*) and domestic passports which limit the movement and travel of citizens.
- End harassment of the publishers of independent magazines, like *Glasnost* and *Referendum*, which would break the state monopoly on mass media.
- Eliminate "regional meetings" (*okruzhnye sobrania*) used by the local Communist Party organizations to screen candidates before their names are put on the ballot.
- Repeal Article 227 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federal Republic and similar articles in the Criminal Codes of all other Union Republics that specify punishment for "infringement of the rights of the citizens under the guise of performing religious ceremonies" and are used to repress religious activists.
- Legalize the Ukrainian Catholic Church, which has been outlawed since 1939.
- Legalize the religious instruction of children.
- Repeal such laws, adopted under Gorbachev, limiting freedom of speech and demonstrations, as the April 8, 1989, Decree against "calls for the overthrow or change of the Soviet state and social system" and against "defamation" of "officials appointed, elected or approved in the office," and as the law granting the search and seizure rights to the Special Units of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which are used to break up demonstrations.
- Dissolve the Special Units of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

- Adopt a law guaranteeing the press greater independence from the Party.
- Remove restrictions on the sale of Western publications in the Soviet Union and on subscriptions bought by Soviet citizens for Western publications.
- Adopt a law guaranteeing greater independence of the legal system from the state.
- Punish those responsible for the April 9, 1989, massacre in Tbilisi, in which troops attacked unarmed Georgian demonstrators.
- Abolish all restrictions on travel and emigration.

MID-TERM

Within five years the Soviet Union should:

Foreign Policy/Defense

- Reduce, unilaterally or under a CFE treaty, Soviet military forces in Europe to below current NATO levels of 22,200 tanks, 17,300 artillery pieces, 28,600 armored troop carriers, and 5,400 aircraft.
- Cut unilaterally the total Soviet troop level by 20 percent (or 900,000) of the 1990 level.
- Reduce the Soviet strategic nuclear forces by at least 50 percent under a verifiable and mutually acceptable U.S.-Soviet Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) agreement.
- Allow the transition to non-communist democratic regimes in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland.
- Allow Hungary to become neutral and to withdraw from the Warsaw Pact if the Hungarian people desire.
- Dismantle the Berlin Wall.
- Cease arms deliveries to Cuba and Nicaragua, Soviet client-states engaged in subversion and terror close to U.S. borders.
- Cut by half Soviet military aid to such aggressive, anti-Western, terrorist-sponsoring regimes as Libya and Syria.
- End Soviet support for terrorism and so-called "wars of national liberation."
- Influence Syria and the Palestine Liberation Organization to stop terrorism and promote the peace process in the Middle East.

Domestic Politics/Economy

- Repeal Article 6 of the Soviet Constitution which declares the Communist Party to be "the leading and guiding force of Soviet society and the nucleus of its political system."

- Abolish the *nomenclatura* system which establishes the Party monopoly on virtually all executive and managerial positions in the economy, government, and arts. -
- Legalize independent political parties.
- Legalize an independent mass media.
- Legalize independent trade unions.
- Allow the participation of political opposition parties in elections.
- Cut by half the size of the secret political police, now estimated at over 600,000 men and women, including special troops and border guards.
- Restrict to matters of national security and foreign policy Moscow's power over the economic, cultural, and political affairs of national republics.
- Establish the independent judiciary and reintroduce trial by jury.
- Introduce price reform to reflect production costs and demand.
- Introduce direct subsidies to low-income consumers, such as pensioners, young families with children and single mothers, to cushion the transition to higher consumer prices which price reform will create.
- Make the ruble convertible.
- Codify commercial law to create a legal framework for contractual relations between independent producers.
- Sharply reduce and redirect the activities of government agencies in charge of agriculture, light industry and services from detailed planning and day-to-day supervision to research, long-range forecasting and information-gathering, education of the private entrepreneurs in the ways of the free market, and facilitating their activities through bank loans and technological innovations.
- Further narrow restrictions on individual economic activity by opening to private entrepreneurship such areas as light industry, food processing, hospital management, transportation, hotels, auto repair and services.
- Gradually privatize state-owned enterprise through stock ownership.

LONG-TERM

Within ten years the Soviet Union should:

Foreign Policy/Defense

- Withdraw most troops from Eastern Europe, with any remaining token garrisons governed by agreements between the Soviet Union and freely elected host East European governments.

- Complete self-determination for Eastern Europe, including East Germany, that allows East European countries total independence in deciding domestic policies and membership in the Warsaw Pact.
- Reduce Soviet armed forces to the present U.S. level of 2,000,000 troops.
- Cease all Soviet support for such terrorist-sponsoring states as Syria and Libya.

Domestic Politics/Economy

- Abolish the domestic branch of the KGB, which enforces political conformity, harasses dissidents, and spies on citizens.
- Eliminate all restrictions on independent political parties in elected bodies because legalizing independent political parties does not necessarily allow them to participate in the government.
- Allow free elections in which the opposition is guaranteed access to the mass media, including television.
- Eliminate all restrictions on the opposition's role in the government, including its ability to form a government.
- Allow the peoples of the national republics to decide freely on the form of their membership in the U.S.S.R., be it greater autonomy within the current system, a loose federation with Moscow, or secession.
- Further reduce state interference in the economy by disbanding the State Planning Committee (Gosplan) and of most of the industrial production ministries.
- Remove price controls in such areas of the economy as mining, steel production, machine-building, transportation, and civil engineering.
- Allow a free wholesale market where large quantities of raw materials and finished products are traded directly without the government's intervention.
- Eliminate most restrictions on private enterprise.

* * *

These criteria are no wish list. They comprise a realistic set of objectives for the Soviet reform. There is no item on this list that is not discussed publicly in the Soviet Union today. It thus is time for them to be discussed in the U.S. as well.

By adopting these criteria, the U.S. will be able to measure the progress of reform in the Soviet Union and thus craft a sensible policy of response to Gorbachev's reforms.

Leon Aron, Ph.D.
Salvatori Fellow in Soviet Studies

