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ABSTRACT

Since coming to power, Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev has undertaken an ambitious program to reform the Soviet economy. Perestroika touches every aspect of Soviet economic life, including relations with the international economy. Soviet specialists and international economists must find common ground so that they can successfully analyze and prescribe policies for perestroika. The conference participants agreed that Gorbachev is serious about perestroika and that it is above all an internal process. Therefore, the implications for the international economy must rest on an understanding of current domestic conditions. Discussion focused on two basic problems that must be overcome for perestroika to succeed: reform of Soviet agriculture to increase productivity and the introduction of a more realistic pricing system. It was agreed that the Soviets must become more involved in the international economy through trade if they are to succeed in their economic reforms, but that the Soviet Union would remain a marginal trading nation for some time. The group agreed that the question of whether encouraging a stronger, economically viable Soviet Union was in U.S. interests would form the core of the policy debate about U.S. responses to perestroika. A list of the conference participants and the conference-opening address are included. (JB)

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Soviet Integration Into the **World Economy**

29th Strategy for Peace, US Foreign Policy Conference 1988

The Stanley Foundation

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About the Conference

Strategy for Peace, the Stanley Foundation's US foreign policy conference, annually assembles a panel of experts from the public and private sectors to assess specific foreign policy issues and to recommend future direction.

At the October 1988 conference, 65 foreign policy professionals met at Airlie House conference center to recommend elements of a strategy for peace in the following areas:

- 1. Developing an Indochina Policy for the Next Administration
- 2. Soviet Integration Into the World Economy
- 3. US Policy Toward Central America: Where Do We Go From Here?

The work of the conference was carried out in three concurrent round-table discussions. These sessions were informal and off the record. The rapporteurs tried to convey the conclusions of the discussions and the areas of consensus and disagreement. This is the report of one discussion group.

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The rapporteur prepared this report following the conference. It contains her interpretation of the proceedings and is not merely a descriptive, chronological account. Participants neither reviewed nor approved the report. Therefore, it should not be assumed that every participant subscribes to all recommendations, observations, and conclusions.



Soviet
Integration
Into the
World Economy

Report of the Twenty-ninth Strategy for Peace, US Foreign Policy Conference

Sponsored by

The Stanley Foundation

October 13-15, 1988

Convened at Airlie House Conference Center, Warrenton, Virginia





Participants

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Affiliations are listed for identification purposes only. Participants attended as individuals rather than as representatives of their governments or organizations.



Soviet Integration Into the World Economy

Introduction

Since coming to power, Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev has undertaken an ambitious program to reform the Soviet economy. Perestroika touches every aspect of Soviet economic life, including relations with the international economy. Gorbachev has announced his intention to encourage greater foreign involvement in the Soviet economy through joint ventures and is seeking Western capital to underwrite his programs. Infusions of Western technology are central to his hopes for modernization. At the same time, Gorbachev has expressed strong interest in a more active Soviet role in the international institutions that support transnational trade and finance.

The international system Gorbachev seeks to enter presents a moving target. Profound changes — the rise of gigantic multinational corporations to control a significant portion of world trade, the ever increasing openness of world capital markets, to name only two key trends — are transforming international economic practice. Keeping pace is a formidable challenge for the institutions and arrangements established to oversee international commerce and for any nation seeking to expand its role in the system. Any analysis of the international dimensions of perestroika thus demands an understanding of two rapidly changing and uncertain processes.

Unfortunately, neither most Soviet specialists nor most international economists are well-equipped for the task. The Soviet's relative isolation from the international economy have allowed both groups the luxury of ignorance about the other. Both thus find themselves ill-prepared to analyze and prescribe policies for perestroika and for the international economic response to it. An important first step toward improving policy analysis is establishing a dialogue between Sovietologists and international economists. Communication would facilitate the identification of major common issues and the development of greater understanding of the implications of events and processes in one area for the other. This discussion group thus included specialists in the Soviet economy and US-Soviet economic relations, experts in international trade and finance, officials charged with developing and implementing US policy, and business people with extensive practical experience in the Soviet Union and in international commerce. At this stage there was no attempt to develop concrete policy recommendations. Successfully beginning the dialogue was sufficient challenge. Only after common ground was established could



the struggle for policy consensus have any meaning.

Gorbachev Is "For Real"

The group quickly concluded that General Secretary Gorbachev is certainly serious about fundamentally reforming the Soviet economy and increasing the Soviet Union's involvement in the international economic system. The participants also agreed that perestroika is first and foremost a domestic reform program and that the needs and requirements of those reforms will drive Soviet international economic policy. What must be done and whether he can accomplish his goals, however, engendered lively discussion and considerable disagreement. The immense difficulties facing Gorbachev and the uncertain implications of his reforms for the United States, its European allies, and the international economy provided continuing themes for the conference.

The Current Status of Perestroika

The group agreed that if perestroika is above all an internal process, then the implications for the international economy must rest on an understanding of current domestic conditions. Discussion focused on two basic problems that must be overcome for perestroika to succeed: reform of Soviet agriculture to increase productivity and the introduction of a more realistic pricing system. Several participants also argued for a third key problem: the need to provide tangible material incenti es to workers in order to win popular support for reforms. They stressed that for the bulk of the Soviet population the pain of reform was immediate and the benefits only dimly perceived. Citing the old workers' joke, "We pretend to work and you pretend to pay us," they cautioned that demanding greater productivity without providing greater benefits in the form of more and better food or consumer goods would doom the reforms. There was no consensus on how much time Gorbachev has before popular discontent could become a serious obstacle, but all agreed that he must act decisively within the next few years.

The Perennial Dilemma of Soviet Agriculture

The group agreed that agricultural reform was vital but disagreed over whether that should have been the initial focus of the reforms. Several participants commented that Gorbachev is only the latest in a long line of Soviet leaders who have tried to reform agriculture—the failure to make the country self-sustaining is a continuing national humiliation. Many experiments have been tried and heavy investments made, but productivity has continued to decline. Some suggested that success in agriculture could therefore provide a showcase for Gorbachev, but others cautioned that its problems are so deep-seated that perestroika could founder if success were tied to improving agricultural production. Yet all agreed that no long-term



modernization of Soviet society can succeed without improving agricultural production.

The group discussed whether reforms undertaken in other socialist countries could provide an example for the Soviet Union. China and Hungary made radical reforms in agriculture a first step, but several cautioned that these cases were not comparable because of differences in the structure of the agricultural sector in the two countries. Moreover, their success is still uncertain. One person commented that the major achievement in the rural sector in China had been in developing small enterprises other than farming. Another noted that collectivization had been a far more brutal and far-reaching process in the Soviet Union. Memories of that experience still lingered, so that many in rural areas were loath to make changes or take risks. "Think about the feelings of a farm worker living in a cottage that originally belonged to a *kulak* [independent farmer] liquidated by Stalin," someone suggested.

In spite of this pessimism, several participants commented on the new laws governing cooperative farms promulgated in May 1988 as a hopeful sign. In some Soviet republics, new forms of land tenure, such as long-term leasing with inheritance rights, also offered hope of change. No clear policy recommendations emerged from the discussions, but all agreed that the new, if belated, attention to agriculture was immensely important to the long-term success of perestroika.

Prices, Markets, and Economic Realities

The group agreed that Gorbachev's fundamental goal is to introduce greater competition and market forces into the Soviet economy, to bring it closer to what some called "market socialism." Traditionally, prices have been set as part of the central economic plan with heavy subsidies for some sectors. Production goals have also been set centrally with limited initiative or flexibility for managers at lower levels.

Reforming that system involves immense changes. As one suggested, for genuine reform to take hold, there must be a greater connection between effort and reform: money must mean something. Price reform, it was agreed, is also essential to greater Soviet participation in the world economy. This must include eventual convertibility for the ruble, the group agreed, although there was dispute about how quickly it must take place. Participants also noted that this need not mean full convertibility; very few currencies are completely open and traded on world markets. At minimum, the Soviets will need to create some mechanism tied to realistic prices to support foreign trade and provide a means for settling accounts.

Yet, price reform also carries the threat of vast inflation; one



estimate sets the "overhang" of savings in enterprises and individual accounts at 250 billion rubles. Someone noted that China has recently delayed its price reforms in response to inflationary pressures. Introducing reforms without setting off inflation will remain one of Gorbachev's greatest economic challenges.

Many participants found the recent expansion of cooperative enterprises a hopeful sign. These potentially extend far beyond the restaurants and other other small businesses that have attracted most of the press coverage in the West. There is substantial unused manufacturing capacity in the Soviet Union; few factories run full shifts. Under new laws governing enterprises, a group could lease and use a factory during its off-hours. Supplies of materials and markets for products remain a serious problem, so most enterprises are still small-scale or require more knowledge than equipment — computer software, for example. Nonetheless, many saw such new private initiatives as an important development.

The renewed Soviet interest in joint ventures struck many participants as hopeful. Laws governing joint enterprises are still being developed, but some participants cited cases where foreign firms were able to move beyond the ministrics with which they had been forced to deal in the past to form direct relationships with individual enterprises. Such foreign investment and involvement offers the Soviets one way to infuse badly needed capital and technology into their economy. Several participants cautioned, however, that neither cooperatives nor joint ventures could bring about fundamental changes, particularly if they remained confined to limited sectors of the economy. As with the discussion of agriculture, the dilemmas of reform were fai easier to identify than the solutions.

The Soviets and the World Economy

As an introduction, the group discussed the vast changes underway in the international economy. The primary trend is toward greater openness and interaction, with transnational corporations the key actors. One participant offered the estimate that 40 percent of world trade is now intracorporate trade. Added to this is the impact of the "information revolution" and the increasing integration of the international financial system, with trading in stocks, currencies, and other financial instruments now going on virtually around the clock.

As another participant pointed out, however, this is largely a "West-West" phenomenon, and it is not clear how the socialist or the developing countries will fit into the new international economy. How can the Soviet Union break into the international economy as a vast but relatively underdeveloped country? The major route is through trade, but today the Soviet Union is only marginally involved.



Morevoer, most of its exports are primary products, so its major competitors would be Third World, developing countries.

These issues set off a lively discussion about the realistic strategies for growth available to the Soviet Union. One of the main questions was whether the Soviets could develop competitive export industries. As several participants noted, the centrally planned Soviet economy shields enterprises from competition, providing little incentive for quality or cost-effective production, which would be essential for international success. A key question was whether there would be sufficient pressures and opportunities to encourage exports. Price reform was again cited as crucial to eventual development of competitive enterprises. Joint ventures were cited as one promising means to develop enterprises that could produce competitive goods.

As for specific strategies, one participant suggested that the Soviets could set up special for-export-only enterprises, forcing them to compete and removing the cushion of the domestic market. Another participant noted that the Soviets do produce high-quality military goods, so the potential exists to produce other competitive products, although others countered that military industries are a special, privileged case. Another argued that the emphasis on quality might be overstated. Many newly industrializing nations first entered the world market with lower quality but less expensive goods in order to capture a share of the market and only gradually improved the quality of their products. Japan and Korea were cited as examples of this strategy. Finally, several participants noted that, short of integration into the international economy, the Soviets could move toward greater integration with Eastern Europe.

One major conclusion of the discussion was the importance of distinguishing between what increased trade means to the Soviet Union and what role the Soviet Union might play in the international economy in the near future. Most agreed with the assessment that although the Soviets must become more integrated to succeed in their economic reforms, the Soviet Union would remain a marginal trading nation for some time. As one participant pointed out, its hard currency exports are essentially equivalent to those of Denmark. The political-economic stakes, in terms of East-West relations, may thus be much greater than any likely impact on the international economy.

Eastern Europe, Western Europe, and the Soviet Union One specific discussion focused on the impact of the plan to greatly increase the integration of the European Economic Community by the early 1990s. Some argued that "EEC-92," as the plan is known, would make it more difficult for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe to find markets in the West. Most focused on the possibility that a more integrated and dynamic Western Europe would be a magnet

for the Eastern European countries, perhaps to the detriment of the Soviet Union's hopes for greater economic involvement with the latter. On the other hand, if the Soviet Union becomes more involved in international trade, its interest in closer integration with Eastern Europe could decline. Several people pointed out the longstanding Western European interest in drawing Eastern Europe closer to the West. The European Community has sought and will presumably retain special ties with Eastern European nations such as Hungary. This creates potential for friction both with the Soviet Union and with the United States as long as the United States continues to emphasize controls on trade and technology transfers.

Implications for US Policy

The final sessions of the meeting turned to questions of US and Western policy options in responding to Soviet reforms. Several participants urged that the United States should be as supportive as possible of perestroika and Soviet desires for greater international trade. "The international political economy and East-West trade are the most positive forces available to encourage change," one participant argued. Another participant dismissed such arguments, noting that close trading partners have frequently gone to war. He also noted the deep-seated anti-Soviet feelings in the United States that make any major positive change in relations difficult. He concluded by arguing that the United States should take what economic opportunities are available to increase trade with the Soviet Union but keep limited, realistic expectations about any impact on US-Soviet relations.

The group agreed that the question of whether encouraging a stronger, economically viable Soviet Union was in US interests would form the core of the policy debate about US responses to perestroika. With a few exceptions, most agreed that some restrictions on technology transfer should remain, although the current system needs streamlining in order to reduce its bureaucratic burden and to avoid needless controversy with our European allies. The Jackson-Vanick amendment that ties most-favored-nation trading status to open emigration for Soviet Jews will also remain in force, it was agreed; and there may be efforts to increase the restrictions to include broader Helsinki Act provisions. As one participant described the attitude of some in Congress: "If the Soviets are about to jump over the hurdle [of Jackson-Vanik], it's time to raise the hurdle."

The group also discussed the issue of US policy toward greater Soviet participation in the world economy. Several expressed concern for continuing use of trade sanctions and the prevailing US belief that somehow others gain more from trade than it does. One participant countered that while unilateral trade sanctions might not be



effective, they were important as a means to permit policymakers to "do something" short of violent action in a dispute. Another participant commented that multilateral sanctions had been effective in the past and pointed out that there is no forum in which the Western allies can discuss coordinated economic policy, either positive or negative, toward the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. NATO concerns itself with military matters, the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) with "purely economic" issues without consideration for their security implications, and COCOM (Coordinating Committee) focuses on narrow issues of technology transfer. Economic summits could theoretically provide this coordination, but in reality the discussions are generally superficial. This lack of a forum clearly exacerbates the potential for misunderstandings and disputes over policy.

The group did not agree about what US policy should be toward Soviet participation in GATT. Some argued that if one takes a broad view of the international economic system as a means to enhance international peace and stability, then one should be looking for ways to bring the Soviets and other centrally-planned economies into its structure. GATT should be used to seek and encourage commonalities among all nations to develop a genuine multilateral trading regime that could encompass a variety of economic systems. Setting goals for the Soviets' internal reforms that would affect international trade was put forward as one way to provide incentives for the Soviets to continue on the path of change.

Other participants disagreed sharply. Some made a distinction between the international economic "system" and the institutions that support it, arguing that the Soviets have not yet demonstrated genuine policy changes that would enable them to be meaningful participants. For example, some argued that GATT was devoted to the principles of the free market and that until the Soviets and other socialist countries were willing to adhere fully to the forces of free trade, GATT had no meaning for them. Others argued that GATT was already very fragile and beset by pressures and conflicts over restrictions on trade, and it might not be able to withstand the additional burden of coping with the Soviets and other centrally-planned economies. As the only international trade regime, GATT was too precious to put at risk.

Finally, several participants argued that it was profoundly misguided to think of using GATT and other international economic institutions as a means to set standards for Soviet reforms. *Perestroika* is above all a domestic reform, undertaken for Soviet domestic reasons, and the United States and the West should not put themselves in the position of negotiating the Soviets' internal development



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with them.

Conclusion

Overall, the group acknowledged that US-Soviet economic relations are closely tied to broader political relations and that strict commercial interests will never drive policy. Most were quite optimistic about the long-term future of US-Soviet relations if Gorbachev remained in power and was able to carry through his reforms, but many expressed concern that the next few years could be very difficult. Periods of transition are always uncertain and filled with risk. Nor is there consensus within the United States about the basic approach this country should take toward perestroika. The stakes are high for both superpowers, and the group agreed that economic issues will occupy an increasingly important part of both bilateral relations and US relations with its allies.



Jo Husbands, Rapporteur

Jerry Hough, Chair



President's Address

by Richard H. Stanley President, The Stanley Foundation

Richard Stanley opened the Strategy for Peace Conference with the following remarks, addressing all participants from the three topic groups.

Welcome to the Stanley Foundation's Twenty-Ninth Strategy for Peace Conference. This annual conference series is intended to be a forum for developing direction and guidance for US foreign policy, and this year is an unusually opportune time for creative discussion. We are on the threshold of national elections and a new US administration. Perhaps even more significant, fundamental changes are occurring in global relationships and these demand new perceptions and offer new opportunities.

As we began planning for this conference, three seemingly unrelated topics seemed ripe for new approaches, and we are delighted with the quality and competence of the participants who have gathered here to discuss them.

US policy toward Central America has been stalemated in recent years. Policy differences within the US government have sharpened. US interests and those of the Western Hemisphere would be well served if participants in this discussion topic could examine the future direction of US policy and formulate elements of a creative and acceptable bipartisan strategy toward Central America.

Our discussion on "Developing an Indochina Policy for the Next Administration" builds on a stimulating discussion of this subject at our Strategy for Peace Conference one year ago. US policy toward Indochina can be characterized as one of neglect since the end of our tragic experience in Viet Nam. This region has both significant needs and significant potential for an expanded US role in Asia. It is certainly timely for participants in this group to propose a new policy toward Indochina which is sensitive to the needs of the region as well as to US interests.

"Soviet Integration Into the World Economy" is also an appropriate topic for policy development. In recent days, General Secretary Gorbachev has strengthened and solidified his support . . . and support for policies of glasnost and perestroika within the Soviet government and party structures. Soviet spokesmen have enunciated new policy thinking: namely, that rather than being in diametric opposition, socialism and capitalism are moving on convergent paths. They have declared the Soviet intent to become a significant actor in the world economy and the Soviet willingness to accept the world



economy "as it is" as they move in this direction. Yet, the problems of implementing economic reform within the Soviet Union are immense, and progress to date is minimal. These problems are further complicated by the fundamental changes now underway in the international economy. While the prospects for Soviet economic reform are arguable, it is in the interest of the United States and the rest of the world for perestroika to succeed. We need to examine the national and international implications of Soviet integration into the world economy and begin formulation of constructive US policy.

At first, these three topics, while timely and ripe for new approaches, seemed separate and unrelated. Yet, as we began working with discussion chairpersons in the development of topics and discussion agendas, significant commonalities emerged. Effective policy recommendations in each of these areas, and undoubtedly in many others as well, must be developed in the context of a world which is in an era of profound change. The world of today and the 1990s differs greatly from that of the post-World War II period, which shaped the formation of our international institutions as well as our attitudes toward and perceptions of the international community. If our policy proposals are to be viable, they must be developed against a backdrop of accurate perceptions of the new realities of today and the future. Fundamental global changes have occurred and are continuing to occur in a number of areas. Let me describe several of the more significant ones.

First, the nature of threats to global security is changing. In the post-World War II period, security threats were perceived in terms of aggression across national borders by hostile states. International institutions and military security systems were developed accordingly. While this kind of security threat has not disappeared, World War II type conflicts seem increasing unlikely and nuclear war has become unthinkable. The security threats of today and the future are far more likely to come from domestic conflict rather than external aggression, from low-intensity warfare, from terrorism, from drug-related threats, and from increasing conventional armament, especially in the South. Military strength is not a reliable guarantor of security against threats such as these.

Further, demographic and development issues are increasingly becoming threats to security. Burgeoning population and growing poverty, along with other economic and social issues, are creating dangerous instability in large parts of the world's population. A new and significant threat to global security comes not from the East or West but from the South. Most of the world's population increase in the next decade will take place in the South, and this will exacerbate problems of migration, refugees, and poverty, none of which



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are amenable to classic military solutions.

Next, it is increasingly apparent that humanity is in danger of fouling the global commons to the extent that survival may be jeopardized. Acid rain, depletion of the ozone layer, desertification, the greenhouse effect, destruction of rain forests, and ocean pollution are sobering examples. Destruction of the global commons was not an issue forty years ago. Today, it is a major risk that demonstrates the need for re-examination of long-held views on state needs versus global needs relative to such issues as population, property rights, environmental regulation, and multilateral institutions. It is a risk that exceeds the competence of national governments.

Third, the scope and nature of global economic activity is greatly changed. Nonstate economic actors, such as transnational corporations and financial institutions have grown in size and power. Global economic matters have become transnationalized to the extent that the ability of national governments, even the largest and most powerful, to independently manage their own economic destinies has become greatly curtailed. Existing international institutions have very limited utility in dealing with a global economy which cannot be contained by international law. New thinking is needed on the shape and nature of the international institutions and international cooperation for the future.

Fourth, significant technological progress in the last forty years, in addition to being an engine of economic change, is also revolutionizing communication, moving the world toward an information society, driving the move toward a service economy, and creating changes in employment patterns and resource and energy demands. The benefits of the technological revolution have fallen disparately on different parts of the world and on different sectors within individual nations. The world must find ways of broadening the opportunities for benefit from rapidly increasing technological capability.

Finally, the bipolar post-World War II era is coming to an end. Forty years ago, global power was defined predominantly in terms of military strength. Today, the utility of military strength is diminished, and global power is much more defined in economic terms. Japan is an economic superpower, partly because it has avoided large military expenditures. The Soviet Union and the United States are wisely moving to find accommodation through arm control agreements and disengagement from Third World adventurism to reduce the military drag on their economic strength. Soviet efforts at perestroika are a significant effort to regenerate national power. The new US administration will have to deal with significant issues like budget deficits and trade imbalances, which threaten to sap US



economic strength.

Multipolarity is clearly in evidence around the world as middle powers begin to assert themselves and seek opportunities outside the context of East-West competition. The nations of Europe are moving to combine their economies. The OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) and the so-called Group of Seven are becoming more significant actors.

The ending of the bipolar era brings new opportunities. Stephen Cohen, a noted Soviet expert, has recently written that the next president of the United States will have both an ". . . opportunity and an obligation to end the decades-long cold war between the United States and the Soviet Union." Can we recognize this change and accept its challenge, or will we shrink back into the ideological cocoon we have constructed out of forty years of fear, mistrust, and military competition?

The fading of bipolarity should not mark the end of US leadership in the world. It provides us with the opportunity to be an effective multipolar leader, sharing this leadership with others, while we see to our own interests. Clearly, openings exist for a more productive role if we can develop multilateral opportunities and seize them as they arise instead of going it alone and risking the wrath of our friends as well as our adversaries.

These are but a few observations that in my view carry great relevance to any discussion of international issues. I would hope that you, as experts in your various fields, would consider the impact of these changes on your topics of discussion. No one can predict the final direction or outcome of what is happening on a global level, but one thing is clear — if we do not deal with change it will certainly deal with us.

As you begin your deliberations on the three important subjects at hand, I urge all of you to keep in mind the multilateral option. Some of the changes which I have outlined have already resulted in a renewed interest in the United Nations to assist in conflict resolution in situations such as Afghanistan, the Iran-Iraq War, and Angola-Namibia. Despite this success, recognized by a Nobel Peace Prize to UN Peace Keeping Forces, the United Nations is an example of a post-World War II institution which requires reform and is making some progress toward this reform in order to be of greatest utility in the world of today and the future.

The United Nations needs a strengthened Secretary General position, improved personnel policies, a better defined mission, and a reformed structure, particularly in the economic and social area.



The United States can, as an influential member-state, work with others for our mutual self-interest to improve the multilateral option by strengthening and reforming the United Nations and other multilateral institutions. Renewed US interest in, and support of, the United Nations is encouraging. We should seize the opportunity afforded by recent Soviet initiatives at the United Nations by working constructively and flexibly with them to develop more fully defined proposals that are mutually acceptable. This subject should be high on the bilateral agenda of the United States and the Soviet Union. These times present both a greater opportunity and a greater need for the development of effective multilateral institutions than at anytime in recent years.

I look forward with great interest to your creative discussions and recommendations as to how the US should proceed in Central America, in Indochina, and on Soviet integration into the world economy. A changed and changing world and an impending new US administration lend opportunity and timeliness to your deliberations.



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Implications of the New Soviet Foreign Policy. 1987 Strategy for Peace Conference, 64 pp. (contains three other conference reports).

The Soviet Economy and US Policy. 1986 Strategy for Peace Conference, 64 pp. (contains three other conference reports).

International Agenda for the 1990s. 1988 United Nations of the Next Decade Conference, 36 pp.

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